

# Open Skies Arms Control

## Russia Coming to Fly over Germany under the Open Skies Treaty

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[Translated from German to English]

Bonn / Geilenkirchen – As a member state of the "Open Skies" arms control treaty, inspectors from Russia will be arriving in Germany on Monday [April 18] to fly an observation mission over Germany. Russia will use their Open Skies Antonov AN-30B aircraft for the flight and according to the German news agency DAPD, the Russian An-30B will land in the military area of the Cologne-Bonn airport. From there the Russian inspectors, accompanied by German officers, will fly a 1,300 kilometer aerial route over German territory for the purpose of determining whether the Federal Republic is in compliance with disarmament agreements.

The Open Skies [OS] Treaty is a key element of cooperative international arms control treaty law. The OS treaty covers a geographical area reaching from Vancouver on the Canadian Pacific coast to Vladivostok in eastern Russia. Participating countries are all entitled to conduct reciprocal observation flights, taking photographs and using video, radar, and infrared equipment to collect imagery of any military installations and weapon systems on the territory of the host country. [Due to the resolution limits imposed by the treaty,] soldiers' faces, license plates and street signs remain obscured from the observers.

The German military, the Bundeswehr, regularly conducts Open Skies observation flights over Russia and other Eastern European countries according to a predetermined schedule.

The Bundeswehr Verification Center in Geilenkirchen, near Aachen, is responsible for implementing arms control agreements in Germany. It has a permanent staff of two hundred and fifty soldiers and civilian employees. In April, the Center celebrated its twentieth anniversary.

The department head for cooperative aerial observation missions, Captain Konrad Seemann, pointed out to DAPD that mutual aerial observation flights under the Open Skies Treaty are permitted under international law. Representatives of the country being observed are always onboard the Open Skies aircraft during each overflight. These representatives are responsible for ensuring that the agreed rules are followed.



### *Monitoring an Area Fifty Times Larger than Germany*

The entire area covered by the treaty [from Vancouver to Vladivostok] is fifty times larger than Germany. There are seven different types of Open Skies aircraft used by the participating states when conducting observation flights. Germany primarily uses the Swedish SAAB 340 aircraft for flying observation missions. This SAAB 340 is equipped with treaty-approved aerial cameras.

[Under other arms control treaties] there are inspections on land to verify the number of troops, tanks, guns, missiles and other weapons. While an observation flight [under the Open Skies Treaty] requires seventy two hours advance notice, for a ground inspection [under other treaties] thirty six hours advance notice is sufficient.

[Prior to the arrival of an inspection team under any arms control treaty,] the host country must be informed about the place of arrival [point of entry/exit] by the inspecting party. Within one hour after the inspection team's arrival, the team can announce which base they would like to inspect. Transportation to the base must then be provided by the host country.

### *Germany as a Role Model*

The commander of the Center for Verification, Brigadier General Jürgen Beyer, told DAPD that arms control inspection activities are usually "carried out in a very professional and calm manner" and are accomplished "without any complaints." No participating state would want to risk being "subject to political exclusion as a result of any substantiated attempts at deception," he said.

Beyer also highlighted the benefits of [participating in arms control treaties. These include] having access to the information collected during the fair and consistent implementation of arms control treaties. Benefits to Germany include being a respected partner and role model.

During each inspection, Germany makes every effort to ensure "objectivity and professionalism" and endeavors to maintain "continuity, reliability, and cooperation while also adapting to the inevitable unpredictability and elements of surprise that are an inherent part of all arms control inspection activities." Ultimately, it is this successful balance which enables the relationships between all parties to uphold a very sustainable level of trust.