

Greece and Italy to protect Montenegrin airspace

GREECE AND Italy are to begin air policing Montenegrin airspace on a 15-day rotational basis.

Montenegro's defence minister, Predrag Boskovic, announced the plan on October 30, explaining that negotiations are still under way for airspace protection to be provided free of charge under an arrangement similar to that enjoyed by Albania since 2009.

Hellenic Air Force jets conducted a high-altitude test patrol over NATO's 29th and latest member state on October 17. Montenegro also hopes to send officers to the Hellenic Air Force Academy in Athens.

Work is meanwhile in progress to overhaul the structure of the Vojska Crne Gore (VCG, Armed Forces of Montenegro), and the Balkan nation's defence ministry plans to procure three utility helicopters capable of firefighting, search and rescue, emergency medical and evacuation missions.

The Vazduhoplovstvo Vojske Crne Gore (Montenegrin Air Force) operates from Golubovci air base at Podgorica International Airport. The small air arm maintains a mixed squadron equipped with 13 Yugoslav-made SA341/342 Gazelles, including five SOKO HN-45M Gazelle GAMA-2 (SA342L) anti-tank helicopters.

Currently no more than four aircraft are airworthy at any one time, but regular budget funds will be used for scheduled inspection and modernisation of the five GAMA-2s and two SOKO HO-42 Gazelle utility helicopters.

In total, €138m will be invested in upgrading Montenegro's military by 2025: €118m for equipment and €20m for infrastructure projects
Igor Bozinovski

Greek F-16V upgrade approved



Above: Hellenic Air Force F-16D Block 52+ serial 602 (99-1536) – from 340 Mira at Souda Bay – took part in Exercise Brilliant Arrow at Wittmund in Germany in September. Henk de Ridder

THE US State Department has approved a potential \$2.4bn upgrade package for Greece's F-16 fleet – the Defense Security Cooperation Agency notifying Congress of the sale on October 16.

The proposal would bring the Hellenic Air Force's existing 123-strong fleet of F-16C/Ds to F-16V standard and include up to 125 AN/APG-

83 active electronically scanned array (AESA) radars; a similar number of Modular Mission Computers (MMCs); Link 16 Multifunctional Information Distribution System – Joint Tactical Radio Systems (MIDS-JTRS); and LN260 embedded global navigation systems/inertial navigation systems.

Also included are up to 123 AN/APX-126 Advanced Identification Friend or Foe (AIFF) combined interrogator transponders, a Joint Mission Planning System (JMPS), one new F-16V simulator and the upgrade of two existing simulators. The Advanced Self-Protection Integrated Suite (ASPI) I suite on 26 aircraft would

meanwhile be updated to ASPI II configuration.

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras said the cost of the upgrade will be up to €1.1bn over the next ten years, suggesting only a portion of the fleet will be upgraded.

The Hellenic Air Force currently flies F-16s in Block 30, Block 50, Block 52+, and Block 52+ Advanced configurations.

UH-1Y Venom for Czech Republic

THE US State Department has approved the sale of UH-1Y utility helicopters to the Czech Republic, the Defense Security Cooperation Agency announcing the potential

\$575m Foreign Military Sale on October 23.

The Czech government has requested 12 UH-1Ys, 25 T700-GE-401C engines, 13 Honeywell embedded GPS/INS and 12 0.3in

(7.62mm) calibre M240 machine guns – plus the Brite STAR II forward-looking infrared system, AN/AAR-47 missile warning and laser detection systems, AN/

ALE-47 countermeasures dispensing systems and AN/APR-39 radar warning receivers. The package also includes helmet-mounted displays and additional GAU-17A and GAU-21 guns.



The first Slovakian C-27J, 1931/CSX62302, arrives at Malacky-Kuchyňa on October 24 after its delivery flight from Caselle. Ministerstvo Obrany SR/Ivan Kelemet

Slovakia's first C-27J delivered

SLOVAKIA HAS taken delivery of its first C-27J. The Spartan, 1931/CSX62302, one of two on order for the Vzdušných síl Ozbroyené sily Slovenskej Republiky (VVzS OS SR, Air Arm of

the Armed Forces of the Slovak Republic) arrived at Malacky-Kuchyňa air base on October 24.

Formal handover was due on October 31. As previously reported, the aircraft had made its

maiden flight from the factory at Turin-Caselle, Italy, on August 7 (see *First flight for Slovak Spartan*, October, p11).

The type will replace two An-26s which retired in 2016 and will be operated

by 1. Dopravná lektá (1st Transport Squadron) of the General Milana Rastislava Štefánika Transport Wing at Kuchyňa. Delivery of the second aircraft is scheduled for next year. **Dave Allport**