



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS OFFICE AND
OTHER INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
G E N E V A**

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva presents its compliments to the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit.

The Republic of Croatia has the honour to officially submit the Clarifications by the Republic of Croatia on matters concerning Croatia's 2nd Request for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in mined areas.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the United Nations Office and other International Organizations in Geneva avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit, the assurances of its highest consideration. *VRM*



Geneva, 21 June 2018

**To the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation
c/o Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention Implementation Support Unit**

Committee on Article 5 Implementation
Matters concerning Croatia's 2nd Request for Extension

Clarifications by the Republic of Croatia

1. The 7-year extension that Croatia is requesting is a result of thorough analysis of the system, which was conducted through the interaction and by direct involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the Croatian mine action system. Moreover, it was additionally verified by the Croatian Government, which adopted the text of the 2nd Request thus giving it much needed political weight. It is therefore our firm belief that the Request as such represents a reasonable balance between the technical and expert concerns (which are founded on the 20 years of mine action in Croatia, strong and dedicated national ownership and acknowledgment of everyday realities on the ground – the safety of our deminers and the quality of clearance activities, which guarantee that the areas that are returned to the citizens / communities are completely safe, are among the most important factors) and political aspiration and commitment to a mine-free world by 2025. The synergies created within the mine action system and the positive momentum that has been built around the political decision to finally complete mine clearance in Croatia, are the key factors that will ensure that all actual field work is basically finished until the end of 2025, leaving us with only administrative (paperwork) issues to be settled in the first three months of 2026.
2. Over the past 20 years of conducting demining activities and clearance of all agricultural area and other uncategorized area in 2018, the remaining HA according to the categorization is mostly forest (89.7%), which is expected to significantly reduce the use of demining machines, especially medium and heavy ones. Thus, the use of demining machines will be limited to small, mobile machines that can be more easily transported and more efficiently used in such areas. By reducing use of mechanical demining, the proportion of manual method will increase, and that will reduce the safety of deminers. It will also reduce productivity and increase the cost of demining and technical survey. Under these conditions, the use of mine detection dogs will have a significant role in demining, especially in the technical survey.

In accordance with the above-mentioned facts, the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) is currently analyzing the possibilities of using dogs in forests on mountain terrain and in systematic technical surveys of such areas, specifically regarding hard terrain and weather conditions (soil, vegetation, ground slope, transport) and having in mind the fact that combat activities were conducted in these areas. Through this analysis, we will cover the existing experience of using mine detection dogs on similar terrain. Special attention will be given to the methodology of using mine detection dogs developed by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA).

In addition, we expect that certain answers to this issue will be given through the new IMAS 09.40, which is in the final phase.

3. In our Request, annual progress made by non-technical and technical survey, as well as the square mileage of the cleared area, is shown on pages 13 and 14. In order to have a

better insight we have enclosed a table with annual progress made by technical and non-technical survey (separately), shown in square meters.

4. All planned actions (demining, non-technical and technical survey), specified in our Request, will be carried out in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that Croatia developed in line with the IMAS while respecting our experience and specificities, and also in accordance with the Act on Mine Action (and related by-laws).

In its Request, Croatia indicates a plan to process 133.9 square kilometers of the remaining challenge through survey methods. The fact is that the Hazardous Area (HA)¹ in the Republic of Croatia is well defined; however, due to certain limiting factors of collecting new data by non-technical survey, it is impossible to precisely define the size of the area that will be reduced by non-technical survey.

The size of the area reduced by the non-technical survey will be the result of an analysis after the technical survey and demining activities are conducted, by comparing results from the field with the existing data in the CROMAC Mine Information System (MIS). As stated in our Request, the CROMAC will insist on the unified and integrated implementation of the non-technical and targeted technical surveys.

The implementation phases:

Phase I - demining of the defined - reconstructed known minefields and their security zones (demining of CHA), as well as the remaining identified mined areas based on the collected evidence and non-technical and technical surveys of the remaining SHA

Phase II - analysis of the demining, non-technical and technical survey results

Phase III - demining of the newly established mined areas based on the results of the non-technical and primarily technical survey or exclusion from the SHA

5. Demining and survey capacities in the Republic of Croatia can follow the realization of this Request, because in the last ten years they were professionally prepared and trained, and have acquired significant experience (national and international). And, unlike ten years ago, Croatia now has enough mine action capacities for completion of the clearance of the entire HA i.e. fulfilment of commitments from the Convention. In the last two years specifically, the CROMAC has strengthened its capacities by employing and recruiting significant number of experienced staff, especially in the field of Quality Control and Survey Operations.
6. During the first extension period, new areas have been included in HA (surface size 91.3 square kilometers). New discoveries and inclusions of the surface occurred through discovery of new minefields during demining operations, non-technical survey of the SHA and through interaction with civilians who approached us with new information and documents etc. We do not expect significant inclusion of the surfaces in HA in the coming period, at least not in the size that would have impact on the planned realization.

