



17th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 26 – 30 November 2018

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

Thank you Madam Vice-President.

Croatia aligns itself with the EU Statement.

With regards to the observations made by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation and following our presentation about the 2nd Extension Request, we would like to highlight a couple of points.

Mine Clearance

- Brodsko-Posavska County has been declared free from mines at the ceremony held on 11th June 2018.
- The first part of the Swiss-funded project “Demining and Socio-Economic Integration” i.e. demining of heavily-mined Kotar forest¹ started on 6 August, 2018 and was finalized on 17 September, 2018. 1.74 km² of forest were demined and more than 3.500 mines and UXO were found. This is the highest number of mines/UXO that were found on a single mine-clearance area (mine field) in the 20 years of mine action program in Croatia.² The value of demining activities is 2.65 million CHF.
- Here it is important to emphasize that the umbrella Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Program (under which this project is implemented) is worth 45 million CHF and that the agreement was made between partners that all leftovers from other projects included in this Program will be streamlined into demining activities.
- EU-funded project “NATURAVITA” has started in September 2018 through which 25 km² of protected forest and forestland will be demined. The value of clearance activities is 34 million € which is the single largest amount of funds that Croatia has ever received from the EU for demining.

¹ The Kotar forest is one of the areas in Croatia with the highest number of post-war casualties (from 1996 to 2016, 16 mine incidents were registered, of which 10 were fatal and 6 were with serious injuries).

² At the height of clearance works, around 260 deminers from 26 companies were deployed on a daily basis.

- That said, hazardous area (HA) in 2018 has been reduced by 45 km² (mostly through demining) which means that the HA in Croatia currently stands at 366 km².

Mine Incidents and Mine Risk Education

- In 2017, for the first time since the beginning of the Homeland War in 1991, we have not recorded a single mine/UXO/ERW-related incident in the hazardous area.
- So far, in 2018 there have not been any mine-related incidents in the hazardous area.
- Worth noting is the fact that there was no civilian mine victims since 2014 and no child mine victims since 2004 in the hazardous area.
- These facts speak volumes about the importance and effectiveness of the systematic and continuous mine risk education (MRE) activities (besides, of course, the clearance of the mine-contaminated areas) which are annually conducted by a variety of GO³ and NGO⁴ stakeholders. For example, so far in 2018 approx. 20.000 persons received some form of MRE.

Thank you.

³ Croatian Mine Action Centre; Ministry of Interior; regional and municipal authorities

⁴ Croatian Red Cross; Association “Croatia helps”; Croatian Hunting Federation; Disability Volleyball Club “Zagreb”; Association „Bembo“