



## **Statement of the Republic of Croatia on international cooperation and assistance**

### **Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions**

Geneva, 4 – 6 September 2017

Thank you Mr. President.

On 30<sup>th</sup> June 2015 Swiss and Croatian officials signed the Framework Agreement between the Swiss Federal Council and the Government of the Republic of Croatia on implementing the Swiss-Croatian cooperation program aimed at the reduction of economic and social disparities within the enlarged European Union.<sup>1</sup> (The program sees for a grant to Croatia in the amount of 45m CHF for projects implemented in the period between 2016 and 2024.)

The Swiss – Croatian Cooperation Program will support activities which will directly contribute to the betterment of Croatian citizens through a number of projects, including the one which is particularly important for us, “Demining and socio-economic integration”, consisting of demining of a protected forest area and the socio-economic empowerment and reintegration of mine/UXO survivors. For these purposes, a grant of 3.5m CHF has been provided to the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) and the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA). CROMAC serves as the Executing Agency, while GOMA is the Intermediate Body of the Project. At the ceremony held on May 30<sup>th</sup> 2017, Croatian Minister of Regional Development and EU funds (Gabrijela Žalac) and Ambassador of the Swiss Confederation to Croatia (Stefan Estermann) signed the contract, thus officially marking the start of implementation of the project activities.

Contribution of this project will be two folded. First, security conditions for people living in the designated county will be ensured through mine clearance in the parts of heavily-mined forest, which in turn would serve as a precondition

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<sup>1</sup> The Swiss Confederation established on 26 June 2006 a cooperation program “The Swiss Contribution to the EU Enlargement”. The mechanism has so far been used by twelve new EU Member States and Croatia became the 13<sup>th</sup> country to formally participate in the program that aims at reducing the social and economic disparities in the EU.

for economic development of this area. Second, demining will be followed by implementation of concrete measures for survivors and PwD in general.

The overall goal of this project is to achieve a safe and secure environment for the local population with increased economic opportunities in terms of land use and individual socio-economic empowerment, better coordination between different institutions responsible for care for survivors and enhanced capability of actions and resources planning for survivors.

Finally, we would like to use this opportunity to once again, on behalf of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, thank the Government of the Swiss Confederation, for its strong and concrete support to mine action efforts in Croatia, which will certainly contribute to the strengthening of institutional partnerships between the two countries.

Thank you.