

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 MARCH 2026
UNCLEAR WHETHER ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE

KEY DATA

ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: HEAVY

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

30 KM²

AP MINE
CLEARANCE IN 2020

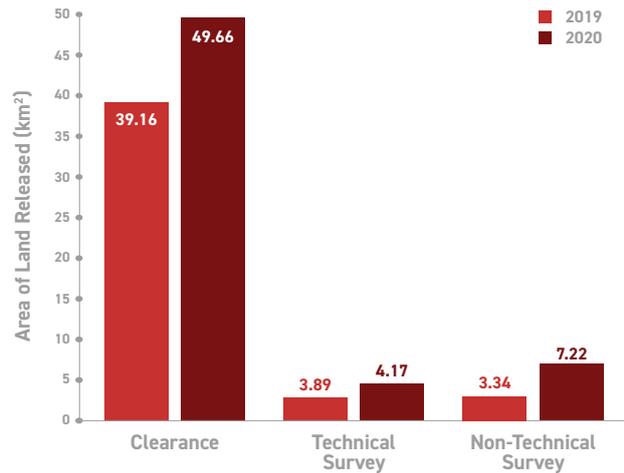
49.66 KM²

AP MINES
DESTROYED IN 2020

5,154

DESTROYED AS PART OF
THE "LESS ARMS, FEWER
TRAGEDIES" PROGRAMME

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



CURRENT LIKELIHOOD OF MEETING 2025 CLEARANCE TARGET (as per the Oslo Action Plan commitment): **LOW**

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

In 2020, Croatia cleared almost 50km² of mined area, an increase of more than 25% on the output in 2019, despite operations being halted for nearly two months between March and May due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The amount of mined area released through non-technical and technical survey in 2020 also represented increases on the previous year.

However, the total of 61km² of mined area released through survey and clearance in 2020 was still below the 70km² land release target in Croatia's revised work plan. In particular, non-technical survey output continued to fall short of annual targets. In addition, 0.42km² of annual mine clearance of military areas by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) in 2020 was well short of the 5km² annual MoD land release target, although it was not reported whether or not the MoD also released any mined area through survey.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC should increase its survey capacity in order to meet the targets outlined in its 2018 Article 5 deadline extension request.
- In addition to survey of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC should also review the basis on which confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) are established. In particular, it should conduct survey to confirm evidence of mine contamination before embarking on full clearance.
- The MoD should ensure sufficient capacity is in place and should significantly increase clearance to release mined areas on military land, in line with Croatia's revised work plan 2020–26. The MoD should also report whether it has released any mined area through survey.
- Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC should fulfil the pledge in Croatia's 2018 extension request to explore the potential for mine detection dogs (MDDs) to enhance the efficiency of technical survey. The 2015 demining law, which only allows MDDs to be used in clearance, should be amended if necessary.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2020)	Score (2019)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	6	6	Croatia considers its current baseline of anti-personnel mine contamination to be reasonably accurate, evidence-based, and complete. One third of remaining mined area is SHA, indicating the need for high-quality survey prior to clearance. Almost 99% of remaining mine contamination is on forested or mountainous land, which can pose challenges for demining operations.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	There is strong national ownership of mine action in Croatia, with political will to implement Article 5. In January 2019, CROMAC and the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA) were integrated within the Ministry of Interior.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	4	4	Gender policies and their implementation in mine action in Croatia are addressed under the national Gender Equality Act, which includes guidelines on gender equality and regulates against gender-based discrimination. The Civil Protection Directorate does not compile or disclose data regarding commercial demining companies. However, the proportion of women employed both at Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC is low, following the incorporation of CROMAC into the MoI in 2019, during which a significant portion of woman (including in managerial positions) were transferred/promoted into different sectors.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	8	8	Croatia has an information management system that is compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and which allows disaggregation by type of contamination and method of land release. Croatia provided regular, accurate, and consistent updates on its progress in Article 5 implementation at APMB meetings and in its Article 7 reports.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	A "Mine Action Revised work plan 2020–26" has been adopted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. A new National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026 had expected to be approved by the Croatian Parliament in the first half of 2021. In addition, Croatia had annual operational work plans for mine survey and clearance, as well as annual targets in its revised Article 5 work plan.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM (20% of overall score)	5	5	The 2015 law on mine action encompasses national mine action standards. However, there is a continued need for survey prior to any clearance, to avoid clearance of CHAs where no contamination was found. In 2020, hazardous areas which did not contain anti-personnel mines accounted for 13 of 79 projects, although CROMAC said that clearance where no explosive ordnance contamination was found accounted for only 3% of all demined land.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	8	7	Clearance output in 2020 was an increase of more than 25% on the previous year, and the output from non-technical and technical survey also increased. The annual land release total still fell short of the target in Croatia's revised work plan, which was the most ambitious work plan yet with a total target of 70.1km ² . The deviation from the work plan was most significant with respect to mined area under military control, with the MoD clearing less than 10% of the 2020 work plan output foreseen.
Average Score	6.5	6.3	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

