



**Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 7–8 June 2018**

**INTERVENTION BY THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE**

Thank you Madam President.

On behalf of the delegation of Croatia, I would like to express our pleasure at participating in the work of this year's Intersessional Meetings of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, while already looking forward to the 17th MSP under your able leadership. I can assure you of my delegation's full support in your work in the following two days and furthermore commend you on your diligent work so far.

With regards to the preliminary observations made by the Committee on Victim Assistance related to Croatia, we would like to add the following:

- All persons involved in mine incidents are entitled to health protection and acquisition of orthopedic aids to the amount covered by the Croatian Health Insurance Institute.
- There are currently 21 psychosocial interdisciplinary centers in Croatia, out of which four are regional centers for psychological services that provide psychotherapeutic services, with main centre in the capital Zagreb.
- There are also 21 county institutes for emergency health care. The time of response of emergency health teams (ambulances) in case of urgency (such as mine incident) has been improved and is now up to 10 min in urban areas and up to 20 min in rural areas (in 80% of situations). In cases of severe injuries or difficult medical conditions of any kind that require urgent transport of patient to a more equipped medical facility, helicopters of the Croatian Armed Forces are available and usually deployed. This in turn dramatically increases the level of survivability in such cases.

- Institutional efforts to provide care and support to mine/UXO victims/survivors are to some extent complemented by the work and activities of NGOs that deal with victim assistance (primarily through psychosocial and economic projects). However, it has to be noted that civil society activities are suffering from a slight downward trend not only because of decrease in funding but also due to a shortage of trained and motivated staff. We find these developments worrying and regretful because Croatian state authorities, such as the Office for Mine Action, have always profoundly benefitted from the dedication and eagerness with which our partners from the civil society have approached their work.
- The Office for Mine Action, as a national focal point for victim assistance, is still faced with a two-fold challenge: firstly, according to the Law on Mine Action, which was enacted in October 2015, *National Coordination Committee for Assisting Mine/UXO Victims/Survivors* has to be appointed by the Government decision which should ensure its “political weight” and also give the Office, as chair of this Committee, more leverage to implement set goals and secondly, “National Action Plan for Assisting Mine/UXO Victims/Survivors” is outdated (it was set for 2010-2014) and has to be updated, the fact which is directly tied to the new set-up of the Coordination Committee. Due to a certain level of administrative and institutional restructuring/repositioning, this has unfortunately not been realized yet and we are currently working to politically restart these processes.

Thank you.