



MORE ABOUT THE EAG

The EAG is a unique organization that comprises the air components of the Belgian, French, German, Italian, The Netherlands, Spanish and United Kingdom Armed Forces. The aim of the EAG is to effectively contribute to the European defence by facilitating improved interoperability among the partner Air Forces to assist them with the delivery of Air Power across the spectrum of conflict. The EAG continues to maintain strong links with other multinational Agencies including NATO, the Movements Coordination Centre Europe, the European Union Military Staff, the European Defence Agency and the European Air Transport Centre.

The EAG is currently undertaking a variety of projects to facilitate interoperability and to integrate training in support of Air Operations, Command and Control, Logistics, CIS, Force Protection, RPAS activity and in cooperation with aeromedical best practice. One of the Group's key products has been the establishment of the interim European Personnel Recovery Centre (EPRC). EPRC staffs coordinate the Combined Joint Personnel Recovery Course, now in its eight year of activity, which provides focused training for military personnel to develop the key skills necessary to conduct personnel recovery operations. This year's course will be held at Florennes Airbase in Belgium. In addition, the EAG will be testing Force Protection elements during its biannual exercise, VOLCANEX. This exercise will be integrated into the United Kingdom's Joint Warrior Exercise and will be held in September – October 2014.

Brief history of the European Air Group

During the first Gulf war, the UK's Royal Air Force (RAF) and France's Armée de l'air (FAF) worked very closely together on a range of operational activities. Soon after this, the same two air forces found themselves working together again, on missions in support of United Nations forces in the former Yugoslavia. Further close cooperation followed in operations over Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The FAF and RAF realised that there was a need for an organisation to improve the inter-air force cooperation and to work on issues relating to interoperability. Thus it was at the Chartres Summit, on 18th November 1994, that the first announcement was made of the intention to create the Franco-British European Air Group (FBEAG). Even at that stage, it was foreseen that other European air forces might wish to join the organisation – so the word "European" was included in the title right from the beginning.

On 27 June 1995, France and the UK jointly declared the formal establishment of the FBEAG. Shortly afterwards, Air Commodore Wright RAF was appointed as the first Deputy Director of FBEAG, with Colonel Beck FAF as the first Chief of Staff and Group Captain Wood RAF as the first Vice COS. Then on the 20th September of that year, the

first meeting of the FBEAG Working Group (WG) was held at the FBEAG Headquarters (HQ), located at RAF High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, UK.

On the 13 October 1995, General André Nicolau was appointed as the first Director of the Group. Shortly afterwards, on 30 October, the FBEAG was formally inaugurated at a joint ceremony, by French President Jacques Chirac and British Prime Minister John Major. That same day, the FBEAG Steering Group (SG) held its inaugural meeting. The SG, in effect a committee comprising the Chiefs of the Air Staffs of each member nation as well as senior representatives of the ministries of Defence and Foreign Affairs, meets every year to make decisions regarding the Group's policies and future work.

During 1996, the FBEAG worked mainly on strengthening existing ties and cooperation between the FAF and the RAF. Italy became the first other nation to apply for membership, and in early 1997 Germany accepted "correspondent" status – that is, to send observers to EAG activities, but not to participate fully in decision-making. Soon afterwards, the Italian Air Force (ITAF) also appointed an observer.

At the November 1997 meeting of the Steering Group, it was decided to invite Belgium, the Netherlands and Spain to become "correspondent" members, along with Germany and Italy. Shortly afterwards, on 1 January 1998, the FBEAG formally changed its title to simply "European Air Group" (EAG).

Meanwhile, work proceeded on the construction of a new building at RAF High Wycombe, to house the headquarters of the EAG. The UK's Secretary of State for Defence, the Right Honourable George Robertson MP, formally opened the building on 16 June 1998. That same day, the EAG Steering Group held a meeting during which Italy announced her decision to become a full member. On 6 July 1998, agreement was reached between the French and British governments regarding the precise wording of the required Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) officially creating the Group, and the document was formally signed. In September of the same year, the first members of the ITAF joined the permanent staff of the EAG HQ.



On 16 June 1999, France and the UK signed a Protocol amending the EAG IGA permitting other nations to join the EAG. At the 1999 meeting of the EAG SG, held in Rome in July 1999, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands and Spain all confirmed their wish to transfer to full membership, and the EAG formally became a 7-nation organisation. Staff officers from Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands and Spain have since joined the EAG HQ.

The post of Director of the EAG is rotational through the seven nations for a two year period. The current Director of the EAG is Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Sir Andrew Pulford, Royal Air Force.

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