



**REPUBLIC OF SERBIA
MINE ACTION CENTRE**

**ANTI - PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION
INTERSESSIONAL MEETINGS OF THE STATES PARTIES
UPDATE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION**

19-21 June 2023

Dear Mr President,

Distinguished delegates,

We would like first of all to extend our sincere appreciation and gratitude to the Colombia for their skillful presidency of the 20th MSP, as well as to Germany for their equally skillful presidency of the 21st MSP.

We thank the ISU, the UN Secretariat, and other stakeholders for the excellent work they have conducted in preparations for the Intersessional Meetings.

It's a pleasure and privilege to address the Intersessional Meetings and share the latest developments in Serbia mine action efforts.

The Republic of Serbia is strongly committed to the fulfilment of the Article 5 implementation obligations, as well as to the full implementation of its obligations from the AP Mine Ban Convention, which is shown by the fact that AP mines are no longer produced in Serbia and the stockpiled AP mines have been destroyed.

At the Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties (20MSP) to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Antipersonnel Mines and on their Destruction, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 21 to 25 November 2022, the Republic of Serbia was granted the request for an extension, until December 31, 2024. This would provide the possibility to complete non-technical survey of newly discovered mine suspected areas in the Bujanovac Municipality, which will take up to 1 year and will focus on the areas where fire forests occurred and explosions could be heard. By then, Serbia will get a clear picture of the remaining mine contamination and development of a detailed plan containing SHA and CHA will be enabled.

As of June 2023, in the Republic of Serbia the area suspected to contain groups of anti-personnel mines totals 390,300 square metres in the Municipality of Bujanovac, plus newly discovered mine suspected areas in the Bujanovac Municipality.

The project area totalling 390,300 square metres will be divided into three projects for which we hope to provide financial support through ITF by available donors and implement these projects in the forthcoming period.

In 2023, Serbian Government allocated 260,000 EUR for demining in Bujanovac. The funds were transferred to ITF to match it with available donor funds.

SMAC developed a non-technical survey project and submitted it to ITF, that will include 2 mixed Serb and Albanian survey teams of 3 surveyors each, who will be fully trained and equipped to conduct required tasks. These activities will be supervised and monitored by SMAC and in cooperation with the local authorities.

Simultaneously with survey activities, MRE activities will be conducted in all 59 villages of the Municipality of Bujanovac.

Mine suspected area has been marked in order to clearly and visually warn of mine danger, as well as to ban the entry of population into mine suspected area. Mine warning signs have been posted in the areas of possible access to mined areas (roads, paths and other areas where movement of people is expected).

Given that the population is multi-ethnic, the wording on the signs has been written in Serbian and Albanian.

Serbia is making efforts to solve the problems related to mines and other explosive remnants of war and the Government, within its modest possibilities, allocates funds for demining operations, but given the extent of the problem of mines and other explosive remnants of war, this is not enough to solve the overall mine problem.

Serbia needs international funds and time to complete the task at hand.

On another note, we would like to take this opportunity to highlight the following achievements:

In order for the SMAC to create an effective system for information management in mine action, in August 2022, the Donation Agreement has been signed between the GICHD and SMAC, whereas the SMAC will be implementing IMSMA Core over a project period of 1 year. In March 2023, GICHD IM advisors visited SMAC to get a better understanding of the context and requirements of SMAC as required to finalize the needs documentation.

In the period 29 May – 9 June 2023, SMAC representatives attended the Mine Action Information Management Qualification at IMSMA Core Administrator in Switzerland which was organized by the GICHD and supported by the Swiss Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS).

SMAC is also participating in Norwegian People's Aid Project *Enhancing Quality Management Systems of National Mine Action Authorities and Centers in Western Balkans*. This project, financed by Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, will improve the management capabilities and support national ownership and leadership in mine action. In the period from May 8 to 12, 2023, in Podgorica,

Montenegro, Serbian Mine Action Centre participated in a quality management course in the field of demining and mine action, which was organized by the Norwegian People's Aid, in cooperation with the Rescue and Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Montenegro. In the period from May 22 to 26, 2023, in Belgrade, at the SMAC Training Centre, a course on quality management in the field of demining and mine action was held. Fourteen trainees from the Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defense and the company Jugoimport SDPR attended the course.

In conclusion, as a member of the States Parties, despite all the unfavorable circumstances, the Republic of Serbia is fully committed to comply with all the provisions of the Convention and will make all their efforts to complete the Article 5 obligations, in order to primarily provide safety of all citizens and further economic and social development.

Thank you for your attention.