

## PRELIMINARY OBSERVATION

### CROATIA

#### STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION – VICTIM ASSISTANCE

##### COMMITTEE ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE

(Austria, Burkina Faso (Chair), the Netherlands, and Sri Lanka)  
Intersessional Meetings  
17-20 June 2025

1. The Committee welcomes the submission by Croatia of updated information on its victim assistance activities. Based on the information provided, the Committee presents the following preliminary observations.

#### VICTIM ASSISTANCE ACTIONS:

**Ensure that a relevant government entity in affected States Parties is assigned as the focal point to coordinate victim assistance and oversee and enhance the integration of victim assistance activities into broader national policies, plans, budgets, and legal frameworks (Actions 30, 1 and 2)**

2. Croatia reported that the Civil Protection Directorate at the Ministry of Interior is the contact point for victim assistance, and that this role will be shifted to the Coordination Body, to be established, which will include representatives of relevant ministries and other stakeholders.

**Develop a national specific, measurable, realistic, and time-bound disability action plan (Actions 30 and 3)**

3. Croatia reported that victim assistance is considered as a combined cross-ministerial and institutional effort and that no specific plan has been developed.
4. The Committee recalls that in 2024 Croatia reported on the existence of a National Plan for the period of 2021-2027 for equal opportunities for persons with disabilities. Croatia reported that the plan established the framework for integration of mine victims, including the following goals:
  - Ensure inclusive upbringing and education for children with developmental disabilities and students with disabilities
  - Improvement of employment system for persons with disabilities
  - Improved access to services in the health care system for persons with disabilities
  - Deinstitutionalisation and prevention of institutionalization of persons with disabilities
  - Improved accessibility
  - Strengthening safety for persons with disabilities in situation of emergencies

**Include mine and other explosive ordnance victims or their representative organisations, in victim assistance planning and implementation at the national and local level (Actions 30, 31 and 39)**

5. The Committee recalls that in 2024, Croatia reported on the existence of an advisory Commission assisting the government on ensuring the wellbeing of persons with disabilities and that the Commission was composed of all ministries, the Central State Office for Sports, the Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, the Central State Office for the Development of Digital Society, representatives of relevant scientific institutions and representatives of 18 federations and associations of persons with disabilities.

6. In 2024, Croatia reported that one of the major challenges in victim assistance is the lack of motivation and interest among EO victims in participating in available activities and support programmes.

7. The Committee would welcome an update in this regard and information on inclusion of representatives of mine survivors in the advisory Commission.

**Report on progress and challenges in implementing their national action plans (Action 30)**

8. Croatia reported that mine victims benefit from a well-developed public health care structure which provides mainstream and specialised services, including rehabilitation. Croatia reported that in 2024 the Swiss Croatian Cooperation Programme 2017-2024 came to an end and that it has provided tangible services and mapped out the living situation, needs and vulnerabilities of mine victims to inform relevant public policy and responses.

**Carry out inter-ministerial and multi-sectoral efforts to ensure that the needs and rights of mine and other explosive ordnance victims are effectively addressed (Action 31)**

9. Croatia reported that an inter-ministerial/agency coordination body will be established which will take over the responsibility of victim assistance implementation. Croatia reported that victim assistance has been integrated into relevant national laws, policies and programmes, with relevant State administration authorities being involved in addressing challenges in victim assistance, including medical rehabilitation, socio-economic empowerment, and other areas.

10. Croatia reported that victim assistance efforts are aligned with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), and that the CPRD implementation as well as the implementation of the National Strategy of Equalization of Possibilities for Persons with Disabilities is promoted and monitored by a dedicated Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities.

11. As Croatia is moving towards achieving its Article 5 obligations, the Committee encourages Croatia to accelerate engaging relevant ministries and departments to ensure the long-term sustainability of assistance provided to mine survivors and affected families.

**Identify all mine and other explosive ordnance victims and collect accurate and comprehensive information on their needs, challenges and geographic locations in a manner disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other considerations (Action 32 and also Action 9)**

12. Croatia reported a total of 610 casualties of which 207 have been killed, with no casualty in 2024.

13. Croatia provided further information indicating that as a result of a survey carried out in 2020-2021, 423 direct and 473 indirect explosive ordnances (EO) victims were identified with 38% of the direct victims had been deceased. The survey provided insights on “social status, psycho-physical health, education, etc., and became an integral part of the comprehensive EO victim database, together with the analysis base value that will serve in future project activities / VA activities”.

