



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 COOPERATION AND ASSISTANCE**

Thank you Chairperson.

Croatia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

We wish to thank the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance for its work and efforts. We particularly see the value in further development of the individualized approach concept and the platforms for partnerships.

The International Symposium “Mine Action 2017”

The Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA), Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) and Centre for Testing, Development and Training Ltd. (CTDT) organized the International Symposium “Mine Action 2017” under the high patronage of the Croatian Parliament Speaker for the 14th time in Biograd, Croatia. The Symposium drew attendance of 150 participants from 30 countries, representing ministries, state institutions, international organizations, equipment producers, academia and civil society.

Within four panels during plenary sessions experts discussed the following: twenty years of the Ottawa Convention – challenges and achievements; non-technical and technical survey; latest experiences in cluster munitions disposal; experiences and methods of approach to the issue of IEDs; new technologies in mine action. As such, the Symposium provided an overview of the latest scientific and practical achievements and offered sustainable solutions in dealing with mines, cluster munitions, IEDs and ERW in general.

More information about the 14th Symposium is available in the supplement to this statement which will also be posted at the ISU's website.

Regional Senior Managers' Course in ERW and Mine Action

The Centre for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR) in collaboration with the College of Business at James Madison University has been carrying out training programs for managers in mine action system for several years already. „The Regional course for senior managers' in mine action and the removal of explosive remnants of war“ integrates the latest achievements in the field of business management with practical knowledge and experience of workers in mine action and disposal of explosive remnants of war (ERW).

The main goal of this program is to create conditions for the managerial segment in national mine action systems to master the additional skills needed for more successful and efficient work in operating their systems.

Thus, from 20 March – 7 April 2017, 20 participants from 12 countries in Europe and Eurasia, as well as Colombia, gathered for the 3rd Regional Senior Managers' Course in ERW and Mine Action in Biograd, Croatia. The Course was funded by the U.S. Department of State and implemented by the CISR in coordination with the partners from the Croatian mine action system.

Other activities in 2017

At the test site Benkovac, Croatia, a research team from the University of Manchester conducted a trial of experimental detection equipment. The aim of the project is to help counter the problems of discrimination of targets in uncooperative (highly mineralized) soils and to research more advanced electromagnetic detectors to the benefit of the international mine action community. The trial is financed by the UK based charity Find a Better Way, founded by the football legend Sir Bobby Charlton.

Croatian mine action system coordinates the project “Biological Methods (Bees) for Explosive Detection” which is financed by the NATO Science for Peace and Security Program with participation of the universities from Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina and the United Kingdom. The goal of this 3-year project is development of innovative methods and technologies for

landmine detection through the advancement and integration of current state-of-the-art techniques (honeybees) in combination with explosive vapor sensors and advanced imaging techniques.

In November 2017, the CTDT conducted a training course in Serbia for 18 employees of the Russian company Emercom Demining on various topics of demining management (project leaders, site leaders, team leaders, QA/QC officers). This was the second training course implemented CTDT for this company.

Thank you.



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SUPPLEMENT
TO THE STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
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The 14th International Symposium “Mine Action 2017”, the annual international gathering of mine action experts, was held under the high patronage of the Croatian Parliament Speaker from 25th to 27th April 2017. The Symposium drew attendance of 150 participants from 30 countries, representing ministries, state institutions, international organizations, equipment producers, academia and civil society. On the margins of the 14th Symposium, a traditional meeting of the South East Europe Mine Action Coordination Council (SEEMACC) was held.

Within four panels during plenary sessions experts discussed the following topics: twenty years of the Ottawa Convention – challenges and achievements; non-technical and technical survey; cluster munitions disposal – latest experiences; IEDs – experiences and methods of approach; new technologies in mine action.

For the second time, the role of partner country was introduced – Columbia (a country with mine/ERW problem and a recipient country) and Norway (donor country; for number of years among the Top 5 donors in mine action globally). Added value of this concept is the fact that Norway (with the USA) is the initiator of the Global Demining Initiative (GDI) for Colombia. Croatia, on the other hand, as a host is perceived in the role of a „bridge“ between donor and recipient countries because of its dual experience (from 2011, according to the OECD indexation, Croatia is a donor country). Against this backdrop, a parallel workshop was held, which included representatives of Croatian mine action system and MFEA, National Centre against Explosive Devices and Mines (CENAM) of Colombia and Norwegian Ambassador to Croatia.

The Symposium provided an overview of the latest scientific and practical achievements and offered sustainable solutions in dealing with mines, cluster munitions, IEDs and ERW in general. Thus, joint Workshop of the International Advanced Robotic Program (IARP) and International CBRNE Institute (ICI) was also held, with the topic of C-IED and C-CBRN EOD Action. As in previous

years, participants used this opportunity to share their experiences, both technological and managerial.

Participants also greatly valued a field demonstration at the technical survey site which included demonstration of the status and analysis of suspected hazardous area; technical survey preparation and implementation (organization, protective measures, methods, key personnel); demonstration of expected outputs; introduction to new and emerging technologies in mine action; presentation of equipment, machines and devices.

Finally, the Cooperation Agreement between Croatian Centre for Testing, Development and Training Ltd. (CTDT) and International CBRNE Institute (ICI) was signed, through which the parties commit themselves to mutual support and exchange of knowledge, as well as to defining plans and activities for future cooperation.