CROATIA

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2019
(NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE)

PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE	For 2015	For 2014
Problem understood	7	7
Target date for completion of mine clearance	7	7
Targeted clearance	7	7
Efficient clearance	8	8
National funding of programme	7	7
Timely clearance	7	7
Land release system in place	7	6
National mine action standards	7	7
Reporting on progress	6	6
Improving performance	7	6
PERFORMANCE SCORE: GOOD	7.0	6.8

PERFORMANCE COMMENTARY

Croatia's mine action programme performed better in 2015, due to a further increase in annual clearance output and the adoption of a new mine action law in October 2015. The new law incorporates developments in the latest International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), introducing a new procedure for non-technical survey (NTS), and enabling reduction of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) through technical survey, which was not possible under the previous law.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- **Croatia should ensure it fully uses both NTS and technical survey, to efficiently confirm areas of contamination and to discredit suspected areas that are not contaminated.**
- **Croatia should better regulate its commercial tendering process to discourage fragmentation of the demining market.**

CONTAMINATION

Croatia is affected by mines and, to a much lesser extent, explosive remnants of war (ERW), including cluster munition remnants (CMR); a legacy of four years of armed conflict associated with the breakup of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. At the end of 2015, total confirmed mined area was just over 294km^2, across 66 CHAs, while mines were suspected to cover a further 189km^2, across 55 suspected SHAs (see Table 1).[1]

The 483km^2 of combined suspected and confirmed contamination is higher than the figure reported in Croatia's Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 7 transparency report for 2015 and its Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 report. The lower figure of 467km^2 (which also contains 3.84km^2 of unexploded ordnance (UXO)) is explained on the basis that it takes into account areas physically cleared in 2015, but which had not yet been certified for handover.[2]

In 2015, mine clearance was completed in Vukovar-Srijem county,[3] leaving nine counties out of a total of twenty-one still mine-affected, across 68 municipalities and towns.[4] Records indicate that a total of 37,118 anti-personnel mines and 6,620 anti-vehicle mines contaminate the nine counties.[5] In addition, a further estimated 25,330 anti-personnel mines, and 1,035 anti-vehicle mines are reported to need clearance from military facilities in Croatia, including three barracks, three training sites, four storage sites, and one radar station.[6]

1 Emails from Miljenko Vahtarić, Assistant Director for International Cooperation and Education, Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC), 13 May and 24 August 2016.

2 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 24 August 2016.

3 Ibid., 13 May 2016.

4 Ibid.; APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C; and Annex to the Statement of Croatia, Clearance session, APMBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.

5 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

6 Ibid.

Table 1: Mined area by county as at end 2015[7]

County	CHAs	Area (km²)	SHAs	Area (km²)
Brod-Posavina	1	3.69	1	0.23
Karlovac	10	18.45	9	35.53
Lika-Senj	9	102.65	9	41.7
Osijek-Baranja	13	39.54	10	27.65
Požega-Slavonia	2	26.03	2	4.78
Split-Dalmatia	4	18.82	2	3.70
Sisak-Moslavina	10	45.40	9	46.60
Šibenik-Knin	7	20.79	5	7.89
Zadar	10	18.66	8	21.52
Totals	**66**	**294.03**	**55**	**189.40***

* A further 30.4km² of SHA concerns military training sites and warehouses. CROMAC does not possess detailed information about this contamination, but believes it to be mainly UXO, with an estimated 1.75km² of mined area.[8]

Mine contamination includes areas on Croatia's border with Hungary, where there is still 3.6km² of SHA within 1km of the border. The area along the borderline was cleared in 2013, as part of the EU IPA Cross Border Cooperation Programme 2007–2013, in a minimum width of 50 metres.[9]

Croatia was impacted by the flood disaster that hit a number of states across south-eastern Europe in May 2014, though in Croatia only 2.2km² of SHA in three municipalities in Vukovar-Srijem county was affected. According to CROMAC, there was no change in contamination because the river bank was breached downstream of the SHAs.[10] After the floods, though, CROMAC made demining the flooded areas a priority. Clearance of the most critical SHA, between the river bank and railway line in Gunja municipality, started as soon as the waters receded, an "in-kind donation" of services by Croatian demining companies.[11]

The remaining SHA in two areas along the flood-affected border with Serbia, located in Vrbanja and Nijemci municipalities, was subsequently released as planned in 2015, and the county of Vukovar-Srijem (including the municipalities of Vrbanja and Nijemci, within the county) was cleared of all mines.[12]

