



Ministerie van Defensie

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Dem Parlementarischen Staatssekretär
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Datum

20 December 2022

Subject: NATO's Alliance Future Surveillance & Control Programme

Onze referentie

BS2022029608

Uw referentie

In afschrift aan

I recently visited the province of Limburg, where I spoke with the Governor of Limburg and the mayors of the municipalities of Beekdaelen and Brunssum about, among other matters, Geilenkirchen Air Base, the Boeing 707-320B aircraft and the study into the future of the NATO Airborne Early Warning and Control Force (NAEW).

*Bij beantwoording datum,
onze referentie en onderwerp
vermelden.*

The area around the air base has been experiencing considerable nuisance from the very noisy aircraft for more than 40 years and those living in the area are looking forward to the time at which these obsolete aircraft are decommissioned. As the departure of the old aircraft is now forthcoming, the persons with whom I spoke are very interested in the actual time at which the old aircraft will be decommissioned, in what will replace them in the NAEW, and in the future of Geilenkirchen Air Base.

These are questions that are still being studied in the Alliance Future Surveillance and Control (AFS&C) Programme and, needless to say, I was therefore not yet able to provide clarity. However, I stated that I would write to my German counterpart regarding these questions, hence this letter. I put before you a number of issues, also on behalf of the province of Limburg and the municipalities of Beekdaelen and Brunssum.

First, during the discussion, I stressed that all of our partners are aware of the need to bring the AFS&C Programme to a successful conclusion rapidly and in any case on time. I understand that this also applies to Germany and I therefore assume that you concur.

Second, given the nuisance currently being experienced, it is understandable that those living in the area around the air base would like clarity on whether aircraft will continue to be part of the NAEW capability. This will probably be the case. The aircraft selected will therefore have to be significantly quieter. The Netherlands will closely monitor this aspect in the NATO study. My question to you is whether you agree with this starting point and whether the Dutch and German delegations can work together on this particular matter.

Third, the authorities in South Limburg are interested in the future of Geilenkirchen Air Base. This future of course depends on the choices made by the German government. During the discussion, the mayors of Beekdaelen and Brunssum stated that a future development of the airfield area in connection with the already existing nature conservation areas (Teverener Heide, Brunssummer Heide and Schinveldse Bossen) had already been discussed with neighbouring German municipalities a few years ago. The concept of a larger "Heidenatur Park" had been seen as a potentially good direction in this regard. While I understand their interest, I stated in the discussion that such choices are not yet at issue. I would like to take this opportunity to ask you to share further clarity and information on the matter with us – that is, with the province of Limburg, the municipalities of Beekdaelen and Brunssum and the Netherlands Ministry of Defence – as soon as you have them.

I look forward to your replies to my questions.

I will send a copy of this letter to the North Atlantic Council.

Christophe van der Maat
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