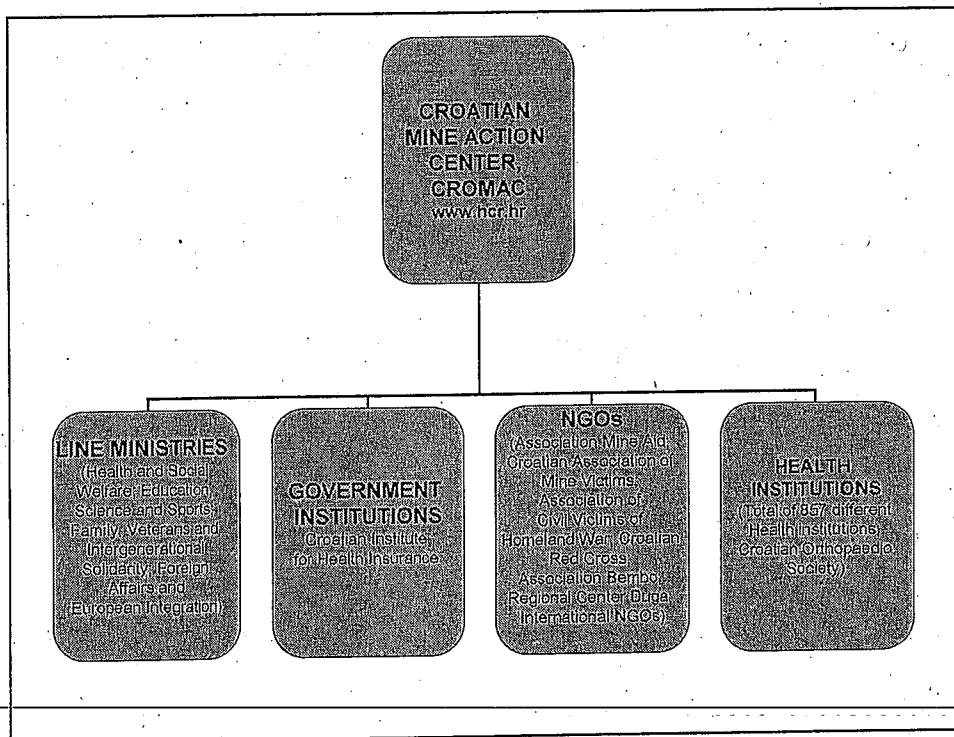


# VICTIM ASSISTANCE IN CROATIA

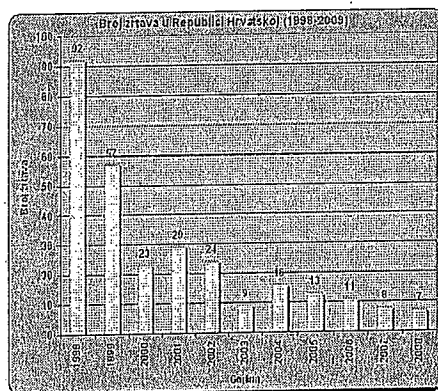
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## GOAL OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

- Provide to landmine/cluster/ERW victims reintegration into everyday life and work.
- Croatia doesn't differentiate between landmine/cluster/ERW victims.
- At the moment, there are 410 registered **civilian landmine/cluster/ERW victims** (334 injured and 76 family members) that enjoy the appropriate status and rights.
- The total number of landmine/cluster/ERW casualties is unknown. CROMAC recorded 1,951 casualties between 1991-2007 (501 people killed, 1,414 injured and 36 unknown)
- In 2008 there were 6 mine incidents with 7 victims: 2 killed, 4 with heavy physical injury and 1 light physical injury. It is the lowest annual rate of mine victims recorded.

Number of victims in Croatia (1998-2009)



## FOUR PILLARS OF VICTIM ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

1. First aid and further permanent medical care, including subsidies to individuals and family members.
2. Physical rehabilitation.
3. Psychological help and social reintegration.
4. Professional and economic rehabilitation.

## FIRST AID AND FURTHER PERMANENT MEDICAL CARE

- Croatia has well developed structure of public health, numbering a total of 857 health institutions.
- Landmine/cluster/ERW victims enjoy same rights as other health insured individuals, according to the Law on Health Protection and the Law on Mandatory Health Insurance.
- According to the Law on Protection of Military and Civil War Victims, victims and their families can enjoy special rights: personal or family pension, subsidy for extra care, orthopaedic device, professional rehabilitation, free school books, priority in educational institutions, student housing, social housing, certain taxing, work benefits and employment schemes covered by the Law on Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons.

