

PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF ARTICLE 5 BY CROATIA

I. Progress in implementation

1. Croatia reported that in 2017 it released for civilian use a total of 36,485,259 square metres of area known or suspected to contain anti-personnel mines, including 6,600,192 square metres reduced and cancelled and 29,885,067 square metres cleared. These efforts resulted in the destruction of 1,393 anti-personnel mines, 40 anti-vehicle mines and 4,419 UXOs. In addition, the Croatian Armed Forces reported the clearance of military facilities measuring 481,900 square metres.
2. The Committee observed that the information provided by Croatia on progress in implementation allowed for comparability with that provided previously. The Committee further observed that Croatia could more clearly present implementation progress by using terminology contained within, and in a manner consistent with, the IMAS.
3. The Committee recalled its conclusions presented to the Sixteenth Meeting of the States Parties in 2017 that Croatia could provide increased clarity by employing the Guide to Reporting adopted by the 14MSP.

II. Clarity regarding remaining challenge

4. The Committee observed that Croatia had provided clarity regarding its remaining challenge. Croatia reported that as of the end of 2017 a total hazardous area estimated as remaining to be addressed of 411.5 square kilometres located in 9 countries. This includes 269.51 square kilometres of confirmed hazardous area and 141.95 square kilometres of suspect hazardous area these areas are estimated to contain estimated to contain 32,830 anti-personnel mines and 6,441 anti-vehicle mines.
5. The Committee observed that Croatia could provide additional clarity regarding its remaining challenge by providing a list of the remaining CHAs and SHAs in each county, with this list including the estimated size of each area, the status of each area (i.e., “known” or “suspected”) and information on the geographic location of each area.
6. The Committee also observed that with survey activities ongoing, the remaining challenge could be further clarified by presenting more precise information on the number of areas and size of these areas required to be addressed. The Committee welcomes further information from Croatia on the impact of survey on annual milestones and deadline for completion.

III. National plans for clearance and survey

7. The Committee noted that Croatia submitted a request for extension in 2018 for consideration by the Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties. The Committee noted that the request contained an updated work plan for completion by 01 March 2026, including tables indicating projected annual milestones to be addressed, including 54,400,000 square metres in 2019, 53,700,000 square metres in 2020, 55,500,000 square metres in 2021, 57,200,000 square metres in 2022, 58,600,000 square metres in 2023, 58,200,000 square metres in 2024, and 49,700,000 square metres in 2025.

IV. Efficient and expedient implementation

8. The Committee recalled that in its 2008 extension request, Croatia provided a detailed description of its land release methods, noting that these are undertaken in accordance with its National Mine Action Standards based on the IMAS. The Committee also recalled that in October 2015, the Croatian Parliament adopted a new law regulating mine action, giving the Croatian Mine Action Centre more possibilities to reduce SHAs by using technical survey which was not possible under the previous law and that new regulations and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are currently being elaborated which will prescribe in detail how mine action activities will take place in the field. The Committee recalled in conclusions presented by the Committee to the Sixteenth Meeting of States Parties in that information on these new regulations and SOPs would be welcome.

V. Actions in accordance with plans in extension requests and decisions on them

9. The Committee recalled that the Ninth Meeting of the States Parties (9MSP) had requested Croatia to provide updates with respect to a variety of commitments made and milestones contained in its extension request. The Committee recalled specifically that the 9MSP had requested Croatia to provide updates on its methodology to address SHAs in forested areas. The Committee further recalled Croatia reported to be working on technology for hyperspectral non-technical survey employing unmanned aerial vehicles with the aim to better analyse and define SHAs in forested areas. Reiterating its 2016 and 2017 conclusions, the Committee observed that further information on these methodologies would be welcomed.

VI. Mine risk reduction

10. Croatia has reported in detail on the actions it has taken to effectively exclude the population from CHAs and SHAs, including 77 lectures and presentations to 27,890 citizens in 2017. Croatia also reported 26,800 people were educated through 66 lectures of the, 'Less Arms, less tragedy' campaign conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Interior and relevant police departments. Specific MRE was also given to a variety of associations and users of forested areas, including tourists. The Committee noted the actions taken by Croatia in Mine Risk Education and welcomes further information on its efforts to ensure that these activities are age-appropriate and gender-sensitive, coherent with applicable national and international standards, tailored to the needs of mine-affected communities and integrated into ongoing mine action activities, namely data gathering, clearance and victim assistance as appropriate.