



16th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Vienna, 18 – 21 December 2017

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ON MINE CLEARANCE**

Thank you Chairperson.

While thanking the Committee on Article 5 Implementation for the preliminary observations on Croatia and since we already had the opportunity to elaborate in detail on our efforts regarding Article 5 implementation at this year's Intersessional Meetings and in Article 7 Report, we would like to provide only a brief update.

Mine Clearance in 2017

In the first 11 months of 2017 (1 January – 30 November 2017) mine suspected area (MSA) in the Republic of Croatia has been reduced by 43.87 km² through implementation of demining, technical survey, non-technical survey and supplementary non-technical survey activities, which amounts to 75% of realization of the Annual Mine Action Plan for 2017.

The MSA currently amounts to 413.7 km² which stretches through 9 counties and 60 towns and municipalities. The entire MSA is clearly and visibly marked with 13.520 mine danger signs and according to available mine records, contaminated with more than 39.000 mines. The structure of the MSA is 93% forest areas and 7% agricultural land.

The Annual Mine Action Plan for 2017 again foresees, as a continuance of 2015 and 2016 financial trends, a high share of financing from the European Union funds, with over 60% of total funding. The overall funding was significantly increased through the absorption of EU funds for financing mine clearance activities where those serve as a precondition for the implementation of development projects. Croatia will therefore continue to apply for the EU funds with projects for integrated development and rehabilitation of the war affected areas, especially these where the mine clearance is precondition for the future development projects.

When we take a look at the issue of mine action financing in Croatia from the historical perspective, total investments in demining activities from 1998 to 2016 from all sources (State Budget; World Bank loans; public and private investors; donations) were 680 million €.

Mine Incidents

- While in 2016 we recorded 5 mine incidents involving 7 demining staff, which was an increase in casualties in comparison to 2015, so far in 2017 there haven't been any mine-related incidents.
- Worth noting is the fact that there was no civilian mine victims since 2013 and no child mine victims since 2004.

Mr. President,

Croatia is well aware of the fact that full compliance with Article 5 obligations is of key importance, not only for the credibility of this Convention but also for the credibility of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) as such. In the spirit of the letter of the APMBC, we would like to inform this distinguished Meeting that we will be submitting a request for extension of our mine clearance deadline, currently set for 1st March 2019. The work on the request is already well underway and we intend to submit the document in accordance with the established procedure and in a timely manner. In the course of this we will engage actively with the Committee on Article 5 Implementation, the ISU and all other interested stakeholders in order to ensure substantiality, inclusiveness and transparency of the process. Through these efforts we intend to provide our fellow States Parties with the timely and realistic information on Croatia's state of compliance regarding Article 5 obligations.

Thank you.