A United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia, completed in late 2014, praised CROMAC's cooperation in and coordination of an effective risk education, survey and marking response during and after the flooding. Nevertheless, it warned that had the problem been larger, capacity to respond in such a timely and effective way would have been lacking.[13] It recommended better integration of mine action into disaster response planning.[14]

As at the end of 2015, 86.6% of suspected contaminated area was reported as being on forested land, much of which is protected as national park or Natura 2000 area; 12.9% was on agricultural land; and 0.3% on other areas (water, marshland, coast, etc.).[15] The percentage of contamination on agricultural land decreased from 19% to 12.9% throughout 2015, due to the prioritisation of agricultural land for clearance.[16]

7 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016

8 Emails from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May and 24 August 2016; and APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

9 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 24 August 2016.

10 Ibid., 20 April 2015.

11 Ibid.

12 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

13 UNDP, "Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia", 2014, p. 3.

14 Ibid., p. 4.

15 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

16 Ibid.

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

CROMAC was established on 19 February 1998 as the umbrella organisation for mine action coordination.[17] CROMAC had 127 employees at the end of 2015.[18] The CROMAC Council, an oversight and strategic planning body, consists of a president, appointed by the country's Prime Minister, and ten members, appointed from the ministries of defence, finance, and interior, as well as eminent persons. According to CROMAC's statute and mandate, the Council should meet on a monthly basis to discuss issues such as progress in implementing the annual plan.[19] However, the four-year mandate period of government-appointed members has expired, and since August 2016, the council has not been meeting as often as before.[20]

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, strengthen coordination among stakeholders and funding agencies, and raise public awareness about mine hazards.[21] The OMA does not sit above CROMAC; rather, it is the government institution dealing with the political aspects of mine action whereas CROMAC deals with operations.[22] The OMA includes a Unit for European Union (EU) Funds tasked with promoting access of the mine action sector to a range of EU funds.[23] The establishment of the OMA has elevated the status of mine action as it can politically pressure the government and international actors in ways that CROMAC, as a technical body, cannot.[24]

Strategic Planning

Croatia's 2008 Article 5 deadline extension request set out annual demining targets and strategic goals, including elimination of all mine threat to housing and areas planned for the return of displaced people by 2010; to infrastructure by 2011; to agricultural land by 2013; and to forest areas by 2018.[25] While clearance of the mine threat to housing and infrastructure is now complete, Croatia missed its target on agricultural land, which remained contaminated as at the end of 2015.

CROMAC also has a National Mine Action Strategy 2009–2019, which was approved by the Croatian Parliament in September 2009, and includes the goal of all mine clearance by 2019.[26] Mine clearance priorities are divided into three main groups – safety, socio-economic, and ecological. The main goal was to complete demining of the safety priority areas and part of the socio-economic subgroup in 2016. The aim is to improve safety and promote economic development, with priorities set in collaboration with local authorities. After release of the highest priority areas has been completed, the focus will be on confirmed hazardous areas.[27]

Legislation and standards

A Law on Humanitarian Demining was adopted in 2005 and entered into force on 5 January 2006.[28] A 2007 amendment to the law elaborated responsibilities and human resource requirements, and a second amendment in 2008 clarified responsibilities for quality control (QC).[29] The law assigns the Croatian army responsibility for clearing all military areas.[30]

In 2014, 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 Defence, CROMAC, and unions and employers' associations active in demining.[31]

The new Law on Mine Action, which was adopted by Parliament on 21 October 2015 (Official Gazette, 110/5), incorporates developments from the latest IMAS, specifically those relating to the use of technical survey to confirm the presence or absence of contamination.[32] It also 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, which was not possible under the previous law.[33] Under the new law, CROMAC can use technical survey to release land, and to better define and confirm minefields for which it has no record.[34]

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

18 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 24 August 2016.

19 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 Vahtarić, CROMAC, Sisak, 14 April 2014; and emails, 9 June 2015 and 24 August 2016.

20 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 24 August 2016.

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

22 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 3 June 2016.

23 Interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, in Geneva, 11 April 2013, and email, 4 July 2013.

24 Interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, Sisak, 14 April 2014.

25 National Mine Action Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, 2008, at: http://www.hcr.hr/pdf/Strategija%20eng.pdf.

