

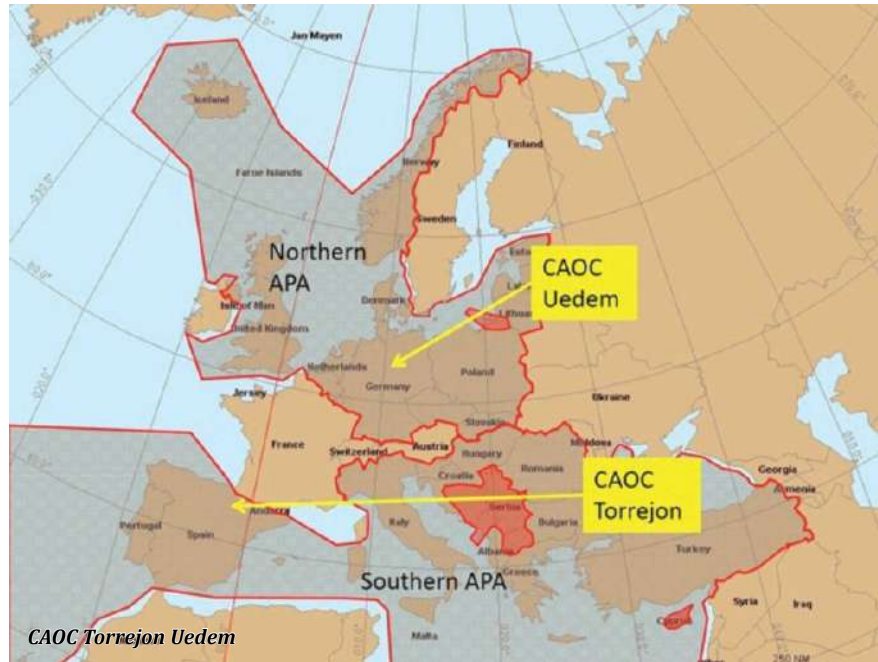
# Allied Air Command-Air Policing flight

On 14 January 2020, a media flight was organised by *NATO Allied Air Command Ramstein*, overflying several countries in northern Europe that sent up their QRA/Air Policing aircraft to intercept our Belgian Airbus A321.

This Belgian Air Force Airbus A321 began a tour that flew over various countries of Europe, taking off from Brussels/Melsbroek AB (Belgium) then flying via France, the United Kingdom, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Estonia, Latvia to Lithuania. At the Šiauliai Air Base in Lithuania, the Belgian Baltic Air Policing (BAP) detachment was visited after which the Airbus A321 flew back to Brussels via Poland and Germany.

During the flight, the Airbus was intercepted by various European QRA aircraft as under:

- Finland: 2 Boeing F/A-18 Hornets from an undisclosed air base in Finland
- France: 1 Dassault Rafale from *Base Aérienne St. Dizier*
- Poland: 2 Lockheed Martin F-16s from BAP Ąmari Air Base and 2 Lockheed Martin F-16s from an undisclosed air base in Poland
- United Kingdom: 1 Eurofighter, Typhoon from RAF Coningsby
- Denmark: 2 Lockheed Martin F-16s from Skrydstrup air base



Due to various reasons, the planned intercepts by QRA fighters from Air Forces of the Netherlands, Sweden and Germany were cancelled, owing to bad weather in Lithuania and Estonia, the intercept by the Belgian Baltic Air Policing F-16s was also cancelled.

After a peak in 2014-2015, the number of BAP intercepts has decreased to some 145 intercepts in 2018, but in 2019, were

scaled up to 200. Most QRA intercepts take place along the airways between the Russian area of St. Petersburg and Russian enclave Kaliningrad located between Lithuania and Poland; as the only way to travel to/from Kaliningrad is by sea or by air, without requesting visa and custom-clearances. Besides that, sometimes unidentified helicopters fly between Kaliningrad and some oil rigs at sea.



(photo: J V Boven)