



REPUBLIC OF SERBIA

MINISTRY OF LABOUR, EMPLOYMENT, VETERAN AND SOCIAL POLICY

21th 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

Geneva, 20-24 November 2023

Assisting the Victims

Distinguished President, distinguished delegates,

The delegation of the Republic of Serbia would like to use this opportunity to express our pleasure at participating in the work of the 21th Meeting of the States Parties.

The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs is responsible for ensuring the protection, rights and financial support of military invalids, civilian war invalids and their family members and maintains a single record of data on beneficiaries of rights in the field of veterans' and disability protection. Upon inspection of the records, and according to data from December 2022, the records include: 630 civilian war invalids, 214 family members of deceased civilian war invalids and family members of civilian war victims, i.e. 122 deceased civilian war invalids, as well as 92 family members of civilian war victims. All persons recorded were injured by anti-personnel mines or other explosive remnants of war.

The Republic of Serbia is making efforts for updating the old database, with the aim of improving the records keeping of beneficiaries of rights.

In addition to the Law on the Rights of Veterans, War invalids, Civilian War invalids and Members of Their Families ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia", No. 18/2020) and the Strategy for Improving the Position of Persons with Disabilities, 2020-2024, the Republic of Serbia has adopted 14 bylaws in order to regulate the manner of exercising rights in more detail. The strategy recognises their equal rights with other disabled people (the rights of war invalids, peacetime military invalids, as well as civilian war invalids). The Republic of Serbia also applies the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

In order to find a solution for adequate assistance that would be provided to the victims of anti-personnel mines, the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs organized several meetings with representatives of relevant institutions in the Republic of Serbia and

representatives of associations that aim to help victims of anti-personnel mines and that operate in this area in order to exchange experiences.

Also, a meeting was held with representatives of the Mine Action Centre, the ITF International Foundation for Enhancing Human Security and the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel mines from Geneva, where conclusions were reached regarding the implementation of the victim assistance project.

Estimating the previous year 2022, the Republic of Serbia provided financial resources in the budget in total amount of 82.500.000,00 dinars (about 700.000,00 EUR), of which 32.500.000,00 dinars (about 275.000,00 EUR) for spa and climate recovery of military invalids, civilian war invalids and beneficiaries of family disability benefits and for support to associations of veterans and invalids in the total amount of 50.000.000,00 dinars (about 425.000,00 EUR). Appreciating the needs of the persons categorized above, the Republic of Serbia has provided budget funds for such purposes in the current year 2023 and will strive to continue with the same intensity in 2024.

In 2022, the first project to help victims was started in cooperation with the Mine Action Centre, which is being implemented thanks to donor funds, placed through the ITF International Foundation for Enhancing Human Security. This project provides the rehabilitation and medical care of victims of anti-personnel mines. The Ministry of Labour, Employment of Veterans and Social Affairs, the Sector for Veterans and Disability Protection has prioritized the persons of the younger population from the Republic of Serbia who will be referred to rehabilitation and medical care at the University Rehabilitation Institute of Soča in Slovenia. In October 2022, the implementation of the project started and one person was referred for assessment and then for rehabilitation process, while two more persons were also referred for assessment and rehabilitation in 2023. As the entire process was evaluated by the beneficiary as useful, we expect that the next beneficiaries will soon be sent to rehabilitation. In addition to rehabilitation, which lasts two and a half weeks, this project also includes the replacement of medical and technical aids.

Having in mind that this project initiated the joint cooperation of the state institutions of the Republic of Serbia, the Mine Action Centre and the Ministry of Labour, Employment of Veterans and Social Affairs, as well as that by implementing the project we contribute to raising awareness for continuous support for the victims, as well as their family members, the fact arises that this is an important issue for the Republic of Serbia.

This type of support is very important to the victims, not only as a form of material assistance, but also as a significant support that gives them the strength to fight all problems and the certainty that the community supports them. The Republic of Serbia does not forget about them and creates conditions for equality.

The Republic of Serbia wants a better standard for its citizens and pays special attention to people with disabilities, victims of anti-personnel mines, and will always be involved in all activities that affect the development of society's awareness and empower victims of anti-personnel mines.

Civilian war invalids, family members of deceased civilian war invalids and family members of civilian victims of war need unconditional, continuous assistance and practical support in preserving, promoting and exercising special rights and privileges, as well as in recognizing and preventing various forms of discrimination, which aim to create conditions for social inclusion and equal, dignified life with other members of the community.