



THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

The Fourth Review Conference of the States Parties to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Oslo, 25-29 November 2019

Agenda item 7: Review of the operation and status of the Convention

(i) Cooperation and assistance

by Mr. Damir Trut, PhD.

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WEDNESDAY 27 NOVEMBER

Thank you, Mister President,

Please allow me to report that the Republic of Croatia has made significant headway in the review period also in the field of assistance and cooperation, through numerous bilateral and multilateral activities.

The bilateral meetings were held with the representatives of Columbia, Syria and Norway focusing on mine action and related activities. The bilateral meeting was held with the Ambassador of Syria, and one of the topics of the meeting was planning future activities in demining. One of the examples of good cooperation was with Ukraine in the area of legislation.

Furthermore, the international symposium entitled “Mine Action” has been held annually for 16 consecutive years in Croatia. Around 2.500 participants from 67 countries have participated in the symposium. The symposium featured more than 450 presentations, and around fifty companies from Croatia and the world exhibited their mine action equipment there. The symposium is aimed at representatives of national mine action centres, demining companies, competent ministries, manufacturers of demining equipment, donors, scientists and representatives of other civilian and military structures involved in mine action. We always strive to keep the main topics current and relevant to mine action community, for example: new technologies in mine action, improvised explosive devices, mine victim assistance, exchange of experience, financial frameworks for demining and – of course – promotion and implementation of provisions of Antipersonnel Landmine Convention (APLC). The said symposium serves as a platform for various meetings on the margins for all participants, with the aim of strengthening partnerships at all levels. One of those meetings is The South-Eastern Europe Mine Action Coordination Council (SEEMAC) meeting, during which countries of the region exchange experiences and plan joint cross-border projects. Preparations for the 17th International Symposium, which will be held in 2020, on the Adriatic Sea, are already underway. I would like to use this opportunity to invite you to Croatia.

Within the five-year period, I wish to emphasise an excellent cross-border cooperation with Hungary. On the basis of this cooperation, we managed to obtain significant EU grants through two projects and managed to completely clear hazardous areas along Hungarian-Croatian border.

Through the “Demining and Socio-Economic Integration” project, financed by the Swiss Confederation in the wider framework of the “Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme”, a remarkable cooperation was achieved, which resulted in demining one part of the most mine-contaminated areas of Croatia (Kotar forest) and in obtaining funds intended to Mine Victim Assistance.

I would like to briefly report also on the CROMAC- *Centre for Testing, Development and Training* activities. The Centre deals with training, equipment testing and developing new technologies. This limited company carried out courses for nearly all demining centres in the region, for the Jordan Centre, members of Iraqi Ministry of Health and Environment, members of Serbian-Russian humanitarian centre, Serbian Mine Action Centre and many others.

International assistance and cooperation in the field of mine action will certainly be one of the cornerstones of Croatian mine action strategy for the period 2020-2026, principally because of the knowledge and experience gained, educated and developed capacities and other elements of Croatian mine action system, as well as the intention to share all this with the wider mine action community.

In conclusion, Mister President, the Republic of Croatia supports the guidelines of the Action Plan in the field of cooperation and assistance and will readily implement them.