

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 President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties on behalf of the States Parties mandated to analyse requests for extensions

22 October 2008

1. Croatia ratified the Convention on 20 May 1998. 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 is obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2009. Croatia, believing that it will be unable to do so by that date submitted, on 2 June 2008, to the President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties (8MSP), a request for an extension of its deadline. Croatia's request is for 10 years (until 1 March 2019).
2. The request indicates that during the period 1996-1998 the United Nations Mine Action Centre (UNMAC) in Croatia originally reported that approximately 13,000 square kilometres of Croatian territory were suspected to contain mines. This was considered a gross overestimation of the actual amount of potentially dangerous areas. By the time Croatia submitted its initial transparency report on 3 September 1999, it was able to have reduced the original UNMAC estimate to a total of 5,980 square kilometres. This included the total area represented by 11,228 minefield records obtained by the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC). Potentially or known dangerous areas were located in 14 of Croatia's 21 counties.
3. The request indicates that efforts were undertaken since entry into force to continually acquire a better understanding of the extent of dangerous areas. As a result of general and technical surveys and systematic removal of the illogical data of potentially dangerous areas, in 2002 a total of 1,700 square kilometres were considered potentially dangerous. During 2003-2004, the entire territory of the Republic of Croatia was surveyed resulting in, by the end of 2004, a significantly better estimate of the total potential or known dangerous area of 1,174 square kilometres.
4. The request provides an annual accounting, by county, of area demined and reduced through general and technical survey. Between 1998 and 2007, more than 226 square kilometres were demined and between 1999 and 2007 over 583 square kilometres were released through general and technical survey. Between 1999 and 2007 26,570 anti-personnel mines, 19,860 anti-tank mines and 202,166 unexploded ordnance (UXO) were destroyed. Implementation is complete in 2 of the 14 counties in which Croatia had originally recorded dangerous areas.
5. The request indicates that as of the end of 2007, 997 square kilometres of area known or suspected to contain mines remained to be addressed. The request further indicates that this includes 3.24 square kilometres of area around military barracks, training grounds, technical warehouses, radar stations and air fields. The States Parties mandated to analyse requests submitted under Article 5 of the Convention (hereafter referred to as the

“analyzing group”) noted that constant progress had been made by Croatia every year since entry into force.

6. As noted, Croatia’s request is for 10 years (until 1 March 2019). The request indicates that the amount of time requested is based on (a) the fact that while a great deal has been accomplished a large amount of the territory of Croatia remains potentially hazardous combined with the need to develop methodologies to address the most significant type of suspected hazardous area in Croatia – forested areas; (b) a realistic projection of available financial resources, and (c) a projection of the amount of demining capacity that can be acquired in accordance with projections of financial resources.
7. The request indicates the following as impeding circumstances: (a) the size of the initial mine problem and need for State funds for general reconstruction of Croatia’s infrastructure after the war; (b) Croatia’s minefields were not planted in accordance with principles and standard procedures (marking system and keeping minefield records); (c) Croatian minefields are uneven and cluttered with obstacles due to the nature of the terrain (mountains, rocky terrains, river banks were used as confrontation lines during the war operations); (d) There is heavy vegetation in many suspected areas; and, (e) UXO destruction is an integral part of the effort to address the problems caused by the totality of explosive remnants of war and thus mine situation and explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) also requires funding and capacities.
8. The request contains tables indicating how much area will be addressed in each year of the request – according to category of area and type of activity (i.e., demining, technical survey and general survey). It is projected that 410 square kilometres will be addressed through demining (including an average of approximately 53 square kilometres per year during the first five years of the extension period), 377 square kilometres through technical survey and 210 through general survey. The request contains a glossary that defines these terms. The request indicates that for forested areas, which account for 57 percent of the remaining suspect hazardous area, new danger assessment methods will be elaborated and standard operating procedures prepared. The analysing group noted that Croatia was focused on addressing the challenges posed by forested areas that are potentially dangerous given that ensuring progress is made in these areas will be the most significant factor, according to size, affecting implementation within the extension period. The analysing group further noted that the projected annual demining rates are significantly greater than recent experience.
9. The request indicates that Croatia intends to have “completely demined” houses by 2010, “completely removed (the) mine threat” from infrastructure by 2011, “completely removed (the) mine threat” from agricultural areas by 2013, “remove (the) mine threat” from forest areas by 2018, “completely remove (the) mine threat” from meadows and pastures by 2018, “demine” areas important for fire protection and parts of national and nature parks by 2017, and “demine” swamps, river banks and other unclassified area. The analysing group noted that ambiguity exists regarding the goals expressed in the request given the variety of terms used (the definitions of which may not be consistent with the fulfilment of Article 5 obligations) and the inconsistent use of the term “completely”. The analysing group further noted that the goals contained in the request do not cover the 3.24 square kilometres of area around military barracks, training grounds, technical warehouses, radar stations and air fields.

