
Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

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Consideration of requests submitted under Article 5

Analysis of the request submitted by Bosnia and Herzegovina for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention*

Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (Austria, Canada, Norway and Zambia)

1. Bosnia and Herzegovina ratified the Convention on 8 September 1998 and the Convention entered into force for Bosnia and Herzegovina on 1 March 1999. In its initial transparency report submitted on 1 February 2000, Bosnia and Herzegovina reported areas under its jurisdiction or control containing, or suspected to contain, anti-personnel mines. Bosnia and Herzegovina was obliged to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines under its jurisdiction or control by 1 March 2009. Bosnia and Herzegovina, believing that it would be unable to do so by that date, submitted a request to the 2008 Ninth Meeting of the States Parties (9MSP) for a ten-year extension of its deadline, until 1 March 2019. The 9MSP agreed unanimously to grant the request.

2. In granting Bosnia and Herzegovina's request, the 9MSP noted that even with a consistent and sizeable effort having been undertaken by Bosnia and Herzegovina going back before entry into force of the Convention, Bosnia and Herzegovina faces a significant remaining challenge in order to fulfil its obligations under Article 5. The 9MSP further noted that, while the plan presented in Bosnia and Herzegovina's request was workable and ambitious, its success was contingent upon increased performance in technical survey, an ongoing, although decreasing, high level of donor funding and the provision of and thereafter constant increase of funds by local governments. In addition, the 9MSP noted the importance of clarity regarding which areas of what size and at what locations remained to be addressed in each administrative area.

3. On 25 April 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted to the Chair of the Committee on Article 5 Implementation ("the Committee") a request for extension of its 1 March 2019 deadline. On 4 June 2018, the Committee wrote to Bosnia and Herzegovina to request additional clarification and information on the extension request. On 7 September 2018, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted to the Committee a revised request for extension incorporating additional information provided in response to the Committee's questions.

* This document was scheduled for publication after the standard publication date owing to circumstances beyond the submitter's control.



Bosnia and Herzegovina's request was for an additional 2 years, until 1 March 2021. The Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties (17MSP) agreed unanimously to grant the request.

4. In granting the request, the 17MSP noted that it was unfortunate that after almost twenty years since entry into force, Bosnia and Herzegovina was unable to specify how much work remains and how it will be carried out. The Meeting further noted that it was positive however that Bosnia and Herzegovina intended to take steps to garner an understanding of the true remaining extent of the challenge and to develop plans that precisely project the amount of time that will be required to complete article 5 implementation. In this context, the 17MSP noted the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina requesting only the period of time necessary to assess relevant facts and develop a meaningful forward-looking plan based on these facts. The 17MSP further noted that, by requesting a two-year extension, Bosnia and Herzegovina was projecting that it would need approximately two years from the date of submission of its request to obtain clarity regarding the remaining challenge, produce a detailed plan and submit a third extension request.

5. On 22 June 2020, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted to the Chair of the Committee a request for extension of its 1 March 2021 deadline. On 31 July 2020, the Committee wrote to Bosnia and Herzegovina to request additional clarification and information. On 25 August 2020, Bosnia and Herzegovina submitted to the Committee a revised request for extension incorporating additional information provided in response to the Committee's questions. Bosnia and Herzegovina's request is for a period of six years, until 1 March 2027.

6. The request indicates that at the time of submission of the previous request, Bosnia and Herzegovina was the most mine-contaminated country in Europe with mined areas measuring approximately 1,056,574,142 square metres (2 % of the total area of Bosnia and Herzegovina).

7. The request indicates that during this period the project Country assessment of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, financed by the European Commission, was carried out with the aim of increasing efficiency through the application of non-technical survey (NTS) and technical survey (TS) to set a new baseline for realistic planning and achieve the goals of the Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025. The request indicates that the project was carried out by 14 NTS Teams (9 of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Mine Action Centre (BHMACE), 2 of the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina and 3 of Norwegian People's Aid) and implemented with the support of local communities authorities.