26 CCW Protocol V Report (for 2015), Form B.

27 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

28 "Law on Humanitarian Demining", National Gazette, No. 153/05, 28 December 2005.

29 "Law on Amendments to the Law on Humanitarian Demining", National Gazette (*Narodne Novine*), No. 63/2007; and CROMAC, "Rules and Legislation, Standard Operational Procedure", at: www.hcr.hr/en/sop.asp.

30 "Law on Humanitarian Demining", National Gazette, No. 153/05, 28 December 2005.

31 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.

32 CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A; CCW Protocol V (for 2015), Form I.

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

34 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 9 June 2015.

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.[35] National Mine Action Standards are also encompassed within the new Law.[36]

Under the new law, the Ministry of the Interior now assesses authorised legal entities for conducting demining; this was formerly CROMAC's responsibility.[37] With regard to accreditation, the Ministry of Interior now provides three separate permits: approval for manual mine detection, approval for mechanical mine detection, and approval for operations by mine and UXO detection dogs. This replaces the former unified accreditation license.[38] Changes to national criminal law have resulted in an increase from around 30 misdemeanour articles to more than 150, meaning that demining is now comprehensively regulated under domestic legislation. Control of demining has also been set at a higher institutional level.[39]

Quality Management

In 2015, QC was performed on 5,180 sampling lots covering a sampling area of 544,197m^2, which on average represented 1.39% of demined area.[40] Companies were ordered to repeat clearance in four projects, over a total surface area of 136,435m^2.[41]

With the adoption of the new Law on Mine Action, supervision during and after survey and clearance has been replaced by QC and quality assurance (QA). Subsequently, internal QC demanded of 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 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.[42]

Operators

As a result of conditions for earlier World Bank funding, Croatia has an unusually commercialised mine action sector, with almost all civil clearance conducted by local companies competing for tenders. CROMAC believes this model of privatised clearance is faster, cheaper, and more efficient.[43] Much foreign donor funding is tendered by ITF Enhancing Human Security, while CROMAC manages tendering for the Croatian government and EU money in accordance with the Law on Public Procurement. The trust fund, "Croatia without Mines", raises money from private sources.[44]

The exception to the commercial tendering system is the state-owned enterprise MUNGOS, which is directly assigned a sufficient number of tasks by CROMAC to keep it solvent while it slowly phases down clearance operations.[45] CROMAC stated that restructuring had improved MUNGOS's efficiency, and that following the adoption of the new mine action law in October 2015, MUNGOS will conduct technical survey for CROMAC.[46] A representative of the Association of Demining Entrepreneurs expressed dissatisfaction with the ongoing privileged status of MUNGOS.[47] NGOs are barred from competing for commercial tenders as CROMAC views their subsidy by other funds as unfair.[48]

As at the start of 2015, 40 commercial companies, with a total capacity of 650 deminers, 55 machines, and 30 mine detection dogs (MDDs), were accredited to conduct mine and CMR clearance. By the end of the year, capacity had increased to 46 accredited companies with a total of 653 deminers, 55 demining machines, and 42 MDDs.[49] Most assets were deployed for mine clearance.

The capacity actually employed varies according to the overall economy, demand and supply, and the strict accreditation process. In early December 2015, Croatia reported that 48 demining companies, 662 deminers, 86 auxiliary workers, 708 metal detectors, 63 demining machines, and 42 detection dogs had been used for survey and clearance in 2015.[50]

35 Ibid., 13 May 2016; and CCM Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form A.
36 Email from Miljenko Vahtaric, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.
37 Ibid., 24 August 2016.
38 Ibid.
39 Ibid.
40 CCW Protocol V (for 2015), Form A.
41 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 21 October 2016.
42 Ibid., 13 May 2016; and APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.
43 Interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, Sisak, 14 April 2014.
44 Ibid.
45 Ibid.; and interview with Amira Savranovic, Director, MUNGOS, Sisak, 14 April 2014.
46 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 21 October 2016.
47 Interview with Zeljko Romic, Director, Piper Demining, Zagreb, 17 March 2015.
48 Interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, Sisak, 14 April 2014.
49 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.
50 Statement of Croatia, Clearance session, APMBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.

