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## **Finmeccanica-Alenia Aermacchi: the M-346 starts its activity as “aggressor” for the Italian Air Force’s Eurofighter aircraft**

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A M-346 of the Italian Air Force’s 61st Air Wing (called T-346A by ItAF) has been temporarily deployed to Grosseto Air Base to start testing the aircraft’s capability as an "aggressor" in dissimilar combat training missions with the Eurofighter of the 20th Squadron OCU, Operational Conversion Unit, of the 4th Air Wing.

Starting next August the students of the Italian Air Force who are to fly on the combat aircraft will accomplish the training’s phase IV on the new M-346 - the final step before the passage to the operational airplanes. The capabilities and the characteristics of the M-346 offer the OCU a kind of training very different from the one provided so far.

The tests validated the ItAF’s M-346 in the role, among the ones envisaged, of “Red” to train future Eurofighter pilots in DACT (Dissimilar Air Combat Training) scenarios.

The two aircraft are perfectly interoperable: in the tests carried out the M-346 has operated at 100% in BVR (Beyond Visual Range) missions thanks to its own data-link, while the Eurofighter has used its own FPR-14 Autonomous Air-Combat Manoeuvring Instrumentation (AACMI) pod to simulate air-to-air “radar-to-radar” missions.

Thanks to the perfect interoperability, to the technological capabilities intrinsic in the two aircraft, and to the M-346 performance, ItAF can now assure a high-quality training by simulating various operational scenarios for its future fighter pilots and instructors.