

**Presentation of *Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC)*
on Article 5 extension request by the Republic of Croatia**

**Standing Committee on Mine Clearance, Mine Risk Education and Mine Action
Technologies**

4 June 2008

1. The mine suspected area in Republic of Croatia on January 1, 2008 was 997 km². In five months this year total 12,5 km² of mined area was demined and returned to local community.

2. The remaining work that has to be done is to finish demining activities in Republic of Croatia on the 984,5 km². The rest of obligations under the Convention are fulfilled i.e. destruction of stockpiles of antipersonnel mines, definition of the MSA, marking of all MSA and distribution of maps to communities and population that live in the vicinity of mine suspected areas.

3. In line with the Article 5, paragraph 1, the Republic of Croatia requests an extension of deadline for the implementation of the Convention for 10 years. The main reasons for requesting the extension of the deadline are as follows:

- size of mine suspected area (MSA)

Although a lot has been done since the first estimates in 1996 until today in the sphere of reduction, defining and demining of mine suspected area (from 13.000 km² the area has been reduced to 997 km², i.e. 13 times), there is still a big part of the Republic of Croatia contaminated with mines. The biggest problem is non-existence of precise mine contamination data due to the nature of conflict itself during which mines were being placed without drafting minefield records or keeping any records at all. The records possessed by CROMAC cover ca. 100 km². However, there are enough indicators and information gathered by general survey for the remaining part confirming the doubt in the existence of mine danger, but for which there are no records of any kind. That primarily refers to the forest area of the Republic of Croatia participating with 57% in the total MSA structure. Considering the fact that the problem of mine contamination of areas important from the aspect of safety of citizens and return of displaced persons has been resolved in the previous period, in the forthcoming period CROMAC is going to put an emphasis on the development of methodologies enabling better quality analysis of mine contamination situation on the area.

- available financial resources

In the period 1998-2007 i.e. at the time of economic recovery of the Republic of Croatia, when considerable funds were invested into reconstruction of devastated economy, infrastructure and housing units, the total of 328.8 million € were invested into demining operations. Further trend of increase of funds for demining is observable from the Proposal of the Croatia's State Budget Plan for the period 2008-2010. According to stated projection, in the next three years, from current 22.5 million € the demining funds will be increase to 33.0 million € in 2010. The considerable increase is also expected in the following years. The Republic of Croatia is considering some additional options for ensuring funds via World Bank loans, loans of commercial banks or increased allocations of public companies facing the biggest mine problem (Croatian Forests, Croatian Waters). Apart from domestic funding sources, the Republic of Croatia keeps counting on continuation of co-operation with numerous donors for the purpose of solving the problem, which directly reflects to the safety of people and socio-economic recovery of war-destroyed areas. Considering the fact that the Republic of Croatia is currently in the process of acceding the European Union, funds of certain European Commission pre-accession funds intended for development projects are already being used, out of which only one part is meant for demining as

prerequisite of development projects realization. Only in the last 3 years, there have been 6.5 million € worth grant contracts signed with the European Commission. Parallel with resolving the projects relevant for economic development and safety of citizens of the Republic of Croatia, gradual loss of interest in demining is expected upon 2014, primarily of donors and investors after that. It is to be expected that the State Budget of the Republic of Croatia and the company "Croatian Forests" will be the only funding sources in the period 2015-2019 with occasional financing on behalf of private investors for the projects whose realization is dependent of demining.

- demining capacities

Demining capacities in the Republic of Croatia are well developed. According to our estimates, the value of investments into training of deminers and their equipping, together with acquired material and technical means, comes to ca. 30.0 million €. In line with the Demining Plan for the period 2009-2019, the biggest volume of demining operations conducted will be up to 2014. After that, we can expect decrease of capacities due to the decrease of financial resources available. We will then have to find alternative capacities (State owned demining company, Croatian Army) for the completion of the humanitarian demining programme in the Republic of Croatia i.e. fulfilment of commitments from the Convention.

For all the above-mentioned reasons, we believe the requested deadline of 10 years to be justified and that the Republic of Croatia will be able to fulfil its commitments undertaken by signing the Convention in the stated period.

4. Republic of Croatia is requesting extension for 10 years because of afore mentioned reasons.

5. The plan of Republic of Croatia in the period from 2009-2019 is as follows:

- with demining activities release 410 km² of mine suspected area,
- with technical survey release 377 km² of mine suspected area, and
- with general survey reduce 210 km² of mine suspected area.

6. More than 57% of total mine suspected area is forest and thus it is one of our priorities to develop the new methodologies for area reduction in forest areas after completion of general survey revision. The second task is to implement technical survey according to the IMAS and accordingly change Croatian legislation.

7. According to our analysis some 740 mil. € is needed for implementation of the requested extension of Convention out of which 660 for demining works. Majority of funds will be secured from State budget and from public and private companies (Croatian Forest, Croatian Waters etc.). We are also trying to use as much as possible pre-accession funds of European Commission for development programmes. Croatia is in final phase of using the World Bank loan for socio-economic recovery of the area of special state care from which 15,5 mil. € is for demining activities. Republic of Croatia is also counting on the support of donor community to be able to fulfil our obligation.

8. As it is said before, introduction of technical survey according to IMAS is one of the most important practical change that will require changes in Croatian legislation (Law on Humanitarian Demining, and related regulations). Because of increase of demining and technical survey activities CROMAC will strengthen its QA and QC capacities by internal reorganisation so that there will not be increase in total number of employees of CROMAC.