As barriers to entry into the mine clearance market are relatively low there is considerable fragmentation. Of the 28 companies operational in 2015, 16 cleared less than one square kilometre and none cleared more than 20% of the total area cleared. A director of a commercial demining company reported that the fragmentation of the market made it difficult to make money, leaving many companies in "pre-bankruptcy".[51] The UNDP needs assessment observed that in recent years the number of demining companies in Croatia has grown but capacity overall has decreased.[52]

The average net price of mine clearance fell from HRK6.73 per square metre in 2014, to HRK6.23 per square metre in 2015.[53] The decrease is said to be due to increased market competition, and clearance of a higher proportion of agricultural area in 2015, on which it was possible to deploy machines for surface preparation, thereby increasing efficiency. The decrease is also due to a significant proportion of survey operations, which are less resource intensive than full clearance.[54]

However, lower demining costs reportedly make it more difficult for firms to make a profit on clearance. Larger firms claimed they were hampered by earlier over-investment in mechanical assets and equipment based on assumptions that funding would match the levels outlined in the 2009–19 mine action strategy.[55] Some companies have sought to diversify with operations outside Croatia, but given the relatively higher wages of Croatian deminers, lack of international experience, and lack of brand recognition, they have found it difficult to compete for tenders.[56] An NGO representative claimed that the quality of demining suffers when the price of demining is low.[57] A director of a commercial demining firm echoed this concern, saying that lower prices put more pressure on deminers to clear more square metres a day.[58]

In 2014, CROMAC reported it had started issuing larger value tenders, to allow companies to reduce the cost of their operations, saying that this had provided an incentive for companies to do better planning and to cooperate with each other. A CROMAC representative claimed that although prices were lower, the bigger tenders allowed continuation of work, resulted in fewer stoppages, and enabled companies to negotiate on better terms with hotels and services in their project areas.[59] Nevertheless, CROMAC acknowledged that bigger contracts mean disputes over allocation of funds between the companies that have to form consortia to compete for the new tenders.[60] A representative of the OMA said that the bigger projects were more rational but remained concerned about fragmentation of the market and possible price dumping.[61] One director of a commercial demining firm said operators had wanted bigger tenders but that they were now too big, requiring large consortia in which some companies only got "bad" areas to clear.[62]

The 2014 UNDP needs assessment recommended that CROMAC consider longer-term contracting to maximise use of operational assets in Croatia for both technical survey and mine clearance. It also noted that the current contracting of defined polygons is suitable for mine clearance but would not be conducive for effective technical survey, and called for a new procedure to be drafted once the law is changed.[63]

However, CROMAC plans operations on a yearly basis, in accordance with the annual demining plan and three-year demining plan, which are set by the Government. CROMAC is unable to award multi-year contracts because it has to budget year-by-year, and in accordance with its laws it is not possible to contract and reserve funds for the next year until the budget is set. With the adoption of the new law, which enables use of technical survey, CROMAC plans to target demining on confirmed mined areas and to conduct technical survey on the remaining SHA.[64]

51 Interview with Zeljko Romic, Piper Demining, Zagreb, 17 March 2015.

52 UNDP, "Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia", 2014, p. 16.

53 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

54 Ibid.

55 Interview with Zeljko Romic, Piper Demining, Zagreb, 17 March 2015.

56 Ibid.

57 Email from Marija Breber, Social Worker, Mine Aid, 25 March 2015.

58 Interview with Zeljko Romic, Piper Demining, Zagreb, 17 March 2015.

59 Interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, in Zagreb, 16 March 2015.

60 Ibid.

61 Interview with Dijana Pleština, OMA, Zagreb, 16 March 2015.

62 Interview with Zeljko Romic, Piper Demining, Zagreb, 17 March 2015.

63 UNDP, "Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia", 2014, p. 4.

64 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 21 October 2016.

LAND RELEASE

In 2015, more than 40.6km^2 of mined area was released by clearance. No land was reduced by technical survey in 2015, and just over 27.15km^2 was cancelled by NTS.