8. The request indicates that the Project led to the delimitation of 488 Mine Suspected Areas (MSAs), which are geographical areas which group together SHAs and confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) into one "area of operation" to be subsequently subjected to the land release process (NTS, TS and clearance). The request indicates that the creation of MSAs better responds to the needs of the community through strengthening community liaison and ensuring that the needs of the communities are prioritized and addressed. The request indicates that this approach simplifies the tasking procedure by assigning organisations a larger geographical area.

9. The request indicates that over the course of the extension period a total of 94,555,274 square metres was addressed including 84,655,964 square metres of SHA cancelled through NTS, 8,342,881 square meters of SHA reduced through TS and 1,566,429 square meters of CHA cleared. The request indicates that at total of 3,064 anti-personnel mines, 76 anti-tank mines and 2,363 pieces of explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munitions, were destroyed. The Committee welcomed Bosnia and Herzegovina reporting on progress and noted the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina continuing to report on its progress in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), disaggregating by area cancelled through non-technical survey, reduced through technical survey and addressed through clearance.

10. The request indicates that during the extension period Bosnia and Herzegovina continued its implementation of the Mine Action Governance and Management Project, supported by the UNDP, which seeks to assist the mine action authorities in increasing transparency, improve planning capabilities and implementing updated mine action standards to accelerate the pace of mine clearance. The overall goal is to re-establish donor confidence

through the formulation of a credible, realistic and achievable completion plan to meet obligations under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention. The request indicates that the project is anchored to the Board of Donors which provides the forum for coordination, timely and accurate reporting, and advice on strategic and operational developments in mine action and supports the establishment of strong national and international partnerships. The Committee noted the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to strengthen national coordination, including by ensuring regular dialogue with national and international stakeholders on progress, challenges and support for implementation. The Committee noted with satisfaction the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina and its efforts to take appropriate steps to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of survey and clearance.

11. The request indicates that during the extension period, Bosnia and Herzegovina continued carrying out mine risk education (MRE) activities through public dissemination, education of affected groups and through community liaison efforts within affected communities as well as through the school curriculum in elementary schools. The request indicates that a plan is in place to deliver MRE in communities where mine clearance is not scheduled for the immediate future and that in communities where mine clearance is currently being conducted MRE is conducted through community liaison efforts with assistance from accredited organizations. The request indicates that MRE is developed through an analysis of accident data within the BHMACE's database, considering accident patterns together with the habits and activities of local communities. The Committee welcomed Bosnia and Herzegovina's effort to provide MRE and tailor its programme on the basis of a needs assessment and the threat encountered by the population. The Committee further noted the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina continuing to provide information on detailed, costed and multi-year plans for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities.

12. The request indicates that during the extension period only 37.82% of the total area expected to be addressed was addressed. The request indicates the following, which, in Bosnia and Herzegovina's view, acted as impeding circumstances during its extension period:

(a) delay in demining as the term of office of the members of the Demining Commission in Bosnia and Herzegovina expired in October 2019 with new members appointed only in 30 April 2020

(b) financial resources having not met the expectation of the Strategy;

(c) climate conditions with the demining season in most of Bosnia and Herzegovina lasting from mid-March to the beginning of December;

(d) COVID-19 pandemic which caused either a cessation of or hindrance to the work of Bosnia and Herzegovina's institutions.

13. The request indicates that the remaining challenge includes 488 MSAs measuring 966,686,086 square metres composed of a total of 799 CHAs measuring 20,747,593 square metres and a total SHA measuring 945,938,493 square metres. The request also indicates that Bosnia and Herzegovina SHAs are identified as the area between confrontation zones of warring factions, for which there is information and probability of mine contamination. The Committee noted the importance of Bosnia and Herzegovina continuing to provide information in a manner consistent with IMAS on the remaining challenges, disaggregating by 'suspected hazardous areas' and 'confirmed hazardous areas' and their relative size, as well as by the type of contamination.