**Integrate the data on mine and other explosive ordnance victims into a national centralised database, such as disability data systems (Actions 32 and 9)**

14. Croatia reported that the data on mine and EO victims has been integrated into a comprehensive database, which also includes information on socio-economic, psychosocial and other needs of the victims. Croatia reported that data are shared with relevant ministries and protected in accordance with the European Union General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

*15. The Committee would welcome information on integration of data on mine and other EO victims into relevant national centralised database, such as disability data systems.*

**Provide effective and efficient context-specific emergency medical care to new casualties and improve national capacity through training, including on psychosocial first care, specialized training for health professionals and layperson first responder training in affected communities (Action 33)**

16. Croatia reported that no new mine related casualty was recorded in 2024 and stated that first response services are available.

**Ensure that mine and other explosive ordnance survivors have access to health services including in rural and remote areas (Action 33)**

17. Croatia reported that mine and EO victims in Croatia enjoy access to a well-established healthcare service across the country.

**Ensure that a national/sub-administrative area referral mechanism is in place to facilitate access to services (Action 34)**

18. Croatia reported on having a national referral mechanism in place.

**Create and disseminate a comprehensive directory of services available, accessible, and inclusive for all mine and other explosive ordnance victims (Action 34)**

19. Croatia reported that a brochure was published to raise awareness on the rights of mine and other EO victims, and opportunities available to them.

**Efforts to increase the availability and accessibility of rehabilitation services (Action 35)**

20. Croatia reported on availability of rehabilitation services across the country and that mine victims benefit from insurance fund, for their healthcare and rehabilitation. Croatia reported that orthopaedic services are provided through specific institutions at the regional and sub-regional level and medical rehabilitation is provided by hospitals that specialise in medical rehabilitation.

**Ensure to provide assistive technology (Action 35)**

*21. The Committee would welcome an update on availability of assistive technology.*

**Increase resources and national capacity to make assistive technology affordable and accessible (Action 35)**

*22. The Committee would welcome information on efforts made to increase resources and national capacity to make assistive technology affordable and accessible.*

**Ensure mine victims have access to psychological and psychosocial support services including to mental health (Action 36)**

23. Croatia reported that psychosocial support workshops, trainings and counselling were held for over 70 mine and other EO victims. Croatia reported on availability of psychosocial interdisciplinary centres in all 21 counties of the country, including four regional centres for psychological and psychotherapeutic services.

**Efforts to make peer-to-peer support availability including by integrating it into public healthcare and other relevant systems (Action 36)**

24. Croatia reported on availability of peer support, including an initiative carried out an NGO (Croatia Helps) who train mine survivors in explosive ordnance risk education which provided a platform for peer-to-peer counselling.

**Meet the social and economic inclusion needs of mine victims (Action 37)**

25. Croatia reported that the national Law on Civilian Victims of the Homeland War adopted in 2021, provides the same legal security to civilian victims as War Veterans, and among others to EO survivors and affected families to improve socio-economic inclusion of the victims.

26. Croatia reported prioritisation of persons with disabilities when hiring and that employer who recruit a person with a disability as well as self-employed persons with disabilities are subsidised by the following incentives:

- Salary subsidy for persons with disabilities;
- Co-financing the costs of education of persons with disabilities;
- Co-financing the costs of adjusting the workplace for persons with disabilities;
- Co-financing the costs of adjusting working conditions for persons with disabilities;
- A subsidy in the amount of the paid contribution for compulsory health insurance;
- Financing the costs of professional support;
- Special funds for the development of new technologies and business processes in order to employ and maintain the employment of persons with disabilities with employers in the open labour market, i.e. with persons with disabilities who are self-employed
- Support for the sustainability of self-employment of persons with disabilities; and
- Co-financing the costs of transporting people with disabilities.

**Remove barriers to the social and economic inclusion of mine survivors and affected families (Action 37)**

27. Croatia reported that the rights of persons with disabilities are guaranteed by over 200 national laws and by-laws and that “there are 4 basic forms of mine victim assistance in which ministries, institutions, non-governmental sector, a number of organizations and individual initiatives take part in, such as medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological help, social inclusion, and economic rehabilitation”.

