

## **PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION BY CROATIA**

### **COMMITTEE ON ARTICLE 5 IMPLEMENTATION (Austria, Canada, Norway, Zambia)**

**Intersessional Meetings 30 June -2 July 2020**

#### **I. Progress in implementation (OAP Action #22, #8)**

1. Croatia reported that in 2019 a total area measuring 45,866,940 square metres was released, including 3,112,829 square metres cancelled, 3,894,443 square metres reduced, and 38,859,668 square metres cleared. Croatia also reported an additional area of 223,165 square metres identified during non-technical survey was cancelled and an additional 298,880 square metres was cleared by the Ministry of Defence, for total area addressed of 46,398,985 square metres. As a result of these efforts and the efforts of the Police counter explosive unit department, Croatia reported destroying a total of 2,530 anti-personnel mines, 2,902 anti-vehicle mines and 446,513 other items of explosive ordnance. The Committee observed that progress reported is below the estimated amount of area projected by Croatia to be addressed in 2019. The Committee would welcome information from Croatia on the challenges in meeting its projected milestones.
2. The Committee observed that Croatia had provided increased clarity regarding progress in implementation that allowed for comparability with that previously provided in its 2017 extension request. The Committee encourages Croatia to continue to improve the quality of information by reporting in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and by using the Guide to reporting (Action #22, #8).

#### **II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge (OAP Action #18, 22)**

3. The Committee observed that Croatia provided a high degree of clarity on its remaining challenge (Action #18). Croatia reported a total of 341.4 square kilometres remaining to be addressed, including 309,701, 017 square metres of mined area located in 53 municipalities and 31.4 square kilometres of known or suspected mined areas located near military sites. Within Croatia's 53 municipalities the remaining challenge consists of 189,983,414 square metres of confirmed hazardous area and 119,717,603 square metres of suspected hazardous area (Action #22).
4. The Committee observed that, with survey activities ongoing, the remaining challenge in Croatia will be further clarified following survey of SHAs at which time Croatia will be able to present more precise information on the remaining challenge. The Committee welcomes updated information on the result of these efforts.

#### **III. National plans for clearance and survey (OAP Actions #1, #2, #3, #19, #20, #26)**

5. The Committee observed that Croatia had a national evidence based and costed plan for clearance and survey in place (Action #2, #19). In 2018 Croatia submitted a request to extend its Article 5 deadline, the request included a work plan that projected to address 53.7 square kilometres in 2020, 55.5 square kilometres in 2021, 57.2 square kilometres in 2022, 58.6 square kilometres in 2023, 58.2 square kilometres in 2024, and 49.7 square kilometres in 2025 (Action #20).
6. The Committee noted that Croatia in its 2018 extension request indicated that Convention implementation activities are integrated into national development agricultural and rural development plans. The Committee further noted that in 2019 the Government of Croatia

allocated an annual financial commitment towards implementation representing 60.8% of all mine action related funding a total of approximately, € 53.2 million (Action #1).

7. The Committee noted that Croatia has committed to the integration of gender equality into the sector, "Croatia has a well-established and comprehensive level of policies, programmes and projects that determine and promote gender equality aspects at all national levels including Mine Action and specifically MRE". In this regard, the Committee would welcome further information on the actions Croatia has taken and ways in which its work plan and strategy integrate gender and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account (Action #3).
8. Croatia reported that it will develop a new National Mine Action Strategy (2020-2026). The Committee encourages Croatia to report on adjusted milestones on an annual basis in future reports, including information on the number of areas and amount of area to be addressed annually against updated milestones, including how priorities have been established to achieve completion as soon as possible (Action #20).
9. Croatia in its 2018 extension request indicated that it had a demining and survey capacity that had were, "professionally prepared and trained". Croatia also indicated that, "the demining of military facilities is conducted by special unit of the Croatian Army (mine clearance battalion) according to special plan made by the Ministry of Defence". The Committee would welcome further information on Croatia's efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address any previously unknown mined areas that may be discovered following Croatia declaring completion of its Article 5 obligations (Action #26).

#### **IV. Efficient and expedient implementation (OAP Actions #5, #9, #27)**

10. The Committee recalled that Croatia in its 2018 extension request indicated that its mine programme, "methods and standards are based on the IMAS, modified in accordance with the specific conditions in Croatia and as such have been codified through the national legislative framework for humanitarian demining" (Action #5)
11. The Committee recalled that Croatia in its 2018 request indicated that it collects and processes data on areas and buildings suspected of being contaminated with, "mines, ERWs and their parts". In this regard, the Committee would welcome further information on progress made by Croatia to establish and maintain an accurate and up-to-date information management system (Action #9).
12. The Committee recalled that Croatia in its 2018 extension request, included the development of, "methods and techniques for the use of dogs for mine detection in forests on mountain terrain". The Committee noted that Croatia had also reported it had conducted testing and certification of mine detection and mine clearance equipment; research and development of new mine detection and mine clearance methods and technology; and providing expert education and training in the field of mine action (Action #27). In this regard, the Committee welcomes continual updates from Croatia on its efforts to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance operations (Action #27).

#### **V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them**

13. The Committee recalled that in granting Croatia's request, the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties (17MSP) requested Croatia to submit updated information on several matters. The Committee welcomes the information provided by Croatia regarding the structure of Croatia's mine action programme, including existing and new organisational and institutional capacities to respond

to residual contamination following completion, progress in continuing land release relative to the commitments made in Croatia's annual work plan, disaggregated in a manner consistent with the IMAS, including identification of new mined areas, and their impact on annual targets as given in Croatia's work plan; and updates regarding resource mobilisation efforts, including resources made available in the Croatian State budget and external financing received to support implementation efforts, including European Union Structural and Cohesion funds, and Cross-border Cooperation funds to support implementation efforts.

14. The Committee would welcome updated information from Croatia on the following decisions of the 17MSP:

- Updates regarding the full range of practical methods used to release land, in line with the latest land release standards, including the use of mechanical assets and animal detection systems in forested areas as well as relevant information on the training of national mine personnel, operators, in new methodologies and quality control, with reference to relevant national standards;
- Updates regarding the development and implementation of Croatia's National Mine Action Strategy (2019-2026)

#### **VI. Mine risk education and reduction (OAP Actions #28-32)**

15. The Committee observed that Croatia reported in detail on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel (Action #32). The Committee noted Croatia's efforts to coordinate activities with aligned ministries, city and municipal governments and other non-governmental organizations and associations in a way that ensures sensitivity to gender, age, disability and take the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into account (Action #28, #29). Croatia reported that it continued to pursue efforts in providing Mine Risk Education and Reduction efforts to populations and groups at risk (Action #30). The Committee would welcome information on how Croatia prioritizes the delivery of mine risk education and reduction programmes to available casualty and contamination data (Action #30). The Committee would welcome further information on Croatia's efforts to develop a national capacity to deliver mine risk education and reduction programmes (Action #31).