

**Analysis of the request submitted by Croatia for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention**

**Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation  
(Chile, Colombia, the Netherlands, Switzerland)**

**20 September 2018**

1. Croatia ratified the Convention on 20 May 1998, and the Convention entered into force for Croatia on 1 March 1999. In its initial transparency report submitted on 3 September 1999 Croatia reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Croatia was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2009. Croatia, believing that it would be unable to do so by that date, submitted a request to the 2008 Ninth Meeting of the States Parties (9MSP) for a 10 year extension of its deadline, until 1 March 2019. The 9MSP agreed unanimously to grant the request.
2. In granting Croatia's request in 2008, the 9MSP noted that, even with a consistent and sizeable effort having been undertaken by Croatia going back even before entry into force of the Convention, Croatia faces a significant remaining challenge in order to fulfil its obligations under Article 5. The 9MSP also noted that, while the plan presented in Croatia's request is workable and ambitious, its success is contingent upon Croatia doubling its average annual contribution to demining and upon developing a methodology to address forested areas suspected to contain mines. The 9MSP further noted that, the plans contained in the request were comprehensive and complete, although the Meeting also noted that additional clarity could result from defining some key terms and using them consistently.
3. On 29 March 2018, Croatia submitted to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation a request for extension of its 1 March 2019 deadline. On 4 June 2018 the Committee wrote to Croatia to request additional clarification and information on the extension. On 21 June 2018, Croatia submitted to the Committee additional clarification in response to the Committee's questions. On 13 August the Committee once again wrote to Croatia to request additional clarification on the additional information submitted by Croatia. On 24 August 2018, Croatia submitted to the Committee additional clarification in response to the Committee's questions. The Committee noted with satisfaction that Croatia had submitted its request in a timely manner and had engaged in a cooperative dialogue with the Committee. Croatia's request is for 7 years, until 1 March 2026.
4. The request indicates that at the start of Croatia's first extension period, 1 March 2009, Croatia had a remaining challenge of 954,500,000 square metres of hazardous areas.
5. The request indicates that during the extension period, Croatia released a total of 614,061,397 square metres, including 232,298,606 square metres cancelled through non-technical survey, 41,969,790 square metres reduced through technical survey and 339,793,001 square metres cleared destroying 19,815 anti-personnel mines, 17,911 anti-tank mines and 47,894 items of unexploded ordnance. The request indicates that the Croatian Mine Action Centre's (CROMAC) database did not record geographically specific information on mines and explosive remnants of war (ERW) of war by counties until 2011.
6. The Committee noted the importance of Croatia continuing to report on its progress in a manner consistent with International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), disaggregating by area cancelled

through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey and addressed through clearance. The Committee wrote to Croatia regarding the consistent use of units of measurements and the disaggregation of areas in a manner consistent with IMAS. Croatia responded by indicating that the definition of Hazardous Area (HA), 'implies confirmed hazardous area and suspected hazardous area (CHA + SHA)'. The Committee further noted the importance of Croatia consistently providing information in a disaggregated manner (i.e., areas "known" (CHA) or "suspected" (SHA) to contain mines).

7. The request indicates that during the extension period new mined areas were discovered totalling 91.3 square kilometres. The Committee wrote to Croatia regarding the circumstances, which led to the discovery of new areas and if this type of discovery is foreseen in the future. Croatia responded that new areas were identified during demining operations, non-technical survey of SHA and through interaction with the local population. Croatia responded that they do not expect the identification of a significant amount of new areas in the future.
8. The request indicates the following, which in Croatia's view, acted as impeding circumstances during Croatia's initial extension request: (a) the significant size of new mined areas; (b) insufficient financial resources and capacities especially in quality control after the new Law on Mine Action enactment.
9. The request indicates a remaining challenge of 387.3 square kilometres, including 173.9 square kilometres of areas known to contain anti-personnel mines, including 32 square kilometres remaining to be addressed within the vicinity of military bases and facilities, and 213.4 square kilometres of area suspected to contain anti-personnel landmines throughout 8 counties. The request further indicates an overview of the remaining minefield records per county totals 1,675 minefield records in 8 counties containing 32,830 anti-personnel mines and 6,441 anti-tank mines. The Committee noted that Croatia could provide additional clarity regarding its remaining challenge by providing a list of the remaining confirmed hazardous areas and suspected hazardous areas in each county, with this list including the estimated size of each area, the status of each area (i.e., "known" or "suspected") and information on the geographic location of each area.
10. The Committee wrote to Croatia to request additional information concerning the remaining hazardous areas under the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence. Croatia responded by providing additional information on the type of facility but indicated that since part of the installations are classified it was unable to provide the same detail of information as in areas under the responsibility of civilian authorities.
11. The request indicates that anti-personnel mines continue to have humanitarian, socio-economic impacts in Croatia, including being located in 8 of 21 Croatian counties, impacting 11.3% of the population. Mined agricultural areas and forest areas represent a significant problem for the economy. According to the Croatian Forests Ltd. calculation, total loss because of mined agricultural areas is approximately €13.5 million. Additional losses come out of the inability to maintain and renew the existing forests. While Croatia has placed a priority on creating safe conditions for tourism, some subsectors continue to be affected, particularly hunting tourism, given that remaining HA account for nearly 45.5 square kilometres of national parks or nature reserves. The Committee noted that completion of Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in Croatia.
12. As noted, Croatia's request is for 7 years (until 1 March 2026) to fulfil Croatia's Article 5 obligations. The request indicates that operations will be completed by 31 December 2025 with

no land release or funding projected for 2026. The Committee wrote to Croatia noting that by finalising all operations and verification by 31 December 2025 Croatia would fulfil its Article 5 obligations in line with aspirations of the States Parties in the Maputo + 15 Declaration. Croatia responded that the time requested for the extension request is a result of thorough analysis, consultation with relevant stakeholders and was verified by the Croatian Government. Croatia further responded that all efforts and resources of the Croatian Mine action system already are and will continue to be aimed at finishing all actual field work (i.e. demining of all known mine fields) until the end of 2025.