10. The request indicates that land is released as a result of general survey, technical survey and demining, with demining undertaken through manual methods and with the use of dogs and machines. The request further indicates the criteria used for cancelling a suspected area. The request also includes a summary of the methods used to control and assure quality. In addition, the request indicates that Croatia uses a “market model” for demining with 27 commercial enterprises and one non-governmental organisation accredited for and currently undertaking demining operations, together employing 610 deminers and making use of 69 mine detection dogs, 45 demining machines and 653 metal detectors.
11. The request indicates that Croatia will require a total of € 740 million to complete implementation from 2008 until the end of the extension period, including €660 million for demining and technical survey, €60 million for general survey and €20 million for “geodetic measurement”. The request further indicates that between 1998 and 2007 the Croatian State Budget has been the most important source of funding for demining, providing 56 percent of all revenues totalling €183.8 million. During this period Croatian public and private investors provided 19 percent of revenues (with most of this having been provided between 2002 and 2007), donors provided 17 percent and 8 percent was obtained through the World Bank (with all of this having been obtained between 1998 and 2003).
12. The request indicates that a commitment of State Budget resources totalling €458 million (or an average of €45.8 million per year) for Article 5 implementation between 2009 and 2018. The request further indicates that between 2009 and 2018 a total of €132 million will be obtained from national investors, between 2009 and 2013 €25 million will be obtained from the World Bank, between 2009 and 2015 €30 million will be obtained from donors, and between 2009 and 2015 €40 million will be obtained from European Union funds. The analysing group noted that expectations for donor funding at the beginning of the extension period are generally consistent with recent experience in acquiring donor funds. The analysing group also highlighted Croatia’s commitment to doubling the average annual amount of State Budget resources to Article 5 implementation and to draw more extensively on funds from public and private companies in part to compensate for expected declines over time in external funding.
13. The request indicates that there have been significant socio-economic gains made since entry into force as a result of Article 5 implementation. Forty kilometres of road and railway bridges were demined, as were 200 kilometres necessary for a major road construction project, 350 kilometres of state and local roads, 200 kilometres of railway lines, 21 railway stations, and more than 300 kilometres of channels and dikes. Humanitarian demining has resulted in a positive impact on the tourism sector, energy distribution and forestry.
14. The request further indicates that 834,000 individuals continue to live in 112 towns that Croatia considers affected by the presence or suspected presence of mines. The request contains a table breaking down, by county, the 997 square kilometres of area according to houses and yards, infrastructure, agricultural areas, forest fire fighting roads / lines, meadows and pastures, and underbrush. The request indicates that forested area represents 57 percent of the remaining area to be addressed. The request also indicates that while annual casualties rates have been reduced since entry into force, individuals continue to be killed or injured by mines. The analysing group noted that completion of

Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period will ensure that Croatia gets as close as is reasonably possible to a no new victims and has the potential of making further significant contributions to the socio-economic development of Croatia.

15. The request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request including a variety of tables illustrating the status of work, on work that remains to be done, on demining capacities and on victims. Croatia has also made available an atlas of all mine suspected areas in Croatia. In addition, Croatia lists a series of supporting documents that may be of interest to States Parties.
16. The analysing group 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 analysing group further noted that, while the plan presented 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. As mentioned above, the analysing group noted the plans contained in the request were comprehensive and complete, although it also noted that additional clarity could result from defining some key terms, using them consistently, and incorporating, into the goals for the extension period, clearance of the 3.24 square kilometres of area around military barracks, training grounds, technical warehouses, radar stations and air fields.¹
17. The analysing group noted that the accounting of annual milestones of progress to be achieved would greatly assist both Croatia and all States Parties in assessing progress in implementation during the extension period. In this regard, the analyzing group further noted that both could benefit if Croatia provided updates relative to this accounting of areas at meetings of the Standing Committees, at the Second Review Conference and at Meetings of the States Parties.

¹ In response to an invitation by the President of the Eighth Meeting of the States Parties to comment on a draft analysis, Croatia indicated that the 3.24 square kilometers in question are included in the 997 square kilometers of total area under consideration with this 3.24 square kilometers incorporated into other categories of land, for example, forest, karst, meadows etc.