



APEX INDIA 26-01: Italy and France United in Air Defense

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On March 4, along the border between Italian and French airspace, the bilateral exercise **APEX INDIA 26-01** took place, a joint training activity that confirmed the effectiveness of cooperation between the two countries in the Air Defense sector.

Planned by the Italian Air Force within the framework of bilateral agreements with France, the exercise aimed to test common [Air Defence](#) procedures and the coordinated response capability to non-military aerial threats. The simulated scenario was of the “**Renegade**” type, meaning the hostile use of a civilian aircraft as a potential threat.

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The Eurofighter Scramble and Handover with France

During the activity, a **P-180 from the 14th Wing**, taking off from Pratica di Mare as a target, simulated the loss of radio communications (**COMLOSS**) and a hostile route towards France. In response, the **National Air and Space Operations Centre (NASOC)** ordered the immediate **scramble** of a pair of **Eurofighter F-2000 from the 4th Wing of Grosseto**, in **Quick Reaction Alert (QRA)** configuration.

The Italian fighters operated under the control of the **D.A.M.I. Groups of Poggio Renatico (11th Group - PIOPPO) and Licola (22nd Group - BARCA)**, confirming full integration into the national and NATO Air Defense **Command and Control (C2)** chain.

The most significant moment of the exercise involved the **handover**, or the transfer of responsibility between the **Aerospace Operations Command (COA) of Poggio Renatico** and the **CAPCODA of Lyon Mont Verdun**. Operational continuity was then ensured by the intervention of a **French Rafale C**, which took charge of the target by applying **Transfer of Authority (TOA)** procedures.

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Interoperability, Security, and International Cooperation

The activity successfully verified both the effectiveness of **visual identification (VIS)** procedures and the interoperability of Italian and French radar systems. All operations were conducted in full compliance with civil air traffic safety regulations, with communications managed through dedicated military networks and under the supervision of the respective national operational authorities.

A central role was played by the **11th Group of Poggio Renatico** and the **22nd Group of Licola**, under the **Aerospace Control Brigade of the COA**, which through the **DAMI Unit (Integrated Missile Air Defense)** ensures detection and identification in national airspace **24 hours a day, 365 days a year**.

With exercises like **APEX INDIA 26-01**, the Italian Air Force confirms its commitment to protecting national skies and the Atlantic Alliance, while simultaneously strengthening international cooperation in the field of Air Policing and aerospace security.

News link: <https://www.aeronautica.difesa.it/news/difesa-aerea-integrata-esercitazione-bilaterale-italia-francia-apex-india-26-01/>