13. The request indicates that during the extension period information will have to be gathered through non-technical survey for areas for which there are no records of any kind and that the majority (89.7%) of the remaining hazardous areas are located in forested areas for which there are no minefield records, and no methodologies developed for reducing such areas. The request indicates that under these conditions, a significant role in demining, and especially in technical survey, will be the use of mine detection dogs and the development of methods and techniques for the use of dogs for mine detection in forests on mountain terrain. The Committee also noted that Croatia may benefit from discussing its situation with other States Parties that have experience in clearing similar terrain and which face similar challenges. The Committee noted that such cooperation could be mutually beneficial, and could lead to improved clearance rates. In this regard, the Committee would welcome further information from Croatia on the application of mine detection dogs on mountainous terrain and the results of animal detection systems in these areas.
14. The request indicates that there are three key components for its work plan: i) demining of all known minefields, including areas within Ministry of Defence bases and facilities, ii) demining of all remaining area that are not in mine field records, and iii) areas to be reduced by survey methods. The request indicates that Croatia plans to address 173.9 square kilometres of known mine fields (CHA) through clearance, 133.9 square kilometres of SHA through survey methods, and 79.5 square kilometres of mine fields (CHA) not currently in mine field records through demining. The request indicates that Croatia will address a total of 54.4 square kilometres in 2019, 53.7 square kilometres in 2020, 55.5 square kilometres in 2021, 57.2 square kilometres in 2022, 58.6 square kilometres in 2023, 58.2 square kilometres in 2024, and 49.7 square kilometres in 2025.
15. In this regard, the Committee wrote to Croatia regarding minor discrepancies in figures shown in tables 1 and 2 – pages 13, 14 and 50. Croatia responded by providing corrected tables and additional information on the reported square metres and square kilometres.
16. The request indicates there are available financial resources, including annual allocations from Croatia's State Budget, national funding is also expected from the national public company 'Croatian Forests' to enable demining of contaminated areas within State forest as well as international financing from European Union (EU) funding streams. In addition Croatia indicated it now has the demining and survey capacities to clear all HAs and fulfil its commitment under the Convention. The request indicates that Croatia will require a total of €459,000,000 in funding towards completion of its Article 5 challenge. The request indicates that €240,000,000 would be allocated from the State Budget, €100,000,000 from EU/ESI funds, €70,000,000 from EU/Cross border cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, and €2,000,000 from donations. The request indicates that the only risk factor in funding this plan is inability to withdraw ESI funds as planned. The Committee noted the importance of Croatia keeping the Committee and the States Parties informed of any funding challenges it faces for the implementation of Article 5.

17. The Committee wrote to Croatia requesting additional information concerning the timeline for funding to be approved. Croatia responded that one project, 'Project Naturavita' is planned to take place in Osječko-baranjska County, with €35 million allocated for demining, with a public tender for demining operations published in May 2018. Croatia also responded that one further project has been drafted with a budget of €33 million for the area of Ličko-senjska County, covering 16.5 square kilometres of protected land and forest. The project is due to start April 2019. Croatia provided further information that in the financial perspective 2021-2027 prepared by the European Commission demining will be kept as priority, giving certainty in fulfilling the plan as given in the request.
18. The Committee noted that the request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including further detail on socio-economic implications of remaining contamination, further information on landmine victims and response to accidents undertaken by the Government of Croatia, additional detail on remaining financial considerations, information on current demining capacity, annexed maps and tables relating to land addressed during first extension period, as well as links to relevant references and literature pertaining to the request.
19. The Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Croatia submitting to the Committee updated detailed work plans every 2 years (i.e. by 30 April 2020 , 30 April 2022 and 30 April 2024) for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee noted that these work plans should contain an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines using terminology consistent with IMAS, annual projections of which areas and what area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organisation, matched to a revised detailed budget.
20. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the information provided in the request and subsequently in responses to the Committee's questions is comprehensive, complete and clear. The Committee further noted that the plan presented by Croatia is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. The Committee also noted that the plan is ambitious and that its success is based on significant allocations from State budgets and contingent upon stable international funding, retaining strong partnerships with international stakeholders and other matters. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Croatia reporting annually to the States Parties on the following:
  - (a) Progress of continuing land release relative to the commitments given in Croatia's annual work plan, disaggregated in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards, including identification of new mined areas, and their impact on annual targets as given in Croatia's work plan;
  - (b) Updated information on the full range of practical methods used to release land, in line with the latest land release standards, including the use of mechanical assets and animal detection systems in forested areas. Together with relevant information on the training of national mine personnel, operators, in new methodologies and quality control, with reference to relevant national standards;
  - (c) Updates regarding the review of Croatia's National Mine Action Strategy, (2009-2019) and updates on the implementation of strategy for the period of the extension request, (2019-2026);

(d) Updates regarding resource mobilisation efforts, including resources made available in the Croatian State Budget and external financing received to support implementation efforts, including European Union Structural and Cohesion funds, and Cross-border Cooperation funds;

(e) Updates regarding the structure of Croatia's mine action program, including existing and new organisational and institutional capacities to respond to residual contamination following completion.

21. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Croatia reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding the implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at intersessional meetings, Meeting of the States Parties and Review Conferences as well as through its Article 7 reports using the Guide for Reporting.