

Destruction of Landmines Completed in the Balkans

A ceremony was held on 16 May 2007 to celebrate successful completion of the NATO Partnership for Peace project to destroy the complete stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines of both Serbia and Montenegro. The ceremony to mark this important event was organized at the Ministry of Defence complex at Topcider in Belgrade. Officials of the Serbian Ministry of Defence, of Montenegro and from NATO and donor nations attended the event.



From Left to Right: Jaroslaw Skonieczka, director EIPD/PASP, NATO; Dr Hannes Porias, CEI Central Coordinator, Austrian MFA; H.E. Robert McDougal, Ambassador of Canada to Serbia; H.E. (Ambassador) Bratislav Djordjevic, Assistant minister Serbia MFA; Colonel Jugoslav Radulovic, Director Technical Repair Bureau, Kragujevac Serbia

Serbia and Montenegro acceded to the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty in September 2003. The Trust Fund project was established in October 2004 to support implementation of the Ottawa Treaty obligations to destroy the declared stockpile of 1.3 million landmines. Approximately 40,000 of these mines were stored in Montenegro. Now completed, this project has resulted in the elimination of the last stockpiles of anti-personnel landmines in the Balkan region.

This was the second Trust Fund project to be undertaken in Serbia and Montenegro. Valued at 1.69 million euros, it was led by Canada and Austria. Financial contributions were also made by Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. The work was carried out by Serbian authorities at the defence ministry's Technical Repair Bureau in Kragujevac under a contract with the NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency (NAMSA).

The first NATO/PfP Trust Fund project in Serbia and Montenegro, completed in November 2003, destroyed more than 28,000 surplus small arms and light weapons. A further Trust Fund project, aimed at creating alternative livelihoods for redundant military personnel of the Serbian Armed Forces, launched in December 2005, is being led by Norway.