14. The request indicates that remaining contamination continues to have a humanitarian and socio-economic impact and that during the country assessment project a total of 1,413 mine affected communities (981 low affected, 193 medium affected and 239 highly affected). The request indicates that most accidents occur in autumn and spring, which is the result of agricultural and firewood collecting activities (80% in third category) and that the second most important cause of mine accidents is collection of raw materials of economic value. The request indicates that males prevail as the most affected group and that most accidents with fatal outcome were the consequence of activation of PROM-1 type mines. The request indicates that, while adult males constitute a great number of victims, the death or disability

of the bread winner greatly affects other family members considered as indirect victims. The request further highlights the critical significance of understanding the psychological and psychosocial consequences for survivors and affected family members, and conditions must be ensured for the satisfaction of their needs. The Committee noted that Bosnia and Herzegovina had provided data on mine victims disaggregated by age and sex in keeping with commitments of the States Parties. The Committee noted that Article 5 implementation during the requested extension period had the potential of making a significant contribution to improving human safety and socio-economic conditions in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

15. As noted, Bosnia and Herzegovina's request is for 6 years (until 1 March 2027). The request indicates that during the extension period Bosnia and Herzegovina intends to achieve three main objectives:

(a) in 2020 and 2021: introduction and application of the results of Country assessment of SHAs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, (the first revision of the Mine Action Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2025);

(b) in 2023: second revision of the Mine Action Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2025, and;

(c) in 2025: completion of the Mine Action Strategy in Bosnia and Herzegovina 2018-2025, and in 2027: status assessment and creation of the exit Strategy and completion of the process.

16. The request indicates that at its 175th session held on 5 August 2019, the Council of Ministers adopted the Mine Action Strategy for the period 2018 – 2025 which has the following 5 strategic goals:

(a) information quality management procedures which ensure the gathering, storage, analysis, exchange of relevant information and their use for efficient and effective planning, setting priorities, tasking and implementation of mine action (Oslo Action Plan (OAP) Actions 9, 22 and 35);

(b) Bosnia and Herzegovina mine action program has been promoted on national and international level in order to increase its visibility and to enhance the responsibility, commitment and support of the State (OAP Actions 1 and 8);

(c) the size and impact of mine/ERW contamination problems are specified and confirmed; the problem is being solved in accordance with Bosnia and Herzegovina mine action standards, ensuring that safe areas are returned to impacted communities for use (OAP Actions 2, 3, 5, 6, 19, 20 and 27).

(d) safety is promoted through mine awareness measures that are gender-sensitive and respect diversity in order to reduce the number of mine/ERW accidents and to support safe and sustainable activities necessary for life (OAP Actions 28, 29, 30, 31 and 32);

(e) all mine/ERW victims participate in society on equal grounds with others; their needs are identified and fulfilled, and opportunities promoted through rights-based assistance which recognizes diversity (OAP Actions 4, 33 and 34).

17. The request indicates that the shift to a focus on NTS efforts will ensure that Bosnia and Herzegovina can efficiently address its remaining challenge. The request indicates that from the results of the "Land Release" project, it is possible to deduce that not all SHAs currently in the BHMIC database are contaminated by mines and that mine clearance capacities will have to be deployed in relatively small areas. The request indicates that it is expected that the total remaining challenge of approximately 967,000,000 square metres will be addressed over the extension period (817,600,000 square metres cancelled, 141,700,000 square metres reduced and 7,800,000 square metres cleared) as follows:

(a) 2020: 71,800,000 square metres (58,400,000 square metres cancelled, 12,700,000 square metres reduced and 800,000 square metres cleared);

(b) 2021: 91,300,000 square metres (75,100,000 square metres cancelled, 15,400,000 square metres reduced and 900,000 square metres cleared);

(c) 2022: 110,300,000 square metres (92,900,000 square metres cancelled, 16,400,000 square metres reduced and 900,000 square metres cleared);

(d) 2023: 126,400,000 square metres (107,800,000 square metres cancelled, 17,600,000 square metres reduced, 1,000,000 square metres cleared);

(e) 2024: 145,500,000 square metres (124,000,000 square metres cancelled, 20,400,000 square metres reduced and 1,000,000 square metres cleared);

(f) 2025: 155,700,000 square metres (132,800,000 square metres cancelled, 21,800,000 square metres reduced and 1,000,000 square metres cleared);

(g) 2026: 131,400,000 square metres (111,700,000 square metres cancelled, 18,700,000 square metres reduced and 900,000 square metres cleared);

(h) 2027: 13,440,000 square metres (11,490,000 square metres cancelled, 18,700,000 square metres reduced and 1,000,000 square metres cleared).

