



Ex Azor 2010



2nd EDA Multinational Helicopter Exercise AZOR 2010

As part of the European Defence Agency's Helicopter Training Programme (HTP), Spain will host a Multinational Helicopter Exercise in June 2010.

The Exercise is the largest of its kind so far, with more than 40 helicopters and 735 people attending from 9 nations and yet takes place less than a year after the Ministerial endorsement of the HTP concept.

The Exercise will take place at the Spanish Army aviation base at Agoncillo, near Logroño, and is designed to allow European helicopter crews to practice the techniques of flying in a hot, high and dusty environment - the same conditions that many of the participants will encounter when they deploy on current operations over the next year.

In order to ensure the widest participation, and as part of their support of the Multinational Helicopter Initiative, Luxembourg has kindly agreed to meet the costs of participation.

The organisation of the Exercise, the management of life support and the use of the ranges have all been provided by the hosts, Spain. The planned participants are Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany, Italy, Slovenia, Sweden, UK and the hosts, Spain.

The exercise will run for three weeks, commencing on 9 June 2010, and there will be a VIP/Press Day on 17 June. The planning of further exercises in the Programme is already underway.





Ex Azor 2010

Q&A

How will the EDA's helicopter tactics program address this shortage and when will it be launched this year?

EDA has two projects running which are assisting nations to prepare their crews for deployment on operations.

The first is the Helicopter Training Programme (HTP), the concept of which was approved late last year by the EDA Ministerial Steering Board. This programme aims to organise two live flying exercises per year, as well as holding a helicopter tactics symposium to allow the sharing of experiences and the identification of best practices. The first exercise since concept approval will be held in Spain in June 2010. The symposium is planned for September - with Luxembourg hosting. Discussions are underway for a possible second exercise in March 2011.

The second project is a Category B project led by the UK with Luxembourg, Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia and Sweden. This project aims to commercially source helicopter tactics courses to provide a training capability over the next two years. The intent is that the nations will use the time, and experience gained to progress an indigenous follow-on capability, either in collaboration or separately. The contract notice has been published and EDA received the proposals from industry in March 2010.

Is this related to the Azor 2010 in June?

Spain has offered to host the next exercise in the HTP. It is an extension of the EX AZOR programme and planning is well underway. The main Planning Conference was held in March at EDA and the Final Planning conference was held in Logroño in May. The exercise will have a main operating base at Agoncillo, with forward operating bases at San Gregorio and Santa

Cilia. 9 nations participate with helicopters and a further 3 plan to send observers. At the moment this will total some 32 helicopters and 500 personnel (this does not include the host nation). The cost of participation is being met by a donation from Luxembourg, through the Multinational Helicopter Initiative.

What progress, if any, has there been with the idea of upgrading helicopters by grouping EDA participating Member States operating the same type of helicopter?

Workshops held at the EDA suggest that at the moment our participating Member States do not have a requirement for this work.

What is the division of labor between NATO and the EDA?

There is no formal division of labour between the EDA and NATO. We have different foci and different constituents, shareholders and stakeholders. However, at the moment NATO recognises that the EDA has made significant progress on the training issue and likewise the EDA recognises that NATO is best placed to preparing aircraft to meet their CJSOR for the ISAF operation. This is due to obvious competencies within each organisation and there is a constant dialogue to ensure that our Members/Allies gain the maximum value from our work. Consequently, duplication is kept to an absolute minimum. The EDA helicopter Project Officer sits as an observer on the HIP Helicopter Task Force at the invitation of the Chair because of his operational experience and tactical training background. Also, many of the participants in the Hip TF are also EDA pMS.





Ex Azor 2010

References

EUROPEAN HELICOPTER TRAINING

The European Helicopter Training Programme was approved by Ministers of Defence on November 2009 to increase in the short-term the availability of helicopters for crisis management operations. The Programme started in 2010 and it consists of two live exercises per year, one focussing on individual training and one on interoperability and operational tactics. An annual symposium will take stock of lessons learned from operations and further shape the development of further exercises.



"In its first five years the Agency has already played a key role in improving the Member States' military capabilities, needed for the Common Security and Defence Policy. The EDA has been instrumental in identifying the gaps in our cooperation and to focus on areas where we can make real progress, such as helicopter crew training. This underlines the added value of the EDA with its integrated, pragmatic and output-oriented approach."

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Head of the European Defence Agency, February 2010



The first fundamental question is - what are the reasons for the lack of deployed helicopters? The answer to the first question is - we are suffering from a lack of helicopters in ESDP operations because very often the existing helicopters and the aircrews are not "fit for flight" in demanding operational scenarios."

Alexander Weis, EDA's Chief Executive, March 2009



The peculiar conditions of high temperature, dry terrain and of high mountains offered by the fields of manoeuvre where this exercise is going to take place constitute an important added value for the development of our operations. Likewise, the high level of participation that we expect turns the AZOR 2010 exercise into the most important multinational training activity – in desert and mountainous environments – ever held within the European Union.

Carmen Chacon, Spanish Minister of Defence, April 2010



Ex Azor 2010

Facts & figures



Country (organisation)	Personnel	Helicopters' type
Austria	17	3 AB 212
Belgium	30	3 A109
Czech Republic	55	2 Mi24 / 3 Mi17
Germany	1	n.a.
Spain	387	2 AS532 / 4 AS332 / 1 AB212 / 1 SEAKING
Italy	54	2 A129 / 2 NH90 / 2 EH101
Slovenia	23	2 AS532
Sweden	64	3 AS332 / 3 A109
UK	103	4 SEAKING / 3 LYNX
EDA	1	n.a.
TOTAL	735	40

