

CROATIA

ARTICLE 4 DEADLINE: 1 AUGUST 2020 (ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE)

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	2015	2014
Problem understood	9	9
Target date for completion of cluster munition clearance	7	7
Targeted clearance	7	7
Efficient clearance	7	6
National funding of programme	9	9
Timely clearance	6	6
Land-release system in place	7	6
National mine action standards	7	7
Reporting on progress	6	6
Improving performance	7	7
PERFORMANCE SCORE: GOOD	7.2	7.0

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Croatia's mine action programme strengthened in 2015. A new mine action law was adopted in October 2015, which incorporates the latest International Mine Action Standards (IMAS). This will enable more efficient land release through better use of survey to confirm contamination and to cancel or reduce areas not contaminated with cluster munition remnants (CMR).

RECOMMENDATION FOR ACTION

→ Croatia should adopt and present a strategic plan for completion of its clearance obligations under the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM).

CONTAMINATION

At the end of 2015, Croatia had 2.64km² of area confirmed to contain CMR. Contamination, which is located across four counties, is estimated to total 4,675 unexploded KB-1 submunitions across 11 confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) (see Table 1).¹ The extent of contamination is a reduction of 0.18km² compared to the situation at the end of 2014.² The decrease in contaminated area resulting from clearance in 2015 was partly offset by the discovery of 0.25km² of previously unrecorded CMR contamination.³

Croatia was contaminated with unexploded KB-1 and MK-1 submunitions by the conflicts in the 1990s that followed the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. While Croatia was affected by the 2014 Balkan floods, none of the CMR-affected areas was flooded.⁴ The Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) reports that CMR have more of a socio-economic than humanitarian impact, as many of the contaminated areas are in regions used for cattle breeding.⁷

Table 1: **CMR contamination by county at the end of 2015⁴**

County	CHAs	Area (m ²)
Karlovac	0	0*
Lika-Senj	4	705,208
Zadar	4	937,619
Šibenik-Knin	2	232,611
Split-Dalmatia	1	765,490
Totals	11	2,640,928

* CMR clearance in Karlovac county was completed in 2015.⁵

Other ERW and Landmines

Croatia is heavily contaminated by other unexploded ordnance (UXO) and anti-personnel mines.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

CROMAC was established on 19 February 1998 as the umbrella organisation for the coordination of mine action.⁸ The CROMAC Board (formerly called the CROMAC Council), an oversight and strategic planning body, which used to meet at least four times a year,⁹ has been meeting almost every month to discuss progress in implementing the annual workplan and other issues.¹⁰

In April 2012, the government created the Office for Mine Action (OMA), reporting to the Prime Minister's office, to function as a focal point for mine action, strengthening coordination among stakeholders and funding agencies, and raising public awareness about mine and cluster munition hazards.¹¹ The OMA does not sit above CROMAC; it is the government institution dealing with the political aspects of mine action whereas CROMAC deals with operations.¹²

Strategic Planning

CROMAC has a National Mine Action Strategy 2009–2019, which includes among its main goals the tackling of CMR in accordance with the obligations of the CCM.¹³ There is, though, no strategic plan for the release of all areas containing CMR. According to Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC's Assistant Director for International Cooperation and Education, all CMR-contaminated areas are cleared in accordance with county and state priorities, taking into consideration obligations in treaties to which Croatia is a state party.¹⁴

1 Emails from Miljenko Vahtaric, Assistant Director for International Cooperation and Education, Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC), 13 and 18 May 2016; and CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.

2 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 10 June 2015.

3 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.

4 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 and 18 May 2016; and CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.

5 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and CCM Article 7 report (for 2015).

6 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 27 April 2015.

7 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

8 CROMAC, "National Mine Action Strategy of Croatia 2009–2019", Zagreb, June 2009, p. 2.

9 Interview with Nataša Matesa Mateković, Director, Planning and Analysis Department, CROMAC, Sisak, 29 February 2008; extract from "Law on Humanitarian Demining", National Gazette (Narodne Novine), No. 153/05, 28 December 2005; and interview with Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, Sisak, 14 April 2014.

10 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 10 June 2015.

11 Interviews with Dijana Pleština, Director, OMA, in Geneva, 23 May 2012 and 10 April 2014; and email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 4 July 2013.

12 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 3 June 2016.

13 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

14 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 10 June 2015.

Standards

A new mine action law was drafted by a working group established by the Ministry of Interior, and consisting of representatives from key actors in the national mine action sector, including the OMA, the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Defense, CROMAC, and unions and employers' associations active in demining.¹⁵

The Law on Mine Action was adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 21 October 2015, and incorporates developments in the latest IMAS, and specifically those relating to the use of technical survey to confirm the presence or absence of contamination.¹⁶ The 2015 law introduces a new procedure for "supplementary general survey" (i.e. non-technical survey (NTS)) and enables "exclusion" (i.e. reduction) of SHAs through technical survey.¹⁷ According to CROMAC, the new Law on Mine Action has eliminated the need for Standing Operating Procedures (SOPs), as all aspects of mine action are now clearly defined in the new law.¹⁸ National Mine Action Standards are also encompassed within the new Law.¹⁹