18. The Committee welcomes the milestones reported by Bosnia and Herzegovina and noted with satisfaction that Bosnia and Herzegovina is employing the full range of methods to permit the safe return of land to the population. The Committee encourages Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue seeking improved land release and certification techniques which could lead to Bosnia and Herzegovina fulfilling its obligations in a shorter time frame.

19. The request indicates that activities to be undertaken during the extension period will cost a total of 336.2 million Bosnia and Herzegovina Convertible Mark (BAM). The request indicates that the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina will finance 50% of the total and would require 50% from donors. The request indicates that for 2020 Bosnia and Herzegovina will require a total of 38'750'000 BAM. The Committee recognises Bosnia and Herzegovina's efforts to ensure a national financial commitment to implementation.

20. The Committee noted that the request includes other relevant information that may be of use to the States Parties in assessing and considering the request, including further details on national demining structures, information on prioritization, risks and assumptions on the work plan, together with annexes with details of the remaining challenge, priority tasks for 2020 and mine risk education (MRE) efforts, amongst other.

21. The Committee noted that, given the fact that NTS and TS efforts will provide increased clarity on the remaining contamination in Bosnia and Herzegovina and given the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina will review its Mine Action Strategy in 2023, the Convention would benefit from Bosnia and Herzegovina submitting to the Committee updated detailed work plans on 30 April 2023 and on 30 April 2025 for the remaining period covered by the extension. The Committee noted that these work plans should contain information on the progress made, an updated list of all areas known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines using terminology consistent with the IMAS, annual projections of which areas and what area would be dealt with during the remaining period covered by the request and by which organisation, matched to a revised detailed budget based on new funding levels.

22. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the information provided in the revised request is comprehensive, complete and clear. The Committee further noted that the plan presented by Bosnia and Herzegovina is workable, lends itself well to be monitored, and states clearly which factors could affect the pace of implementation. The Committee also noted that the plan is detailed, costed and multi-year. The Committee further noted that the plan is based on allocations from State budgets and contingent upon stable international funding. In this regard, the Committee noted that the Convention would benefit from Bosnia and Herzegovina reporting annually, by 30 April, to the States Parties on the following:

(a) progress in implementation of Bosnia and Herzegovina's National Mine Action Strategy 2018-2025;

(b) progress of land release activities relative to the commitments given in Bosnia and Herzegovina's annual work plans, disaggregated in a manner consistent with the International Mine Action Standards;

(c) adjusted milestones including information on the number of areas and amount of mined area to be addressed annually and how priorities have been established;

(d) information on how implementation efforts take into consideration the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men and the diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities;

(e) progress on efforts to establish a sustainable national capacity to address previously unknown mined areas, including newly mined areas discovered following completion;

(f) updates regarding national and international resource mobilisation efforts, including efforts in approaching potential donors and efforts in raising awareness of the lack of funding with state authorities, public enterprises and local authorities to fund clearance operations and the result of these efforts;

(g) updates regarding the development and implementation of a detailed, costed and multi-year plan for context-specific mine risk education and reduction in affected communities including information on the methodologies used, the challenges faced and the results achieved, with information disaggregated by gender and age;

(h) update on efforts by Bosnia and Herzegovina to strengthen national coordination including by ensuring regular dialogue with national and international stakeholders on progress, challenges and support for implementation of their obligations under the Convention (e.g. establishing an appropriate national platform for regular dialogue among all stakeholders) and the results of these efforts.

23. The Committee noted the importance, in addition to Bosnia and Herzegovina reporting to the States Parties as noted above, of keeping the States Parties regularly apprised of other pertinent developments regarding the implementation of Article 5 during the period covered by the request and other commitments made in the request at intersessional meetings, Meeting of the States Parties and Review Conferences, as well as through its Article 7 reports using the Guide to Reporting.
