



Statement of the Republic of Croatia on victim assistance

Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Geneva, 4 – 6 September 2017

Thank you Mr. President.

Victim assistance-related activities in Croatia are carried out in accordance with legal regulations by government bodies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) with coordinating role of the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA).

The Law on Employment of Disabled Persons has introduced the obligation of people with disabilities' employment quota for real sector (in addition to public sector people with disabilities' employment obligation quota, which is 3%), which means that all employers with at least 20 employees, depending on the total number of employees and activities performed, have to employ related number of people with disabilities.

The Ministry of Homeland War Veterans has introduced a psychosocial and medical support and assistance program for participants and victims of the Homeland War, the Second World War, as well as to the returnees from the peacekeeping missions. There are 21 psychosocial interdisciplinary centers in Croatia, out of which four are regional centers for psychological services that provide psychotherapeutic services, with main centre in Zagreb.

The same Ministry has also initiated a project called the House of Croatian Veterans which is designed as accommodation / rehabilitation institution that will permanently or temporarily reside Homeland War veterans, returnees from the peacekeeping missions, injured deminers and members of their families, civilian war victims, as well as other persons in need, depending on their health status and socio-economic situation. This project has been at work for several months already and five more similar centers are planned for opening in the near future. The House of Croatian Veterans has been entirely financed by the EU funds.

The Office for Mine Action, as a national focal point for victim assistance, has been faced with a two-fold challenge: firstly, according to the Law on Mine Action, which was enacted in October 2015, National Coordination Committee for Assisting Mine/UXO Victims/Survivors has to be appointed by the Government decision which should ensure its “political weight” and also give the Office, as chair of this Committee, more leverage to implement set goals and secondly, “National Action Plan for Assisting Mine/UXO Victims/Survivors” is outdated (it was set for 2010-2014) and has to be updated, the fact which is directly tied to the new set-up of the Coordination Committee. Due to a certain administrative and institutional restructuring/repositioning in 2016, this unfortunately has not been realized yet and we are looking into ways to get these processes back in the political pipeline.

On the other hand, civil society organizations, such as “MineAid” and the Trust Fund “Croatia without Mines”, despite all challenges, have continued their support to persons affected by mines and their family members through psychosocial and economic projects throughout 2016, as extensively reported in our annual Article 7 Transparency Report.

Mine Incidents in 2016

We recorded 5 mine incidents with 7 demining staff victims (6 deminers and 1 auxiliary worker, all male aged between 36 and 60; 3 fatalities and 4 with light injuries), which is an increase in casualties in comparison to 2015.¹

Thank you.

¹ Again, we have to emphasize that, out of last 7 mine incidents which occurred in 2015 and 2016, 5 of them involved bounding anti-personnel mine type PROM-1, which is one of the most dangerous APLMs due to its high sensitivity, instability and lethality. The PROM-1 is particularly difficult to render safe because its fuse becomes unstable after being exposed to weather conditions for several years.