



**15th MEETING OF THE STATES PARTIES TO THE
ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE BAN CONVENTION**
Santiago, 28th November – 1st December 2016

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ON COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE**

Thank you Mr./Ms. Coordinator.

The International Symposium and Equipment Exhibition Mine Action (April 2017)

We have already reported in detail about this annual international gathering of mine action experts during the Intersessional Meetings of the APMBC in May this year. The said statement is available at ISU's website. I am however pleased to announce that the 14th International Symposium "Mine Action 2017" will be held from 25 to 27 April 2017 with Colombia as this year's partner country. First invitations have just been sent out and the program will follow shortly while all information will be available on websites of the co-organizers.

Enabling Inductive Metal Characterization in Non-Cooperative Soils – project PERUN (ongoing)

The non-cooperative soils are present globally in many heavily mined countries and recently there have been initiatives to develop an information database and distribution maps of electromagnetic properties of soils worldwide in order to help with the landmine detection problem.

The project is led by the research team from the Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing at the University of Zagreb in cooperation with the University of Manchester (Sensing, Imaging and Signal Processing) with support from the CROMAC - Center for Testing, Development and Training Ltd. (CTDT). The objective of this project is to explore and investigate the next generation of metal detectors based on advanced inductive metal characterization in order to face the challenge of huge false alarm rate of metal detectors for humanitarian demining. Ultimately, the research should lead to devising a model-based soil compensation method to enable advanced characterization of metallic targets in humanitarian demining. The project will take the next step in reliable operation of existing and next-generation metal detectors over non-cooperative soils,

optimized with respect to practical and regulatory requirements of humanitarian demining. Special attention will be paid to the requirement that the experimental setup can be in a later stage developed to ergonomic, easy-to-interpret, low power handheld prototype. The project is financially supported by the charity *Find a Better Way* from the UK, founded by legendary British football player Sir Bobby Charlton.

Explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) course (Level 2/3) for SEE countries (November/December 2016)

In November 2016 CROMAC – CTDT Ltd. conducted explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) training for 16 participants from Montenegro and Croatia who have received certificates of qualification for performing UXO disposal of Level 2 according to IMAS. EOD Level 3 course will be conducted in December 2016.

Bilateral meetings and other activities

A number of meetings and visits was organized during 2016 to promote and present Croatian capabilities in the field of mine action. These particularly included visits of ambassadors accredited to Croatia to CROMAC HQ in Sisak and demining worksites and/or to training/research facilities (Cerovac and Benkovac test fields). Talks with globally renowned partners such as the *ITF – Enhancing Human Security* from Slovenia were held to explore possibilities of cooperation in projects in third countries.

It is also worth mentioning that Croatian mine action experts participated in the Forum of Experts related to the *Global Initiative for Demining of Colombia*, organized by the State Department of the United States, the US Embassy in Colombia, the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia, the Colombian Organization for Mine Action (DAICMA) and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) held in May 2016 in Bogota. Furthermore, Croatia participated at the meeting in Oslo in September 2016 at the headquarters of the Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) regarding possible cooperation in demining program in Colombia.

We are also actively exploring possibilities of enhancing already successful cooperation with a certain number of countries (eg. Colombia and Jordan) in the framework of the official development aid (ODA) of Croatia.

Thank you.



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**SUPPLEMENT
TO THE STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
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Thank you Mr./Ms. Coordinator.

Project "De-contamination of war-affected areas" (De-mine HU-HR II)

The said project is listed as a strategic project in the INTERREG V-A Cross-border program Hungary - Croatia 2014 – 2020 and is the continuation of the project "Rehabilitation of land mine contaminated sites in the Drava-Danube area" (*De-mine HU-HR I*) which was financed by the EU within the IPA component II - Cross-border cooperation, in the period 2011 - 2013. The leading partner is the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) with two project partners on the Hungarian side - Baranya County Police Headquarters and Danube-Drava National Park. Within the total budget that amounts to 3.5 million €, for the activities conducted by the Croatian side 1.78 million € is allocated.

Through project implementation, mine threat on Croatian side of the border will be completely removed, including minefields along the Drava river. In cooperation with the Croatian State Geodetic Agency, project also foresees restoration of the stone markings alongside border between Croatia and Hungary.

Thus, demining of areas size of 1.45 km² / 945.903 m² on Croatian side of the border (the inundation zones of the rivers Drava and Danube in the Osijek-Baranja County) started in September 2016. The approved Execution Plan of demining will include engagement of 177 deminers, 14 demining machines and 28 mine detection dogs in the period of up to 60 working days. The size of capacities being engaged (in this project) speaks clearly about the importance that Croatia attaches to this project. Also, the ceremonial opening conference (kick-off conference) held in late October 2016 in the Belišće Municipality in Croatia, with high-level attendance from the two countries, emphasized the importance of this project for people, economy and protection of environment on both sides of the border.

Worth mentioning is also the fact that from 1998 until today the EU assisted with the process of demining in Croatia with over 83 million €.

Thank you.