Survey in 2015

In total, ten SHAs were cancelled by NTS in 2015, covering 27.15km^2.[65] No technical survey was conducted.[66]

Clearance in 2015

Clearance operations released 40.6km^2 from a total of 95 mined areas in 2015, with the destruction of 2,435 anti-personnel mines, 658 anti-vehicle mines, and 1,708 items of UXO, as set out in Table 2.[67] In addition, the demining battalion of the Croatian Armed Forces reportedly demined 343,584m^2 of military facilities in 2015, with the destruction of 40 anti-personnel mines and 69,720 items of UXO.[68]

The 40.6km^2 cleared in 2015 represents an increase compared to the 37.75km^2 cleared in 2014.[69] This is reportedly due to a greater focus on agricultural areas, which allowed for greater use of demining machines and consequently more square metres cleared in fewer days.[70]

Some 0.83km^2 of clearance in 2015 resulted in no mines being found; an improvement on the equivalent mine-free area of 2.1km^2 cleared in 2014.[71] Furthermore, in roughly 40% of the mine-free area cleared in 2015, one or more items of UXO were destroyed.[72]

The 2,435 AP mines destroyed during clearance in 2015 was higher than the equivalent 1,842 destroyed in 2014. Despite this, according to CROMAC the number of mines found and destroyed in 2015 was still less than expected, in comparison to the minefield records.[73]

65 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

66 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

67 Ibid.

68 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

69 Emails from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 20 April and 9 June 2015.

70 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

71 Emails from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 20 April and 9 June 2015.

72 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.

73 Ibid.

Table 2: Mine clearance in 2015[74]

Operator*	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m²)	Region/county	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
ALFA	1	8,990	Osječko-baranjska	0	0	0
BAK UNIJA	1	165,881	Brodsko-posavska	0	0	1
BIOS-F	1	22,578	Sisačko-moslavačka	2	0	0
COR	1	1,989,558	Karlovačka	25	0	4
CREDO	2	198,791	B-p/S-m	270	0	0
DIZ-EKO	3	286,039	Ka/Š-k/S-m	57	0	1
DOK-ING	2	404,790	Brodsko-posavska	0	0	0
FAS	5	355,670	B-p/O-b/V-s	33	1	6
FOSSIO	2	1,025,616	B-p/P-s	1	0	13
HARPIJA	2	114,882	B-p/Zd	0	0	12
HEKSOGEN	4	8,125,271	S-m/Š-k/V-s	129	14	17
ISTRAŽIVAČ	6	6,037,460	K/S-m/O-b	320	297	375
LOCO	1	82,477	Brodsko-posavska	0	0	0
MINA PLUS	1	2,596,638	Vukovarsko-srijemska	243	0	34
MKA*DEMING	1	1,771,306	Sisačko-moslavačka	29	0	1
MUNGOS	25	3,399,805	B-p/O-b/P-s/Š-k/V-s/Zd	296	54	83
NEUTRAL	5	1,755,264	B-p/O-b/V-s	375	48	65
NITRAT d.o.o.	3	414,453	Ka/L-s/V-s	42	0	0
ORKAN	3	341,958	B-p/V-s	7	0	3
PIPER	1	35,044	Ličko-senjska	0	0	1
PITON	1	14,991	Vukovarsko-srijemska	3	0	0
RUMITAL	3	1,919,676	Š-k/V-s	169	3	71
TERRAFIRMA	1	305,187	Sisačko-moslavačka	15	0	0
TETRAZEN	3	1,140,390	S-m/Zd	7	0	195
TITAN	10	3,036,219	S-m/Ka/L-s/S-d/Š-k/V-s	177	11	16
TNT 7	1	8,654	Sisačko-moslavačka	1	0	0
TORPEX	1	15,062	Sisačko-moslavačka	0	0	0
ZELENI KVADRAT	5	5,031,357	Ka/L-s/S-m/V-s/Zd	234	230	810
Totals	**95**	**40,604,007**		**2,435**	**658**	**1,708**

AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle

* Data is provided from CROMAC's database of contracts, and therefore does not list some of the accredited companies that worked as subcontractors.

The greatest proportion of clearance operations in 2015 took place in areas of economic value, including agricultural land and forested areas, which local and regional governments had identified as priority areas.[75]

74 Ibid; and APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

75 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.

Deminer Safety

CROMAC reported two anti-personnel mine incidents during demining operations in 2015. In the first, a deminer was severely injured, while in the second, one deminer was killed and other was injured.[76]

Progress in 2016

In July 2016, Croatia signed a contract to demine its border with Hungary, as part of the cross-border cooperation project. The total area to be covered by the project is 1.46km^2, and it was expected to start in late August 2016 and be completed by the end of the year. As at October 2016, some 85% of the project had been completed, and the clearance operations were in their final stages. CROMAC expected clearance to be finished by the end of October, weather permitting.[77] The remainder of the 3.6km^2 of SHA along the border will be subject to technical survey, planned for 2017.[78]

ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the ten-year extension request granted by states parties in 2008), Croatia is required to destroy all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control as soon as possible, but not later than 1 March 2019. Croatia is not on track to meet the deadline.