It had been observed previously that Croatia's land release system was more suited to addressing mined areas, and no specific land release system was in place for CMR. In particular, technical survey was not being used to release land efficiently.²⁰ Subsequently, a working group under the Ministry of Interior developed a regulation that lays down distinct technical survey procedures for mines and for CMR. The regulation was also passed in 2015, and was being translated into English as at May 2016.²¹

Quality Management

With the adoption of the new Law on Mine Action in late 2015, the required internal quality control (QC) for clearance operators has increased from a minimum of 1% to 5%, in order to increase safety and the quality of demining operations. In addition, CROMAC quality assurance (QA) officers review a minimum of 5% of control samples at least every three days, and final quality management is conducted by a commission with two representatives from CROMAC and one from the Ministry of Interior.²²

Operators

In January 2015, 40 commercial companies, with a total capacity of 650 deminers, 55 machines, and 30 mine detection dogs (MDDs), were accredited to conduct CMR and mine clearance. By the end of the year, capacity had increased to 46 accredited commercial companies with a total of 653 deminers, 55 demining machines, and 42 MDDs.²³ The majority of assets were deployed in mine clearance. CMR clearance capacity has remained constant, and will continue to do so, as current capacity is deemed sufficient for planned activities.²⁴

Following the adoption of the new mine action law, CROMAC envisages that MUNGOS, a state-owned clearance operator, will be more involved in technical survey, in addition to clearance.²⁵

LAND RELEASE

Croatia released almost 0.43km² of CMR area by clearance in 2015. During 2015, clearance of CMR contamination in Karlovac county was completed.²⁶

Survey in 2015

CROMAC identified and confirmed 253,264m² as CMR-contaminated area in 2015 through NTS, following information received from the police about contamination discovered in the town of Šibenik in Šibenik-Knin county.²⁷

15 CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.

16 Ibid.

17 Emails from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 and 18 May 2016; and CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.

18 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.

19 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

20 Email from Darvin Lisica, Programme Manager, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norwegian People's Aid, 3 March 2015.

21 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 18 May 2016.

22 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

23 Ibid.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

26 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and CCM Article 7 report (for 2015).

27 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 18 May 2016. Croatia's CCM Article 7 report (for 2015) states that the new contamination was found in Zadar and Split-Dalmatia counties, but CROMAC subsequently confirmed that in fact it was all found in Šibenik-Knin county.

Clearance in 2015

Croatia released 429,445m² of area containing CMR in 2015, all through clearance, and destroyed 101 submunitions (see Table 2).²⁸ This is a significant decrease compared to the 0.66km² of CMR-contaminated area cleared in 2014.²⁹ The majority of clearance was conducted by MUNGOS and the remainder by commercial demining companies.

The 101 CMR discovered during clearance in 2015 were destroyed in situ, comprising of 100 KB-1 submunitions and 1 MK-1 submunition.³¹

Demining machines were deployed more frequently in 2015 than the year before, reflecting the agricultural nature of many of the project areas. MDDs were also used in CMR operations in 2015.³²

CROMAC's priorities for 2016 were to reduce the extent of CMR contamination and to maintain the marking of all CHAs containing CMR.³³ Croatia started many projects in 2015 with a view to releasing all agricultural land from contamination. At the end of 2015, 12.9% of the remaining CMR-contaminated land was defined as agricultural; 86.8% as forested, and 0.3% as "other area" (e.g. water, marshland, landslides, coast).³⁴ Much of the contaminated forest is designated as national parkland, or Natura 2000 area, and is therefore protected land.³⁵

Table 2: **Clearance of CMR-contaminated area in 2015**³⁰

Operator	County	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)	Submunitions destroyed
MUNGOS	Šibenik-Knin	1	299,233	48
Tetrazen	Zadar	1	110,101	52
Zeleni Kvadrat	Karlovac	1	20,111	1
Totals		3	429,445	101

ARTICLE 4 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 4 of the CCM, Croatia is required to destroy all CMR in areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 August 2020. It is on track to meet this deadline.

In 2015, Croatia contributed around €4 million (approximately US\$4.5 million) in national funding towards the cost of CROMAC, and around €22 million to cover the cost of survey and clearance of mined areas.³⁶ CROMAC expected to receive increased funding in 2016, especially from European Union (EU) funds.³⁷ More resources for CMR clearance have already been provided by the European Fund for Rural Development (EUFDR).³⁸ In September 2015, Croatia hosted the First CCM Review Conference in Dubrovnik.

Croatia has cleared a total of almost 3.6km² over the past five years, but annual clearance has decreased successively over the last three years, as illustrated in Table 3. Despite this, Croatia foresees no obstacles in meeting its CCM Article 4 obligations, and has predicted that clearance of CMR-contaminated areas will be completed by the end of 2018,³⁹ well in advance of its August 2020 Article 4 deadline.

Table 3: **Five-year summary of clearance**⁴⁰

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2015	0.43
2014	0.66
2013	1.15
2012	0.77
2011	0.58
Total	3.59

28 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

29 CCM Article 7 Report (for 2014), Form F.

30 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

31 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 18 May 2016.

32 Ibid.

33 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 See Cluster Munition Monitor reports on clearance in Croatia covering 2011–14.