



16th Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Vienna, 18 – 21 December 2017

**STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ON COOPERATIVE COMPLIANCE**

Thank you Chairperson.

At the outset, the Republic of Croatia wishes to warmly congratulate both the governments and the peoples of Algeria and Belarus for becoming compliant with their Article 5 and Article 4 obligations respectively. The commitment shown by these two State Parties is a strong motivation for other affected states, including Croatia, that the realization of a mine-free world is indeed achievable.

We also wish to thank the Committee on the Cooperative Compliance for its work and efforts.

Mr. President,

Croatia is convinced that the credibility of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) rests in the manner in which we, as the collective, deal with the questions of various issues of compliance with its core legal obligations.

It is for this reason that we are deeply alarmed by the information from the new *Landmine Monitor 2017* (LMM 2017) that anti-personnel landmines have been used by government forces in two states non-parties to the Convention – Myanmar and Syria and by the armed non-state actors in 9 countries. Even more worrying fact is the negative trend reflected in staggeringly high numbers of mine casualties in 2016, which started with the sharp increase in 2015. The new LMM 2017 further notes that 2016 casualty numbers are the highest recorded since 1999, including the most child casualties ever recorded. This is also due to the use of victim-activated improvised explosive devices (that mostly act as anti-personnel mines) or improvised mines, which are increasingly becoming a weapon of choice for numerous non-state armed groups and terrorist organizations.

In keeping with the international norm being established by the APMBC, we strongly condemn these actions, primarily because of the humanitarian harm that landmines cause. We have repeatedly called on both States and non-State actors to refrain from the manufacture, trade and use of antipersonnel mines because the use of these banned weapons is never acceptable under any circumstances and those responsible for the use must be held accountable.

Mr. President,

It is important to acknowledge, and to take pride in the fact that, the overall record of implementation of and compliance with the Convention has been undeniably impressive, especially compared to other international instruments. What we have called the “cooperative compliance” approach of this treaty has worked well, an approach underpinned by trust, good will, and the desire to facilitate proper implementation and compliance.

We therefore appeal to and encourage our friends and partners from Ukraine to consider a different approach regarding the deadline for request of extension for Article 5 obligations fulfillment. Being a country with a similar historic background - a victim of a foreign armed aggression that resulted in a widespread mine contamination - Croatia understands the concerns expressed by Ukraine and would like to emphasize our readiness for further cooperation in this regard.

Finally, we believe the APMBC is strong enough to address serious compliance issues head on, and not to look the other way or sweep them under the carpet because non-compliance directly corresponds to a weakened humanitarian impact of the treaty. Twenty years after its negotiation, the treaty is being seriously tested in a number of ways. We implore our fellow States Parties to rise to the occasion.

Thank you.