



Hungary - Mi-17 (above)

Like many of the CK 'Hip' helicopters, the Hungarian Mi-17 from the 4 Szállító Helikopter Század/87 HE 'Bakony' at Vesprem-Szentkirályszabnya - still wearing its markings from SFOR - performed in the PSO role. A typical CK '02 peace support mission began with the insertion of special operation teams to secure a landing zone after aerial reconnaissance missions had located a refugee concentration. Meanwhile, close air support was given by aircraft like the Bulgarian Su-26, Romanian Lancer-A or Greek and Turkish F-16s. French, Romanian or Greek C-130 Hercules dropped a multinational paratroop force made up of Austrians, French, Moldovans and USMC soldiers to properly secure the area. Medical teams with supplies were flown in to tend to the wounded and prepare them for evacuation. Once a secure perimeter was established, Romanian medevac IAR-330s, accompanied by Hungarian and Slovakian Mi-17s in air transport configurations, picked up the refugees and flew them to a secure landing strip, where a Bulgarian An-26, Moldovan An-72 or Slovenian L-410 took them over and airlifted them out of the crisis area.



Latvia - Mi-8MTV (above)

The main aim of the Co-operative Key exercise cycle is to practise and refine interoperability in air and land operations in support of Peace Support Operations (PSO), to which many Partnership for Peace (PfP) member countries contribute air assets, as well as troops and observers. During CK '02 at Saint-Dizier the Latvian Gaisaspaki (Latvian Air Force) sent a single Let L-410 and a brand-new Mil Mi-8BMTV-1. This hoist-equipped helicopter is operated by 1. Aviācijas Eskadriļa at Lielvarde airbase, and mainly used for SAR missions along the Latvian coast.

Lithuania - Mi-8MTV (right)

During CK '02 another Baltic participant came in the form of a new Lithuanian Mi-8BMTV-1 coming from Antroji Aviacijos Baze (airbase no. 2), better known as Pajūstis, where it is operated by the Sraigtasparnių Eskadriklė (helicopter squadron).

