



# Press release

Serbian Ministry of Defence

Royal Norwegian Embassy

IOM International Organization for Migration

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**For immediate release**

21/11/2006

Reference: IOM/NTF/2006/001

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## **NATO Trust Fund support to former military personnel**

*Belgrade, 21 November 2006* – NATO will spend €6 million over two years in Serbia to assist 1,850 redundant military personnel to reintegrate into productive civilian life.

During an information campaign held in October and November 2006 in Belgrade, Niš and Novi Sad, the NATO Trust Fund, funded by lead nation Norway and a dozen of other NATO member states, launched in July 2006 for a period of two years, was presented to 630 potential beneficiaries.

The NATO Trust Fund was designed in close cooperation with the Serbian Ministry of Defence and will underpin the ongoing efforts and activities in the framework of the Ministry of Defence's own downsizing project PRISMA. The International Organization for Migration IOM as the project executing agent will provide financial assistance through micro-credits and grants for setting up or joining micro, small and medium size enterprises, and offer support for employment and specialized training.

According to Maj.Gen. Slobodan Tadić, Chief of MoD Personnel Department, this project will make a significant contribution to faster employing of persons who are leaving the MoD and SAF as part of the reform process, thus speeding up their integration within the civilian structures. "This is of paramount importance taking into account the unemployment rate in Serbia", Tadic added.

"The NATO Trust Fund was established to support the ongoing defence reform in Serbia. This reform plays a vital role in the Euro-Atlantic integration process which has progressed very positively over the last couple of years. All NATO nations have been through painful reforms since the end of the Cold War. We know what is at stake and what it means to former military personnel who are made redundant. The Trust Fund will make the threshold for establishing a new career much lower than without it." said LtC Terje Haaverstad, Defence Attaché at the Royal Norwegian Embassy.

"IOM views defence personnel as a professional and extremely disciplined workforce, whose skills and knowledge need to be channelled and appropriately supported in order for them to re-enter mainstream society as productive civilians" said Ilse Schuster, NTF project manager, IOM Belgrade office, Mission in Serbia.

IOM has world-wide experience in the field of assisting in the process of downsizing military personnel and contributing to their reintegration into civilian life, and is successfully managing similar projects in Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina and Georgia.