**The number of mine and other explosive ordnance survivors and affected families accessing social and economic services (Action 37)**

28. Croatia reported that in 2023 assistance in the form of cash (CHF 200,000.00), provided to assist 15 mine victims and their immediate family members to start new or expand existing entrepreneurship.

29. The Committee would welcome an update on progress made in 2024 in this regard.

**Ensure the safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risk (Action 38)**

30. Croatia reported that mine victims are included in the measures put in place to ensure the safety and protection of general population in situations of emergencies, in line with Disaster Risk Management Strategy and Disaster Risk Management Action Plans.

31. The Committee recalls that previously, Croatia reported that persons with disabilities are recognised as a vulnerable group when it comes to emergency situations and activities carried out by the Safe and Equal in Emergency project (known as SEE ME) ensures the specific needs of persons with disabilities are considered both in awareness materials and the essential skills responders require when it comes to persons with different types of disabilities.

**Increase inclusion of and access by mine victims into programmes for humanitarian assistance, risk reduction, and conflict preparedness and protection (Action 38)**

32. Croatia reported that efforts are made to increase inclusion and access by mine victims in relevant programmes and policies.

**Improve accessibility and strive to remove physical, social, cultural, political, attitudinal, and communications barriers (Actions 39 and 37)**

33. Croatia reported that the rights of individuals, including mine and other EO victims are protected by over 200 national laws and by-laws. Croatia also reported completing a national survey in identifying mine and other EO victims. Croatia reported that measures have been established to remove various physical, social, cultural, political and attitudinal or communication barriers that may exist and could limit mine victims' access to services.

**Include survivors and/or their representative organisations in matters that affect them, including in planning and implementation at the national and community levels (Actions 39, 38 and 30)**

34. Croatia reported that mine survivors and their representative organisations are included in relevant programmes and policies.

**CROSS - CUTTING ACTIONS:**

**Demonstrate high levels of national ownership, partnership and coordination (Action 1)**

35. Croatia reported on progresses made in different areas of victim assistance and that victim assistance has been integrated into relevant ministries and other institutions' policies and programmes.

**Ensure that gender, age, disability considerations, and the diverse needs and experiences of people in mine-affected communities including mine survivors, are considered (Action 5)**

36. The Committee recalls that Croatia reported that the field survey that was carried out in cooperation with Switzerland, considered the different needs and perspectives of women, girls, boys and men as well as their age.

*37. The Committee would welcome further information on how Croatia considered gender, age and disability in the implementation of its victim assistance responsibilities.*

**Allocating national financial commitments for victim assistance implementation (Action 40)**

38. Croatia reported that no regular budget is allocated to victim assistance through mine action as victims benefit from relevant ministries' and institutions' programmes and policies in line with the integrated approach applied for the implementation of victim assistance and that all EU funded projects are inclusive of the needs of EO victims.