¹ HA includes Confirmed Hazardous Area (CHA) and Suspected Hazardous Area (SHA).

7. As we indicated in our Request, in the last few years steady funding from different pre-accession European Union (EU) funds exceeded funding from the State Budget (almost 60% of financial resources are from the EU funds) and due to the fact that the CROMAC is already in the final phase of conducting new projects (as a technical advisor and/or partner in project), also funded from the ESI funds (Structural and Cohesion funds, Cross-border Cooperation fund, etc.), we are confident that we can utilize the EU funds as planned.

Project “Naturavita”, which will tackle the HA in the Osječko-baranjska County on the territory of the Nature Park “Kopački rit” and forest area along the Drava River, totals €49.9 million out of which €35 million is dedicated to demining. The project is now starting and a public tender for demining operations was published in May 2018.

Also, based on the abovementioned project, the CROMAC in cooperation with the Croatian Forests has begun drafting a project of demining an area in Ličko-senjska County, which is a part of Natura 2000. The project is titled „Fearless Velebit“ and covers 16.5 square kilometers of protected land and forest. The project value is estimated at €33 million and the start of implementation is scheduled for April 2019.

In the Financial perspective 2021-2027 prepared by the European Commission (EC), (Croatia is a member of the working group for preparation of this financial perspective), demining will be kept as a priority, which gives us certainty in fulfilling our plan as indicated in the Request.

8. Regarding the request for a more detailed information about the HA under the MoD’s authority, we can inform that the said data are classified as confidential thus we are not able to provide more information.
9. In Croatia’s National Mine Action Program (NMAP) surfaces are expressed in square kilometers, and based on this, we have shown remaining challenges and progress made in square kilometers. Surfaces are expressed in square meters only when we are sure in the data accuracy.
10. The Centre for Testing, Development and Training Ltd. (CTDT) was established in 2003 as the first institution in the Republic of Croatia which conducts research, development and education in the field of mine action.
Business activities are focused on the:
 - testing and certification of demining machines, mine detection dogs and handlers, and metal detectors
 - field testing and operational validation of technologies used for detection of mine contaminated areas and reduction of mine suspected areas
 - implementation of scientific projects training on the use of metal detectors
 - training of EOD officers,
 - various programs of assisting other mine contaminated countries in organizing and managing mine action activities.

Based on the guidelines of the NMAP, the CTDI participates in research and development of new methods and technologies for survey of mined areas and mine detection and introduces them into operative use. Training and education of personnel participating in humanitarian mine clearance in the Republic of Croatia is conducted by the Police Academy of the Ministry of Interior in accordance with the Act on Mine Action.

11. According to the Act on Mine Action (Article 6), the Croatian Parliament, at the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, passes the National Mine Action Program (NMAP). The proposed NMAP is drafted by the CROMAC, with the agreement of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, Transport and Infrastructure, the Ministry of Regional Development and EU funds, the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Environment and Energy, the Ministry of Tourism, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Ministry of Construction and Physical Planning.

The CROMAC has prepared NMAP draft proposal that is currently being reviewed by mine action experts/stakeholders. Final draft proposal will be sent to the Government which will propose it to the Croatian Parliament for adoption with expected deadline for adoption being the end of 2018.

12. Discrepancies – explanations:

- a) The incorrect sum, due to the reported square meters and square kilometers (shown in tables 1 and 2 – pages 13 and 14). Also, on page 50 (table 2) a technical error occurred while entering data in the table. Corrected tables are an integral part of this document.
- b) To the total planned land release in the period 2018-2026, the surfaces that are under the jurisdiction of the MoD were not included. MoD surfaces planned for demining total 32 square kilometers.

13. Last changes (or modifications) in organizational structure in the CROMAC have occurred in March 2018 (Scheme 2, page 23 of the Request) and they are in accordance with the planned activities and milestones in the following years. If deemed necessary, Croatia will modify and change its institutional structure and capacities, based on the future needs and requirements. At this moment in time, it is too early to precisely cite what extent of adjustments to the system this would entail.