

VICTIM ASSISTANCE

Ladies and Gentleman

I am happy to inform you that since the Cartagena Review Conference, Croatia has made some relevant steps forward in improving the rights of the victims of mines and other unexploded ordnance.

On April 14, 2010 the first Coordination Meeting for Victim Assistance was held in the Ministry of Health. The meeting was an opportunity to review recent developments and set the plan for future strengthened cooperation between government institutions and NGOs on the projects concerning victims and their rights, including in the area of the improvement of their status.

In accordance to the Law on Humanitarian Demining, since 2005 Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) has the role of a formal coordinator of the mine victim assistance activities between government and NGOs.

The conclusion of the first coordination meeting of April this year was that it is necessary to legally establish the Coordination body and appoint its permanent members that will include both governmental and nongovernmental sector.

The members of the Coordination include 21 institutions, both governmental and non-governmental, two of which have not participated yet at the meetings. The membership involves 5 ministries (Foreign Affairs; Health; Economy; Family Affairs and Interior), 5 public institutes and other public institutions, city administration, associations and NGOs.

- Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Ombudsman for disabled people
- Ministry of Health
- Ministry of Economy
- Ministry of Family Affairs
- Ministry of Interior
- Croatian institute for public health
- National protection and rescue directorate
- Croatian health insurance institute
- Croatian pension institute
- Croatian employment institute
- Zagreb Hospital
- ICBL/Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor
- Government Human rights office
- Institute for professional rehabilitation and employment of the persons with disability
- City of Zagreb
- Mine Aid Association
- Croatian association of persons with disability
- Croatian Association of civilian victims of the war
- ITF – International Trust Fund
- Croatian mine action centre

In accordance with its obligations set by the Cartagena Action Plan, the Coordination mechanism started on the preparation of the Croatian Action Plan for Mine Victims for period 2010-2014.

The Action plan is divided in 6 main chapters: (1) Understanding of challenges; (2) First Aid and further medical care; (3) Physical rehabilitation; (4) Psycho-social help; (5) Economic reintegration and (6) Laws and legal policies.

Currently the members of the Coordination *mechanism* are preparing the proposals in accordance with their field of responsibility. By the end of the July all proposals will be sent to CROMAC that will prepare first draft of the Croatian Action Plan on Victim Assistance. The third meeting of the Coordination mechanism is scheduled for September when we expect to adopt the final draft of the national Action plan 2010-2014.

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Vital starting point ~~segment~~ in the Action Plan is the final establishment of the mine and other unexploded ordnance victims data base, currently scattered in different files of the members of Coordination mechanism. The coordinators for the Victim Data base are jointly Croatian institute for Public Health and the Croatian Mine Action Centre.

Another good development is the establishment of, so called, "crisis teams" with the Ministry of Health who go visit the victim immediately following the accident and provide for psycho-social assistance, in addition to the physical medical attention.

In addition to the establishment of the Coordination mechanism for VA, in April 2010 the booklet entitled „Possibilities and Rights“ was prepared in collaboration between the NGO Mine Aid and The CROMAC, financed by the county. This booklet of 76 pages presents a summary of all the laws and regulations that cover possibilities and rights for the disabled persons, as well as the list of ministries, government institutions and NGOs dealing with the issues, together with the names and telephone numbers of the contact persons on the state and local level. The booklet has been distributed for free through the existing channels, both governmental and non-governmental.

Last but not least, we are looking forward to welcoming you all to Croatia later this year for the follow-up expert workshop on VA, in the footsteps of the very successful Vienna one from April this year, and leading up to the meetings of states parties – both this Convention, as well as the CCM.

Thank you.