



STATEMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA ON VICTIM ASSISTANCE

CCW Protocol V Meeting of Experts Geneva, 12 April 2013

Mr. Coordinator, distinguished delegates, dear colleagues,

On behalf of the delegation of Croatia I would like to express our pleasure at participating in the work of this year's Protocol V MoE. In our effort to ensure that adequate measures for the provision of assistance to ERW and UXO victims are being taken, we can report on the following in 2012.

Coordination and Planning

The National Coordinating Body for Mine and UXO Victims was established in 2010 based on recommendations from Cartagena Action Plan (CAP) and Vientiane Action Plan (VAP), as well as on obligations from the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD). Its main task was drafting the National Action Plan for Mine and UXO Victims 2010 - 2014 and overall coordination of victim assistance system in Croatia. Due to a number of reasons the Coordinating Body in 2012 did not organized meeting or any other activity. This is mainly due to the fact that in December 2011 Croatia held general elections after which a new government was elected. This resulted in a number of administrative and technical changes in all spheres of governmental structure meaning new people taking over posts and duties and institutions switching responsibilities over different areas. Bluntly said, the whole system took time to reshape and to get used to a new situation.

Due to described situation there was not any revision of the the National Action Plan for Mine and UXO Victims 2010-2014 in 2012 and not any (f)actual monitoring of the Plan's implementation in 2012 apart from obligatory overview done by the relevant institutions in each of the sectors involved.

Office for Mine Action

In 2012 Croatian Government established Office for Mine Action as a governmental body in charge of expert, analytical, counseling, coordinative and other activities regarding the mine action in Croatia. As such, the Office also monitors the work, activities and operations of the Croatian Mine Action Center. One of the Office's main goals is to raise the awareness of general population about the dangers of mines and

UXOs as well as to create the adequate conditions for the development of mine action in Croatia.

Croatia and CRPD

Croatia ratified the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2007 and accordingly adopted National Strategy for Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities 2007 – 2015. Focal point for the CRPD is Ministry of Social Policy and Youth. Office for adults and persons with disabilities is an administrative organization within the Ministry of Social Policy and Youth which co-ordinates implementation of the national policy for persons with disabilities and implementation of the CRPD.

Croatia's Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities' role is more to advocate, propose measures, make recommendations, inform and to report on actions taken. The Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities in 2012 reported difficulties in the provision of necessary services to people with disabilities and children with disabilities. Although the changes to ensure accessibility for PwDs are continuing, they are not developing in accordance with the set plans.

Medical assistance

In the framework of the reorganization of the Emergency Medicine in 2011 and 2012 the Croatian Institute for Health Insurance has signed contracts for the implementation of the emergency medicine activities with the County Departments of Emergency Medicine. Also every doctor in the primary health care is required to provide emergency medical assistance and if necessary arrange transport of the victim to the hospital. In exceptional cases it is possible, in cooperation with state institutions, to provide helicopter or ship transport of the patient.

Survivor Inclusion

Survivors and their representative organizations collaborated in preparing national reports for both OTW and CCM as well CCW in 2012. NGO representatives were also contacted by the government officials to discuss/offer their views on the planned national statements. But survivors did not participate as members of the government delegation to international meetings.

NGO Activities in 2012

The Association for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities reported decrease of the services and number of people that could assist. Still they organized individual support for mine victims as a new activity in 2012. They were also involved in activity that supports employment of PwDs and became a member of the working group that is drafting the Law on Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment of Persons with Disabilities.

MineAid continued to address the needs and lack of appropriate services identified by mine/ERW survivors in the past years. It provided psychological support groups for adults and children; visits by social workers to implement tailored, individual plans for improving health, education or social inclusion and financial assistance. During 2012 due to the reduction of personnel and financial capacity number of services decreased. In the same time Centre M.A.R.E. started with new activities such as psychosocial rehabilitation of mine survivors and their families. These activities gather 34 survivors including children and conducted number of workshops during the summer 2012.

Croatian Employment Service

In the period from 01 January to 31 December 2012 through CES mediation 1421 people with disabilities were employed. In order to increase employability in 2012 the 779 persons with disabilities were enrolled in some form of active employment policy, which is an increase of 25.4% compared to the number involved in active labor market measures in 2011.

Legislation, policies, human rights and equality

During 2012 new Law on Social Welfare was adopted. Novelty regard PwDs is Inclusive supplement - financial support for PwDs to help them create conditions for equal opportunities in their daily life's involvement.

ERW Risk Education

During 2012 ERW risk education programs for about 1700 elementary school students were conducted in different regions of Croatia. Experts from the Croatian Mine Action Centre also participated in different radio and TV programs raising the awareness of civilian population on ERW potential risks.

ERW risk education along with the precise marking of the mine and ERW suspected areas greatly contributed to the reduced number of victims in the last few years. For example, in 2011 we recorded 6 ERW victims, while last year that number was down to 3. We recommend to affected State Parties with large contaminated areas that will take some time to clear to consider the improvement of their civilian education programs in order to reduce the number of future ERW victims. These programs do not require great financial resources in comparison to the lifetime psychological and physical treatments of a potential victim.

Therefore, we are looking forward to sending an annual report with the big zero next to the number of ERW victims.

Thank you Mr. Coordinator.

