



REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

**19th 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**

The Hague, 15 to 19 November 2021

Agenda item 10.a

Assisting the Victims

Civil Protection Directorate

Ministry of the Interior

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Mr President, esteemed colleagues,

Allow us to begin with reaffirming the determination and commitment of the Republic of Croatia in ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of Mine Victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality, inclusion and non-discrimination. Republic of Croatia, in order to be effective and sustainable in this manner has over the years developed comprehensive system of victim assistance which is integrated into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks relating to the rights of persons with disabilities, health, education, employment, development and poverty reduction.

This legal framework continues to evolve and during 2020 a new Law on Civilian Victims of the Homeland War was drafted and made available for public consultations. This mentioned Law, which was officially adopted by the Croatian Parliament in mid July 2021, stipulates the application for the status of a war-disabled civilian based on a disability caused by a disease correlating with the Homeland war, among other things, due to disabilities caused by explosions of ERW left over after the end of war operations. This means the law will provide the same legal security to civilian victims as already provided to Croatian War Veterans, among others, to ERW survivors and families of individuals killed by ERWs, all with a goal to greatly improve socioeconomic status of the victims.

Unfortunately, in the 2020, the Republic of Croatia had one civilian mine victim, when a man inadvertently entered a marked hazardous area and was severely injured by an anti-personnel mine. Regrettably, a mine incident occurred again in Karlovac County in March, 2021, where in the marked hazardous area, seven illegal migrants were injured after activating PROM-1 bounding fragmentation AP mine, resulting with one fatality, two heavy injuries and four light injuries.

In conclusion, we would like to use this opportunity to emphasize the progress of a specific activity conducted in the Republic of Croatia in the field of victim assistance. The project entitled „Demining and socio-economic integration“ co-financed within the „Swiss – Croatian Co-operation Programme“, after extensive demining activities and elimination of significant number of ERWs, continued in the scope of socio-economic integration of Mine Victims.

Namely, a field survey of Mine Victims and their families was organized and conducted with a very good response rate of 82.6% of available households. Almost 900 mine victims and their immediate family members were interviewed resulting with the establishment of comprehensive database on Mine Victims in line with Action #35 of the Oslo Action Plan. The survey collected information on social status, psycho-physical health, education, etc., that will be used in future activities, i.e. in the development of programmes for psychosocial empowerment with addition of launching initiatives to improve living conditions of Mine Victims and their families.

Implementation of educational courses, psychosocial and economic support for Mine Victims activity is currently in the phase of public procurement with an expected start of implementation in the last quarter of 2021, while economic support activities will be implemented in 2022.

Finally, Mr President and esteemed colleagues, we reiterate our readiness and perseverance to act in accordance with the provisions of the Convention in every field, with special contribution and care for Mine Victims.

Thank you