



## **19 Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction**

Mr President, Your Excellences', dear colleagues, ladies and gentlemen,

As we are all aware, an extremely difficult year is behind us, as in all spheres of life, in the field of mine action as well. Nevertheless, I am honored to be here today to express Bosnia and Herzegovina's never-ending strong commitment to resolve long-term threat of antipersonnel mines and explosive remnants of war, within the agreed timeframe under Article 5 of the Convention, as of March 2027.

Fully aware of the fact that we are one of the countries facing a major mine and explosive remnants of war problem, we have accordingly clearly identified key segments that can contribute to the realization of what we set more than two decades ago, so that new generations would not have to live under constant threat in the form of mines and explosive remnants of war.

Despite all the difficulties we are facing constantly, including lack of funding, and non-functional minefield records, along with unpredictable weather conditions, as the main reasons for requesting an extension under Article 5 of the Convention, we are focused on a clear concept of mine action.

We should start from the assumption that the character of the mine problem requires efficient risk management, through continuous assessment of the mine situation, efficient planning and coordination, and linking all components of mine action into an integrated process.

It is very important to emphasize that Bosnia and Herzegovina has made significant progress in all areas of mine action, primarily due to a very good cooperation, with partner countries and donors.

In this regard, at the end of 2020, representatives of fifteen countries, including three NGOs and six international organizations, gathered at a virtual conference entitled "Challenges for Bosnia and Herzegovina without mines" to discuss about the current situation and further steps in supporting Bosnia and Herzegovina to achieve its goal and become a mine-free country. The Federal Government of Germany has thus expressed its readiness to establish a Country Coalition with Bosnia and Herzegovina in order to ensure better regulation and coordination and to develop a common understanding in creating a basis for future joint efforts.

Therefore, on behalf of my country, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the donors, as well as to all the other respected institutions, that have helped us. However, much still remains to be done.

There are still 180,000 mines remain to be found with 133,000 directly endangered people, living within 118 mine suspected municipalities. The current size of the suspect area in Bosnia and Herzegovina is 933 km<sup>2</sup> or 1.82% of the total land area.

In 2021, which was extremely difficult globally, primarily due to the threat in the form of COVID threat, our country was forced to decrease demining operations, but we still managed to release an area of 23km<sup>2</sup>. Using technical methods, 1364 mines and 354 pieces of other explosive remnants of war were removed.

With good indicators in this year, we can assume that the achievement of more significant results compared to the previous one is expected, especially taking into account the implementation of projects financed by donor countries. In this year, we have reached the lag from the previous year, with 54km<sup>2</sup> of mine suspected areas tasks in progress.

The newly established web platform of the mine information system is accessible to the entire population and participants in mine action, and this platform greatly contributes to mine risk education activities.

In the upcoming period, Bosnia and Herzegovina will switch to the IMSMA Core information system, aimed of fully enable operational works, as a better and more transparent system in the country. In order to raise awareness about the danger of mines and reduce risky behavior, 5380 people living or moving near mine suspected areas, were warned about potential danger.

Urgent marking activities have been intensified, within which about 13,000 signs have been placed, all with the aim of continuing decreasing of mine victims.

Although the number of civilian casualties is declining, in 2021, there were unfortunately two accidents with three fatalities. One child, who activated an unknown explosive device and two adults who, during the hunt, despite clearly visible mine markings, entered inside the risk area and activated the PROM-1 mine.

Due to the increased movement of migrants, and in order to increase the capacity of trained personnel for mine warning activities, additional number of people have been trained to perform these activities, within migrant camps and, if necessary, in the field as well.

Providing adequate assistance to landmine survivors is one of the more demanding priorities in this area, as we still face serious challenges, when it comes to the socio-economic reintegration of people with disabilities, as well as the provision of adequate services within medical and rehabilitation facilities. Coordination of all activities is approved and implemented, through a coordination group, established at the state level.

A mine-free world, as a main pillar of stability and peace and as a global goal for all of us, is certain and achievable, if we continue to work together. And most importantly, we must make sure that our words spoken here today are turned into concrete deeds, with results on the ground. It is important not only to continue our efforts, but also to redouble them, in order to make up for the lost time caused by the global pandemic.

As always, Bosnia and Herzegovina will make every effort to complete the remaining activities on the removal of mines and other explosive remnants of the war, in the best possible way and with the assistance of donors and domestic sources of funding.

Thank you for your attention!