



## **THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA**

**Twenty-First Meeting of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention**

**Geneva, 20-24 November 2023**

### **Statement**

**Agenda item 10. Consideration of the general status and operation of the Convention**

**ASSISTING THE VICTIMS:**

**Conclusions and recommendations related to the mandate of  
the Committee on Victim Assistance**

**Ministry of the Interior  
Civil Protection Directorate**

**NOVEMBER 2023**

Mr President, excellences', distinguished delegates of the member states, colleagues and stakeholders of the global mine action system,

the Republic of Croatia aligns itself with the comprehensive EU statement and continues to express strong support towards the implementation of the APMBC in all its aspects, especially in line within undertaken obligations and strongly advocating for the implementation of transparency measures, providing assistance to Victims of mines and UXOs while providing international cooperation, in line with the Oslo Action Plan.

Important achievements and positive trends in 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 2023, a project financed within the Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme named "*Demining and Socio-Economic Integration*" continued. After significant results during the clearance projects removing 3615 mines and UXOs altogether, establishment of a comprehensive Mine Victim database, creating and publishing a thematic brochure which communicates all the updated rights and opportunities available to EO Victims in the Republic of Croatia and the manner to exercise them, 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, project continued throughout 2023 with the activity of small scale investment opportunities to EO victims aimed to increase their economic welfare.

We can conclude that this activity was completed successfully until November 2023 during which 200 thousand Swiss Francs was disbursed based on the public call and nominated micro-projects where 15 direct or indirect mine victims were empowered by procurement of entrepreneurship equipment, starting new businesses, and upgrading current businesses and similar.

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 25 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 February 2023 Croatian Parliament accepted new National Mine Action Programme until 2026 which, once again, emphasizes the importance of the comprehensive implementation of the continuous efforts of Mine Victim support.

Unfortunately, even with the widely organized EORE activities in the Republic of Croatia with the extensive mine risk marking system, at the beginning of 2023 there were 2 accounted mine incidents with 3 casualties. During January 2023, a hunter/civilian died from the anti-personnel bounding fragmentation mine PROM-1 in the market border area. Same AP mine was the cause of another fatal outcome when two deminers, male and female, died during clearance activities in February 2023. All of this, once again, proves the deadly legacy and impact of landmines even more than 27 years after they were emplaced, which, in the case of the Republic of Croatia, increased the number of fatal outcomes to 207 people, from the end of the Homeland war, up to date.

In conclusion, the Republic of Croatia will continue with its comprehensive efforts to improve national activities in the mentioned field, and, in the same time, is available to share its knowledge and experience in the relevant Mine Action pillar.