## PHYSICAL REHABILITATION.

- There are clinical centers in 4 major cities in Croatia that provide physical rehabilitation services, 29 specialized hospitals and one Institute for Rehabilitation and Orthopaedic Devices in Zagreb.
- A number of private producers of orthopaedic and other devices employing licenced orthopaedic technicians, and 400 registered companies for import of such.
- Landmine/cluster/ERW victims enjoy rights under the Law on Protection of Military and Civil War Victims.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP AND SOCIAL REINTEGRATION.

- Ministry of Family, Veterans and Intergenerational Solidarity has established a network of Centers for Psycho-Social Assistance in all of the 20 counties of the Republic of Croatia, as well as in the City of Zagreb.
- NGOs, domestic and foreign, including summer and winter workshops for children mine victims by the Center "Duga" in Rovinj, travelling theater plays, picture books and animation films (age-sensitive victim assistance).

## PROFESSIONAL AND ECONOMIC REHABILITATION

- This pillar of victim assistance features as the priority, according to the public survey of the Croatian Demining Center.
- Law on Employment and Professional Rehabilitation, and its Fund for Professional Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities encourages companies and organisations to employ persons with disabilities, but also incites the persons with disabilities on self-employment by granting schemes and assistance in equipment from the state budget.
- Law on Free Legal Help ensures all the legal assistance necessary in establishing own business.
- Law on Humanitarian demining ensures special rights for pyrotechnicians and their families.
- Regional Center for Psycho-Social Rehabilitation of Children and Youth Victims for South-East Europe in Rovinj, is the biggest single common project of the governmental and non-governmental sector. It is in its final stages of completion.

## NATIONAL STRATEGY FOR EQUALIZING OPPORTUNITIES FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES, 2007-2015.

- Larger framework of dealing with assistance, rehabilitation and most importantly, reintegration into society of the persons with disabilities, includes landmine/cluster/ERW victims indiscriminately.
- National Strategy was adopted on June 5, 2007.
- It consists of 101 measures, with defined responsibilities, activities and deadlines, implementation indicators and funds needed.
- Republic of Croatia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities, as well as its Optional Protocol on August 15, 2007.

- Obviously, Croatia has a wide-ranging legislation addressing the rights and entitlements of persons with disabilities indiscriminate to landmine/cluster/ERW victims, including in its Constitutional provisions and by ratifying all international binding legal instruments in the field.
- However, a lot remains to be done in the effective implementation.

- Weaknesses were spotted and partly reported, mainly in Croatia's annual reports to the APMBC, at Croatia's statements during recent Annual State Parties Meetings of the APMBC, in the European Community National Progress Reports on Croatia, as well as Landmine Monitor excellent work.

- Provisions of continuous psychosocial rehabilitation and reintegration remains weak.
- Emergency teams, as well as rehabilitation specialists are unevenly distributed across the country.
- Reported slowness in providing home visits to survivors by the County Centers for Psychosocial Support.
- Persons with disabilities continue to face employment challenges, especially outside of Zagreb.
- Military mine/cluster/ERW survivors injured during the war receive much higher financial support than civilian survivors.

### REGIONAL PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND REHABILITATION CENTER "DUGA", ROVINJ

- I would hope that by the next presentation of Croatia in any disarmament forum, we will be able to announce the completion of the Regional Psychosocial Support and Rehabilitation Center in Rovinj, "Duga" that could accommodate around **500 children and youth victims and their families from South-East Europe per year.**
- It is the unique project initiated by Dr. Dijana Pleština and funded entirely by donations. It is at its final stages of completion. I would like to thank the generous donors up to date, namely Monaco who is at the moment reviewing the project on the spot.

Behind all the words and numbers, strategies, laws and charts, we have to keep in mind that it is people and their lives we are talking about in VA – individuals, families and communities.

There are many inspiring stories of amazing strength that survivors can tell us, and one of them stroke me greatly recently – not from Croatia, but they are all universal anyway. It is the Miss Landmine 2008 event held in Angola.

