

Welcome Address by the Chief of the Hellenic Air Force General Staff, Lieutenant General Dimosthenis Grigoriadis, at the DV Day of the Ramstein Flag 24 Exercise

Minister of Defence,

Chief of Hellenic National Defense General Staff,

Ambassadors,

Distinguished guests,

NATO allies and partners,

It is my honor to welcome you all today to Andravida AFB at this significant event, the Distinguished Visitors Day of NATO's inaugural Ramstein Flag exercise. After two weeks of intensive, high-end training, it is truly a privilege to stand here and reflect on what we have achieved together and what this exercise represents for NATO, the Hellenic Air Force and our collective future.

As we are gathering here on this final day, we are not only marking the end of a successful exercise, but we are also celebrating the beginning of a new era in NATO's training and operational readiness. Over the past two weeks, Ramstein Flag 2024 has brought together more than 140 aircraft from 12 NATO allies, simulating real world scenarios and complex operational challenges that we may face in the future, bringing the renowned "train as you fight" concept to a live NATO event.

I am proud to say that during the course of this exercise, our aircraft flew an impressive 1200 sorties. This staggering number speaks to the scale and intensity of Ramstein Flag 2024. Each sortie represented a crucial opportunity for our pilots and aircrews to refine their skills, practice complex operations, and strengthen their ability to operate in a contested environment. The sheer volume of missions flown in such a short span of time reflects the incredible coordination, discipline, and resilience of everyone involved.

Considering the scale and complexity of this exercise, I should first and foremost acknowledge the exceptional teamwork that has taken place over these last two weeks. Each of the participating nation brought their best pilots, aircrews, and support staff to Ramstein Flag, and together, we

have accomplished something extraordinary. The rigorous training we have conducted, with multiple waves of aircraft taking to the skies daily, reflect the kind of high-pressure, real-world situations our forces may encounter. This exercise has tested our limits, pushed our capabilities, and most importantly, reinforced the strength of our interoperability as an Alliance.

As the host nation, Greece is incredibly proud to have supported this landmark event. The Hellenic Air Force has drawn on its extensive experience from conducting the annual international exercise INIOCHOS which has become a premier event for Air Forces around the world. The logistical, operational, and multinational coordination expertise we have gained through INIOCHOS enabled us to facilitate Ramstein Flag smoothly and efficiently. The infrastructure, training facilities and airspace of Greece have provided a perfect environment for such a high-caliber exercise.

At this point, I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the other branches of the Hellenic Armed Forces, the Army and Navy, as well as the Special Warfare Command, for their unwavering support throughout this exercise. The achievements of Ramstein Flag were made possible as a result of their vital contributions, including ground-based air and missile defense systems, naval units, helicopters and logistical support. Their assistance and expertise were instrumental in creating a realistic, multi-domain training environment, demonstrating the strength and synergy of joint operations within our defense forces.

In addition, I must recognize the tireless efforts and professionalism of the Hellenic Air Force personnel during both the planning and execution phases of Ramstein Flag. Your dedication, attention to detail, and operational expertise ensured that this exercise ran efficiently and achieved its objectives. From the aircrews to the ground personnel, planners, logisticians and support teams – each and every one of you played a crucial role in this success. Your hard work has reinforced Greece's reputation as a reliable and capable host nation for large-scale international exercises and I am deeply proud of everything you have accomplished.

To all men and women who have participated in Ramstein Flag 2024, I extend my deepest gratitude. The hard work, commitment and proficiency displayed by every single one of you have been remarkable. You have embraced the opportunity to train as we fight, to collaborate and to refine your skills in the face of complex and evolving challenges.

The outcome of this exercise is a direct result of your commitment to excellence and I commend each of you for your efforts.

Lastly, as the Chief of the Hellenic Air Force, I would like to take this opportunity to express my profound gratitude to General James B. Hecker, Commander of the Allied Air Command. General, thank you for trusting the Hellenic Air Force to serve as host nation of this groundbreaking exercise. Your confidence in our capabilities is a testament to the hard work, professionalism and operational readiness of my personnel. It has been a privilege to work closely with your team and we look forward to continuing this strong partnership in the future.

Distinguished guests,

As we look ahead, it is clear that Ramstein Flag is not just an exercise. It is a crucial investment in NATO's future readiness. The geopolitical landscape is ever-changing and new threats are emerging from state and non-state actors alike. In this environment, NATO's ability to adapt, innovate and remain united is more important than ever. Ramstein Flag 2024 has shown that we are ready to face these challenges, prepared to operate in contested and complex environments and capable of maintaining the peace and security of the Euro-Atlantic region.

Over the past two weeks, we have proven once again that when we train together, when we operate together and when we stand together, there is no challenge we cannot overcome. Ramstein Flag has set a new standard for future NATO exercises and it has reinforced the bonds of trust, cooperation and shared purpose that underpin the Alliance.

As we bring Ramstein Flag 2024 to the end, let me forward the lessons learned, the relationships we have strengthened, and the readiness we have sharpened. Together, we will continue to ensure that NATO remains the most capable and resilient Alliance in the world, ready to defend our values and our way of life.

Thank you.