



**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINE ACTION CENTRE**

**ANTI - PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION
THE FIFTEENTH MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES**

UPDATE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION

Santiago, Chile, 28 November – 1 December 2016

Madam President,

First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you and your country on a successfully organized 15 MSP and thank you for a warm and cordial hospitality.

The Republic of Serbia fully aligns itself with the EU statement delivered by the EU delegation on the first day of the 15 MSP.

The Republic of Serbia is a State Party of the Convention since 2004 and is fully committed to the implementation of its obligations under the Convention, and regularly submits its Annual Article 7 Reports.

The Republic of Serbia neither produces AP mines nor possesses the stockpiles of AP mines. Namely, the stockpiles of AP mines were destroyed in 2007, well before the 1st March 2014, Serbia's original deadline established under Article 5.

The Republic of Serbia fulfils its obligations related to clearance of mine contaminated area, too.

At the 13th Meeting of the States Parties of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction, which was held in the period 2-6 December 2013, Geneva, the Republic of Serbia was granted a 5 year extension of the deadline for fulfilment of its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, which is 1st March 2019. The remaining mine contamination in Municipalities of Bujanovac and Preševo, totalled around 3,500,000 sqm of land contaminated with groups of mines laid in accordance with no pattern and without any minefield records.

Since the 13th Meeting, clearance of the area of 270.616 sqm was completed in the Municipality of Preševo. After completing clearance operations in the Preševo Municipality, during which only UXO was discovered, as well as after a re-survey of cleared and surrounding suspected area, the Serbian Mine Action Centre excluded the surrounding mine suspected area from the category of mine suspected. Thus, in the Municipality of Preševo, according to available data, there is no more confirmed hazardous area, as well as mine suspected area.

Based on the results of a demining project in Bujanovac in 2012 when on a relatively large area (75,987 m²) a relatively small number of mines (4 AP mines) was discovered, as well as on the results of survey operations and subsequent statements of the local population, in 2015, in order

to achieve effectiveness and cost efficiency, the SMAC decided to reclassify the area initially categorized as confirmed hazardous area (defined as such according to then available relevant indicators) and suspected hazardous area into mine suspected hazardous area (around 3.000.000 sqm in the Municipality of Bujanovac) to be treated with an integrated approach that includes survey, manual demining, detection by mine detection dogs.

In 2015, the funds (100,000 EUR) for demining operations have been allocated from the Serbian State Budget for the first time.

SMAC secured with the U.S. Department of State's Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement to match these national funds. Provision of these matched funds enabled implementation of the SMAC project "An integrated approach to the mine risk land release in the territory of the Municipality of Bujanovac", which included survey, manual demining and detection by mine detection dogs. The project area totaled 1,179,000 sqm, of which 413,915 sqm was subjected to manual clearance in combination with detection by mine detection dogs, while the larger part of the area was land released as the area without confirmed mine risk. During the clearance 14 AP mines and 1 UXO were found and safely destroyed.

The remaining mine suspected hazardous area totals around 2,000,000 smq in the Municipality of Bujanovac. The whole area suspected to be contaminated with various types of mines has been visibly marked with bilingual warning signs, given that it is an area with mixed ethnic population.

In 2016, the funds for demining operations were allocated from the Serbian State Budget, which we planned to match with donor funds and use for the implementation of our demining projects. However, due to the fact that there were no available matching funds in 2016, our demining projects could not be implemented. Therefore, we requested our Government to allocate more funds for 2017 and hopefully, in addition to available donor funds in 2017, we will continue our demining operations in order to primarily provide safety of local population, safe exploitation of woods, safe use of road communications, environmental protection, as well as reduction of fire risks.

Please note that, in addition to mines, Serbia has to deal with clearance of areas contaminated with cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other UXO, since they also affect population and block substantial resources and hinder implementation of development and infrastructure.

Despite all these problems and financial restrictions resulting from economic difficulties the Republic of Serbia has been facing, we remain strongly committed to the accomplishment of a goal to make Serbia mine-free by 2019.

I thank you.