



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
UNITED STATES ARMY EUROPE & AFRICA

[REDACTED]

20 June 2024

Hessischen Ministerium für Wirtschaft, Energie, Verkehr und Wohnen
Attn: Ms. Barth
Kaiser-Friedrich-Ring 75
65185 Wiesbaden

Dear Ms. Barth:

This letter is in reference to your request for information on the future development of air traffic movements at Wiesbaden Army Airfield (WAAF) over the course of the next 10 years.

We anticipate the overall air traffic at WAAF to increase by 30% compared to the numbers that have been provided to you by [REDACTED] for 2022 and parts of 2023 and includes the movements of aircraft stationed at WAAF (consignment movements). In absolute numbers, this would mean a potential increase to 13640 movements (US counting method). Meanwhile, we have the complete numbers for 2023, which are included in the attached document for your use.

The composition regarding the types of aircraft for this total number regarding will essentially stay the same for the foreseeable future, however, with a relatively higher number of aircraft not typically seen at WAAF and international flights outside regular hours of operation.

The basis for this projection is the continued increase in operational tempo directly related to the geo-political tension in Europe. In response to the reality of a resurgent and aggressive Russia, the United States, but also Germany, and other NATO Allies will increase their defense activities, to include military flights. WAAF has seen a significant increase already over the past six years concerning the number of international flights (for example, an increase by 77% from 2018 to 2023). These flights are in addition to our domestic and training flight movements. We have seen a particular increase in the number of flights arriving from outside of the Schengen Zone requiring *Bundespolizei* border control. We have also seen an increase of transient flights by large-frame aircraft and other aircraft not typically operated at WAAF, as well as increases in transient flights occurring outside of our normal hours of operation.

As you may have recently seen in the media, there are now efforts underway to establish a "NATO Security Assistance and Training – Ukraine" (NSATU) element here in Wiesbaden. Furthermore, talks are being held to bring a NATO LANDCOM Core Staff Element to Clay Kaserne. For WAAF, this type of added, new NATO capability means a projected further increase in flights arriving from outside the Schengen Zone (LANDCOM HQ is in Türkiye) and an expected increase in large-frame aircraft not typically seen at WAAF, to include C-130 and C-17 airframes.

For this reason, this headquarters has engaged with the German Federal Ministry of the Interior to designate WAAF as a port-of-entry for non-Schengen military flights or otherwise simplify the entry and exit to and from non-Schengen locations.

We would like to emphasize that the operations at WAAF are volatile and always depending on the security situation. For example, in the early 1980s, the Army started planning stationing additional helicopters to a total of almost 150 aircraft and initiated a coordination process with the Federal Ministry of Defense (FMoD). At the time, between 40 and 60 aircraft were stationed at WAAF. This plan led to two consecutive litigation actions, first by the State of Hesse and subsequently by the city of Wiesbaden. Both litigations were settled with the final outcome that the FRG agreed to work with US Forces towards a limitation of the stationing at WAAF to 60 aircraft with a maximum of 30,000 flight movements and to not permit more aircraft at WAAF. In turn, the State of Hesse and the city of Wiesbaden agreed to tolerate the operation of the airfield with a maximum of 60 aircraft and up to 30,000 flight movements. A respective consignment agreement was signed in 1996 and updated in 2003. The agreement includes the following language:

"Short, temporary increases in usage above the limits set out in paragraphs 1. and 2. above which are due to acute security requirements are possible with the concurrence of the Federal Ministry of Defense without modification of this agreement. In case of lasting higher security and threat conditions, the limits of the stationing and flight operations can be renegotiated between the user and the Federation (Federal Ministries of Defense and Finance) and increased by mutual consent – insofar as it is legally required, only after an air traffic permit procedure has been concluded and an executable change approval has been received. The Federal Republic will consult with the City of Wiesbaden before issuing approval or stating consent."

Based on the above, the Army could increase both, the number of aircraft stationed at WAAF today and the number of consignment movements by over 100% compared to the 2023 statistics under the existing agreements without having to go through any formal procedure.

That said, the arrival of new airframes or unforeseen new military requirements could at some point trigger the need for an air traffic permit for WAAF. An encroaching residential or mixed-use area such as Ostfeld would significantly impact any potential future permitting procedure in case of a significant change to the WAAF or its operation.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covers the signature and name of the sender.

G3 Aviation, US Army Europe and Africa
(USAREUR-AF)