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PRESS INFORMATION

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Hungary chooses Gripen

Hungary has chosen Gripen, and is the first NATO country to do so. The MOU signed today entails Hungary leasing 14 Swedish Gripen aircraft over a 10-year period.

Sweden's Minister for Defence Björn von Sydow today signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with his Hungarian counterpart Dr János Szabó, which means that over 10 years, Hungary will lease 14 Gripen aircraft currently operational within the Swedish Air Force.

At the same time, Gripen International, owned jointly by Saab and BAE SYSTEMS, has negotiated an offset agreement connected to the Gripen contract. The offset agreement will be signed as early as December this year, and will afford Hungary industrial co-operation and economic development.

"This is a breakthrough in Europe and an important step for us on the international market," says Åke Svensson, President of Saab Aerospace in Linköping, Sweden, which will be modifying the aircraft to Hungarian specifications. Sweden is one of only five countries in the world that develop advanced military aviation systems. Gripen is the only fourth generation fighter currently in operational service. Hungary is the third country to choose the Gripen, after Sweden and South Africa.

Pilots and engineers will initially be trained in Sweden. Adjustments and modification to, among others, NATO standard will be carried out at Saab Aerospace in Linköping. The first Gripen aircraft will be delivered to Hungary in autumn 2004, and will be fully operational the following summer.

Saab is one of the world's leading high-technology companies, with its main operations focusing on defence, aviation and space. The group covers a broad spectrum of competence and capability in systems integration.

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