**Having a resource mobilisation plan (for victim assistance) in place (Action 41)**

39. The Committee would welcome an update in this regard.

SRAAP country reporting tracker							
Victim Assistance							
Croatia							
Actions	Indicators	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	Additional information or clarification requested by the Committee
30	% of affected States Parties that report on the relevant government entity assigned as the focal point to oversee and enhance the integration of victim assistance into broader national policies, plans, budgets, and legal frameworks to ensure its sustainability, including following Article 5 completion;						
	% of affected States Parties that report having an inclusive national action plan in place considering mine and other explosive ordnance victims, gender, age, disability, and other considerations and containing specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-bound objectives;						
	% of affected States Parties that report including mine and other explosive ordnance victims or their representative organisations, in victim assistance planning and implementation at the national and local level;						The Committee would welcome an update in this regard and information on inclusion of representatives of mine survivors in the advisory Commission.
	% of affected States Parties that report on progress and challenges in implementing their national action plans.						
31	% of affected States Parties that report having in place an interministerial and multi-sectoral coordination mechanism to ensure that the needs and rights of mine and other explosive ordnance victims are addressed;						As Croatia is moving towards achieving its Article 5 obligations, the Committee encourages Croatia to accelerate engaging relevant ministries and departments to ensure the long-term sustainability of assistance provided to mine survivors and affected families.
	% of affected States Parties that report including the needs and rights of mine and other explosive ordnance victims in relevant national policies, legal frameworks, and budgets.						
32	% of affected States Parties that report on efforts to identify mine and other explosive ordnance victims and disaggregate victim data by gender, age, disability, and other considerations;						
	% of affected States Parties that report the inclusion of data on mine and other explosive ordnance victims in a national centralised database such as disability data systems and make data available to relevant stakeholders in accordance with data protection regulations/measures.						The Committee would welcome information on integration of data on mine and other EO victims into relevant national centralised database, such as disability data systems.
33	% of affected States Parties that report having a mechanism in place to ensure an efficient and effective emergency response to new casualties;						
	% of affected States Parties that report on availability and accessibility of health services, including in rural and remote areas.						
34	% of affected States Parties that report having a national/sub-administrative referral mechanism in place which is available, accessible, and inclusive for all mine victims;						
	% of affected States Parties that report having a comprehensive directory of services available, accessible, and inclusive for all mine victims.						
35	% of affected States Parties that report on efforts to increase the availability and accessibility of rehabilitation services;						
	% of affected States Parties that report on the provision of assistive technology;						The Committee would welcome an update on availability of assistive technology.
	% of States Parties that report on efforts to increase resources and national capacity to make assistive technology affordable and accessible.						The Committee would welcome information on efforts made to increase resources and national capacity to make assistive technology affordable and accessible.

36	% of affected States Parties that report on mine and other explosive ordnance survivors and affected families accessing mental health and psychological support disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other relevant factors;					
	% of affected States Parties that report on the provision of and integrating peer-to-peer support into public healthcare and other relevant systems.					
37	% of affected States Parties that report on efforts to remove barriers to the social and economic inclusion of mine survivors and affected families;					
	% of affected States Parties that report on programmes for inclusive employment, livelihoods, and other social protection services;					
	% of affected States Parties that report on the number of mine and other explosive ordnance survivors and affected families accessing social and economic services, disaggregated by gender, age, disability, and other relevant factors.					The Committee would welcome an update on progress made in 2024 in this regard.
38	% of affected States Parties that report integrating the safety and protection of mine survivors in their emergency/humanitarian response and preparedness plans;					
	% of affected States Parties that report on mine victims' inclusion and accessibility to programmes for humanitarian assistance, risk reduction, and conflict preparedness and protection.					
39	% of affected States Parties that report on progress in removing physical, social, cultural, political, attitudinal, and communication barriers;					
	% of affected States Parties that report including survivors and/or their representative organisations in matters that affect them, including in planning and implementation at the national and community levels.					
CROSS-CUTTING ACTIONS						
1	% of affected States Parties that report integrating Convention implementation activities into: national development plans and budgets, strategies and budgets including on poverty reduction, humanitarian response, on health and mental health, gender equality inclusion of persons with disabilities, peacebuilding, Human Rights, climate change adaptation plans, environmental protection and improvement, and/or disaster risk reduction					
	% of affected States Parties that report having strengthened partnerships and coordinated Convention implementation activities with relevant humanitarian, peacebuilding, climate, environmental, development, health, disability, and human rights sectors					
5	% of affected States Parties that report national work plans and strategies integrating gender, age, disability considerations, and the diverse needs and experiences of people in mine-affected communities including mine survivors;					The Committee would welcome further information on how Croatia considered gender, age and disability in the implementation of its victim assistance responsibilities.
	% of affected States Parties that report national work plans and strategies developed through inclusive consultation with stakeholders including survivors and representatives of mine-affected communities					The Committee would welcome an update in this regard.
	of mine victims and survivor organisations participating in Convention meetings					The Committee would welcome an update in this regard.
40	% of affected States Parties that report making national financial commitments to their implementation of victim assistance.					The Committee would welcome an update in this regard.
	% of States Parties that report on exploring all sources of funding, including conventional and alternative/innovative					The Committee would welcome an update in this regard.
41	% of affected States Parties that report on progress, challenges in implementation, and requirements for assistance.					
	% of affected States Parties that report having a resource mobilisation plan in place.					The Committee would welcome an update in this regard.
	% of affected States Parties that have taken advantage of the Individualised Approach.					The Committee would welcome an update in this regard.