

Mr. Ed Batlak, MoD - THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
Convention on cluster munitions
STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION - PROGRESS REPORT

Slide 1. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to elaborate on the status of our cluster munition destruction program. On behalf of the Croatian Ministry of Defense, I was tasked to prepare the progress report for this years Intersessional meetings.

Slide 2. Croatian Defense Ministry started working with Norwegian Peoples Aid in February 2010 on the implementation of the SHADOW program which was already successfully implemented in Moldova. This step by step program in 2011 scheduled a Research & Development phase which was conducted in Croatia during the time period of 26th June to 07th July.

The objective of this exercise was to disassemble at least one of each type of cluster munition as well as their respective submunitions.

Besides establishing the exact cluster munition internal structure and conducting disassembly training experience for Croatian personnel, main goal of the activity was to determine possible destruction options for the implementation of the stockpile destruction final phase.

Slide 3. All disassembly activities were conducted in an Ammunition Processing Building at Pleso Airbase Military Complex. Permission to work check list were completed and signed, a schedule and safety briefing was conducted and medical assistance teams put in place before the start of proceedings. For most operations, two representatives from NPA and two from the Croatian team were present. Croatian Air Force EOD personnel participated in disassembly of air delivered weapons while the Army EOD teams were present for disassembly of land service ordnance.

Slide 4. All disassembly work was conducted as planed, with all cluster munitions as well as their submunitions being fully disassembled. This slide shows a completely disassembled KB-2, M93 DPICM submunition which is delivered by a 120 mm mortar.

Slide 5. Demolition and burning trials were conducted at the proving ground in Slunj, approximately 60 km south-west of Zagreb. The techniques were selected by the NPA team, while the demolitions were set up jointly with the Croatian personnel.

Slide 6. All explosive demolitions were successful with complete detonation of all submunitions. TMA-3 anti-tank mines were used as donor charges on two occasions and PEP-500 plastic explosive on the third trial.

The trials on second day of demolitions included attempts to burn out secondary high explosive from submunition warheads that were defused during the disassembly process. This procedure was successful with PTAB-2,5M and BL-755 bodies. However the burning trials failed to ignite the explosives in the AO-1 SČ and KB-1 bodies. Combination of black powder and single based powder was used as the ignition source. In this case, the burning option may still be feasible if a high temperature ignition source can be found. Otherwise, removal and disassembly of fuse followed by demolition of body although not ideal would be the best destruction option.

Slide 7. The Croatian MOD considers the Research and Development phase of the NPA shadow program a full success with accomplishment of all its goals and objectives determined at the outset. Viable destruction options were identified. This was also a great learning experience for the Croatian personnel as a preparation for the final stages of the destruction program.

Slide 8. On September 13th 2011, a local fire broke out near the village of Pađane, right outside of town Knin. Helped by strong wind fire quickly spread and despite the joint efforts of local firefighters and Croatian Air force firefighting unit to suppress it, fire reached and engulfed Pađane military storage complex.

Slide 9. Fire triggered several explosions at the storage complex and as a result, among large amounts of munitions and ordinance (all declared non-perspective for future use), part of the Croatian cluster munition stocks was also destroyed. They include: 68 Aerial bombs BL-755, 77 Aerial bombs RBK-250 PTAB-2,5M and 8 Aerial bombs RBK-250 ZAB 2,5M with all of its submunitions. There were no casualties due to this incident. Members of the Support Command supported by AF & AD personnel as well as the Engineering regiment unit are working on sanitizing the area of 5 km radius.

Slide 10. Plans for this year include transfer of all CM stocks to 3 locations taking into the account the safety, capabilities for disassembly processes and proximity to the actual destruction site. All air delivered weapons will be transferred to the AF & AD storage site while the land service ordinance will be moved to the Army storage facilities. During this year, we are also planning disassembly and disposal of all explosive components of the 14 cluster bombs which will be used for safe keeping in military museums as well as for education and training purposes. This activity will serve as formal training and preparation for the final stage of the destruction program.

Slide 11. These are the 14 cluster bombs that the Croatian Armed Forces are planning to keep for training and education purposes as well as for static displays at the military museums. Our delegation will have a separate statement on RETENTION later on.

Slide 12. At present time, Croatian Armed Forces are left with approximately 110 tons of CM stockpiles. Currently, the NPA and Croatian officials are searching for financial resources of about 300 000 euros for the completion of the destruction programme. NPA support thus far immensely helped us with organizational and technical aspects.

Regardless of the NPA's Shadow programme and our current quest for resources, Republic of Croatia is still left with an obligation to destroy its stockpiles of cluster munitions under Article 3. of the Convention. Keeping this in mind, the Croatian MOD and GS have made alternative plans to conclude the destruction process with its own resources.

Thank you for your attention.