



THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

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Submission of information for the Convention's website

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Matters related to Article 5 Implementation

The Civil Protection Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, as the coordinating and implementing body for mine action in the Republic of Croatia, would like to inform the Member States that, since the adoption of the Oslo Action Plan, the Republic of Croatia continues its efforts to comply, implement and improve its activities in accordance with actions contained in the stated document, in particular with regard to the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction.

In addition to the activities of the implementation of Article 5, based on Point III. of the Decision of the States Parties on the acceptance of the 2nd request for extension of the deadline for fulfilment of the obligations, the Republic of Croatia was obliged to submit a Revised Work Plan by 30 April 2020. In the first half of April 2020, the draft Plan was submitted for consultations to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit and was partially amended in line with their input, but the fact that the competent ministries have been involved in elevating the effects of the epidemic and the Zagreb earthquake, resulted in non-fulfilment. In the meantime, the Croatian Parliament, authorized for adopting the National Mine Action Program on which the Revised Work Plan is based, was dissolved. Nevertheless, the adoption of the Revised Work Plan by the Minister of the Interior is expected.

In this way it is reported that the draft of the above stated document prepared by the Civil Protection Directorate of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia, in cooperation with the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia, is harmonized with the proposal of the National Mine Action Program of the Republic of Croatia for the period of 2020-2026. The vision set by the Plan is the Republic of Croatia without the mine threat by 1st March 2026, enabling a safe life for all its citizens, more balanced and faster economic development and environmental protection in the entire state territory, where mine victims, integrated into society, will be able to fully exercise their rights, by achieving the established objectives of the Convention.

In addition to destroying antipersonnel mines, i.e. performing surveys and clearance of suspected hazardous areas, as the primary goal of the Plan, in accordance with the guidelines of the Oslo Action Plan, the Plan also contains other components of mine action, marked as secondary goals of the Plan - international cooperation and assistance, mine victims assistance, mine risk education, maintenance of fully destroyed stockpiles and surveillance of retained antipersonnel mines, persistence in ensuring full universalization and implementation of the Convention, and promotion of best practices for the implementation of the Convention.

In summary, the Plan envisages completely clearing the SHA of explosive remnants of war in the period from 2020 to 2025. At the time of preparation of this document, the SHA covers 309.7 km², in 8 counties and 53 cities / municipalities. Furthermore, the SHA of military sites and / or buildings covers 31.4 km². The Plan envisages the acceleration of the current dynamics of exclusion from the SHA of military sites / buildings, in accordance with the Law on Mine Action. 98.6% of the SHA in the Republic of Croatia is covered by forests, 1.1% by agricultural land and 0.3% by other types of land. It is assumed, according to available minefield records, that the SHA is contaminated with over 24,000

explosive remnants of war, especially in the areas of intense combat operations during the Homeland War.

It is estimated that in order to achieve the primary goal of the Plan, it is necessary to provide 299.6 million EUR, out of which 45.12% would come from the state budget, 13.17% from the Ministry of Agriculture and 41.71% from the European Union. The financial resources for the realization of the Plan are based on the projections of the state budget, as well as on the assumed unit price of demining operations with regard to the structure of the remaining SHA. Furthermore, the current dynamics of withdrawal of funds for demining from the European Union was also taken into account, which is expected to be maintained and even intensified, based on the conclusions of the thematic working groups for the development of the National Development Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, considering the fact that demining is a priority task within certain thematic working groups. Should there be any changes with regard to the planned financial sources, the Plan will be revised. It is emphasized that in the period since the adoption of the 2nd Request for Mine Action (primarily for demining), 94.4 million EUR were spent, of which 33% have been provided through EU structural funds. To date, the European Union has funded mine action in the Republic of Croatia with roughly 170.6 million EUR, which is slightly less than a quarter of the total financial resources spent.

In particular, an increase in the number of explosive remnants of war found during 2019 and the first half of 2020 during demining is reported. In the stated period, preliminary demining plans were made according to the priority criterion of the intensity of contamination in the area, i.e. on the basis of available minefield records. This resulted in the discovery of almost 5,700 mines and 4,400 unexploded ordnances, so a total of 10,100 pieces of explosive remnants of war were found and destroyed since 1st January 2019, which is many times more than in previous years. (e.g. in 2018, 2,388 ERWs were found and destroyed; 1,800 in 2017 and 3,800 in 2016).

Since December 2016, there have been no mine incidents with fatalities in the Republic of Croatia, which is the result of marking SMEs with more than 11,400 warning signs, continuous education of the population and target groups and established e-services of the Civil Protection Directorate (web portal showing SHA and a mobile application for smartphones that shows the SHA and warns the user of danger with an audio signal).

All data contained in the Revised Plan, which report on the progress and achievements may be publicly presented and used, while the data from this document relating to the future period are expected to be adopted by the Minister of the Interior, as head of the mine action authority, and then the Plan will be submitted to the States Parties to the Convention through the Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations Office in Geneva.