

The Supporting EART



The European Air Transport Command (EATC) at Eindhoven air base were the organisers for this year's air-air refueling competition, which took place during the *Frisian Flag* exercise at Leeuwarden airbase during first two weeks of April 2019. This supporting tanker exercise *European Air Refuelling Training* (EART) was conducted from Eindhoven.

In addition to the Dutch Air Force's McDonnell Douglas KDC-10, a German

Airbus A310 MRTT, an RAF Airbus A330 Voyager, a French Boeing C-135F and an USAF Boeing KC-135 participated this year, however the latter aircraft was only present at Eindhoven for a day, the remaining missions being flown from RAF Mildenhall in the United Kingdom.

EART's Exercise Director Colonel A Massucci gave an overview of the aerial tankers in Europe. Presently, European countries continue to rely heavily on the

USAF's capacity which became obvious during the *Unified Protector* operations over Libya in 2011. Since then, steps have been taken with, among other things, the joint purchase of A330 MRTT tankers, the first of which is expected at Eindhoven in early 2020. Ultimately, eight such aircraft will be purchased, some of which to be located at Eindhoven with others at Germany's Cologne-Bonn.

The French Air Force is also replacing its obsolescent C-135Fs, dating from the '60s, with