



THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

Twentieth Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva, 21-25 November 2022

Statement

MINE VICTIM ASSISTANCE

**Ministry of the Interior
Civil Protection Directorate**

NOVEMBER 2022

Mr President, excellencies, distinguished delegates, colleagues and stakeholders of the global mine action system,

the Republic of Croatia and its implementation bodies continue to strongly support and implement the APMBC in all its aspects, namely by honouring and implementing undertaken obligations and strongly advocating for the implementation of transparency measures, providing assistance to victims of mines and UXO and developing international cooperation, ensuring the full universalization and implementation of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention in line with the Oslo Action Plan.

Important achievements and positive trends in Mine Victim Assistance in the period since the last Meeting of the State Parties confirm our commitment to fulfilling the obligations and goals of the Convention. During 2021, a project financed within the Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme contribution named "Demining and Socio-Economic Integration" continued. After significant results in the clearance project, one of the activities that were finalized in 2021, after a full-scale field survey, was the establishment of a comprehensive EO victim database, gathering, among other elements, the information about different needs, vulnerabilities and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men from diverse populations and all ages. We can conclude that this field survey was completed with a very good response rate of 82.6% of the available households (data was gathered from 423 EO victims and 473 EO closest family members.) The collected data concerned the social status, psycho-physical health, education, etc., and became an integral part of the comprehensive mine victim database, together with the analysis base value that will serve in future project activities / VA activities. Further project activities continued in 2021 with the development and implementation of specific VA programs for psychosocial empowerment including counselling and educational activities, and an initiative to improve the social status of EO victims and their families featuring specific workshops and trainings that will continue in 2022. In addition, a thematic brochure has been published which contains all the rights and opportunities available to EO victims in the Republic of Croatia and the manner to exercise them. The project activities will continue in 2022 and 2023, also enabling small scale investment opportunities to EO victims aimed to increase their economic welfare.

Additionally, we have to emphasize the strong determination of the Croatian Government and efforts to improve the inclusiveness and support for the EO victims continuously, even 20 years after the Homeland War had ended, in line with the Oslo Action Plan. This is reflected through the enhancement of the legal framework when in July 2021 a new Law on Civilian Victims of the Homeland War was officially adopted by the Croatian Parliament. The new Law enables the application for the status of a war-disabled civilian, based on a disability caused by a disease correlating with the Homeland War, due among other things to disabilities caused by explosions of EO left over after the end of war operations. This means the Law will provide the same legal security to civilian victims as is already provided to the Croatian War Veterans, and among others, to EO survivors and families of individuals killed by EO, all with a goal to greatly improve socioeconomic status of the victims.

In the coming period, within the national framework, it is planned to strengthen the Coordination Body established by the Law on Mine Action, which will be composed of representatives of the ministries responsible for internal affairs, health and veterans of war, the Croatian Pension Insurance

Institute, the Institute for Public Health and other bodies and non-governmental organizations in whose scope is the problem of victims of explosive remnants of war.

In conclusion, the Republic of Croatia will continue with efforts to improve its activities in the mentioned field, and at the same time is available to share its knowledge and experience in the relevant segment of mine action.

Thank you!