CROMAC has claimed, though, that if all planned EU-financed projects are carried out, Croatia still expects to meet its March 2019 deadline.[79] It acknowledges, though, that this is dependent on funding.[80] Operators, however, asserted in 2015 that the programme is already operating significantly below capacity.[81]

The total of 40.6km^2 released through clearance in 2015 was higher than in previous years (see Table 3). The area of land cleared over the last five years has continued to increase annually, and exceeds the annual clearance targets in Croatia's 2009–19 mine action strategy.[82] However, the amount of land released by survey each year has fallen well behind the yearly targets outline in the strategy, including for 2015, for which 52km^2 was forecast to be released through reduction, and a further 19km^2 by general survey. However, only 27km^2 was actually cancelled by survey in 2015.

Table 3: Mine clearance in 2011–15

Year	Area cleared (km^2)
2015	40.6
2014	37.7
2013	32.3
2012	30.5
2011	27.7
Total	**168.8**

76 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and Statement of Croatia, Clearance session, APMBC 14th Meeting of States Parties, Geneva, 1 December 2015.

77 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 21 October 2016.

78 Ibid., 24 August 2016.

79 Ibid., 13 May 2016.

80 Ibid.

81 Interview with Zeljko Romic, Piper Demining, Zagreb, 17 March 2015.

82 National Mine Action Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, 2008, p. 10.

In 2015, around €4 million of national funding was provided to cover the costs of the mine action centre, and around €22 million towards survey and clearance of anti-personnel mines.[83] For the first time in recent years, demining funding acquired from external sources was reported to have surpassed funds from the state budget, which until 2015 accounted for more than 59% of funds spent for mine clearance operations in 1998–2014.[84] In 2015, EU funds accounted for the largest share of the mine action, representing approximately 56% of the overall budget; with share from the Croatian State Budget accounting for approximately 38%, legal entities and state administration bodies 4%, and donations 2%.[85]

Croatia received and contracted funds for mine action, totalling approximately €53.4 million in 2015, of which the following €47.6 million was spent: State Budget (€27.6 million); EU funds (€16.5 million); public and state owned companies and investors (€2.6 million); foreign governments, organisations, and individual donors (€0.9 million). The remaining unspent contracted funds will be released in 2016.[86]

As a result of its accession to the EU, Croatia is no longer on the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development's Development Assistance Committee (OECD DAC) list and so can no longer be a recipient of official development assistance (ODA), which UNDP has identified as an impediment to Croatia's removal of the mine threat.[87] CROMAC expected to receive more funding in 2016, particularly from the EU, but anticipated that funding from other international donors would reduce now that Croatia is a member of the EU.[88]

From September to December 2015, Croatia undertook a €23 million project, financed largely by the EU rural development funds, to demine agricultural land.[89] Conducted in partnership with the Ministry of Agriculture, the project aimed to clear land that is fragmented and has not been easy to tender.[90] In 2016, an additional €23 million was to be contracted as part of this project.[91]

UNDP's Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia stated that the ability to release land through technical survey would enhance the capacity to more quickly recover from disasters and speed up land release.[92] However, it raised concerns that CROMAC did not have sufficient survey capacity to enable the release of land through technical survey once the demining law is changed and advised CROMAC should boost this capacity to fully implement land-release methodology.[93] As at October 2016, CROMAC reported it had increased its capacity for technical survey through internal reallocation and that it was using MUNGOS for technical survey.[94]

In order to ensure greater progress towards meeting Croatia's Article 4 obligation, CROMAC will need to increase survey operations, including the use of NTS and technical survey to more accurately determine the size and location of contamination, and to respectively cancel and reduce areas in which there is no evidence of contamination.

83 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.
84 APMBC Article 7 Report (for 2015), Form C.
85 Ibid.; and CCW Amended Protocol II (for 2015), Form B.
86 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 24 August 2016.
87 UNDP, "Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia", 2014, p. 18.
88 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.
89 Ibid., 24 August 2016.
90 Email from Dijana Pleština, OMA, 16 March 2015.
91 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 24 August 2016.
92 UNDP, "Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia, 2014", p. 3.
93 Ibid., pp. 42–43.
94 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 21 October 2016.