



**Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention  
Geneva, 8 – 9 June 2017**

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA  
ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

Thank you Mr./Ms. President/Coordinator.

On behalf of the delegation of Croatia, I would like to express our pleasure at participating in the work of this year's Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, while already looking forward to the 16<sup>th</sup> MSP in December in beautiful Vienna. I can assure you of my delegation's full support in your work in the following two days and furthermore commend you on your diligent work so far.

In 2016, victim assistance to mine/UXO victims/survivors was carried out in accordance with legal regulations by government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) under the coordinating role of the Government Office for Mine Action.

The Law on Employment of Disabled Persons has introduced the obligation of people with disabilities' employment quota for real sector (in addition to public sector people with disabilities' employment obligation quota, which is 3%), which means that all employers with at least 20 employees, depending on the total number of employees and activities performed, have to employ related number of people with disabilities.

The Ministry of War Veterans has introduced a psychosocial and medical support and assistance program for participants and victims of the Homeland War, the Second World War, as well as to the returnees from the peacekeeping missions. There are 21 psychosocial interdisciplinary centers in Croatia, out of which four are regional centers for psychological services that provide psychotherapeutic services, with main centre in Zagreb.

The same Ministry has also initiated a project called the *House of Croatian Veterans* which is designed as accommodation / rehabilitation institution that will permanently or temporarily reside Homeland War veterans, returnees from the peacekeeping missions, injured deminers and members of their families, civilian war victims, as well as other persons in need, depending on their health status and socio-economic situation. This project has been at work for several months already and five more similar centers are planned for opening in the near future. The *House of Croatian Veterans* has been financed by the EU funds.

The Office for Mine Action, as a national focal point for victim assistance, have been facing with a two-fold challenge: firstly, according to the Law on Mine Action, which was enacted in October 2015, *National Coordination Committee for Assisting Mine/UXO Victims/Survivors* has to be appointed by the Government decision which should ensure its “political weight” and also give the Office, as chair of this Committee, more leverage to implement set goals and secondly, “National Action Plan for Assisting Mine/UXO Victims/Survivors” is outdated (it was set for 2010-2014) and has to be updated, the fact which is directly tied to the new set-up of the Coordination Committee. Due to a certain administrative and institutional restructuring/repositioning in 2016, this has unfortunately not been realized yet and we are looking into ways to get these processes back in the political pipeline.

On the other hand, civil society organizations, such as *MineAid* and the Trust Fund “Croatia without Mines”, despite all challenges, have continued their support to persons affected by mines and their family members through psychosocial and economic projects throughout 2016, as extensively reported in our annual Article 7 Transparency Report.

Thank you.