DEMINEING CAPACITY

MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- Ministry of the Interior (MoI), in which CROMAC and the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA) are integrated within the Civil Protection Directorate.

NATIONAL OPERATORS

- Forty-three commercial demining companies are accredited for mine and CMR clearance operations.
- The Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment, Croatian Armed Forces

INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

OTHER ACTORS

- Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

Croatia is affected by mines and, to a much lesser extent, explosive remnants of war (ERW), a legacy of four years of armed conflict associated with the break-up of the former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. On 1 August 2020, Croatia declared compliance with Article 4 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions, having completed clearance of cluster munition contaminated areas¹ (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants* report on Croatia for further information on cluster munition remnants).

At the end of 2020, Croatia reported a total of more than 249km² of mined area remaining, excluding military areas. Of this 166km² was CHA, while mines were suspected to cover a further 82km² of SHA (see Table 1).² This represents an almost 20% decrease in estimated contamination compared to the 309.7km² of mined area, excluding military areas (189.98km² of CHA and 119.72km² of SHA) as at the end of 2019.³ Croatia estimates that its hazardous areas, excluding the military zones, contain approximately 15,939 anti-personnel mines and 1,035 anti-vehicle mines.⁴

A further 30.14km² of confirmed mined area existed in areas under military control as at the end of 2020,⁵ compared to 31km² as at the end of 2019.⁶ This mined area, which is also contaminated with unexploded ordnance (UXO), is across military barracks, training sites, radar stations, and storage sites. The MoD Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment is responsible for clearing all military facilities.⁷

A total of nearly 49.66km² was released through clearance (including 0.42km² cleared at military sites) and nearly 9.7km² through survey in 2020.⁸ In addition, survey in 2020 by the Civil Protection Directorate sector of CROMAC added 310,931m² of previously unrecorded mined areas to Croatia's information management database (33,266m² in Lika-Senj; 12,228m² in Požega-Slavonia; 22,152m² in Šibenik-Knin; and 243,285m² in Sisak-Moslavina).⁹

Eight of Croatia's twenty-one counties are still mine-affected. At the end of 2020, 98.75% of mine contamination was on forested land, 1.08% was on agricultural land, and 0.17% was on other areas (e.g. marshland).¹⁰ Much of the remaining mined area is mountainous and has not been accessed for 20 years, so the terrain and conditions will pose challenges to demining.¹¹

According to Croatia's Civil Protection Directorate, the baseline of anti-personnel mine contamination has been established through inclusive consultation with women, girls, boys, and men, including, where relevant, with minority groups. Croatia considers its current baseline of contamination to be evidence-based and reasonably accurate, following the completion of a baseline survey.¹² However, the high ratio of SHAs to CHAs, and the fact that mined areas continue to be cleared without anti-personnel mine contamination being encountered, calls this into question.

Table 1: Anti-personnel mined area by county (at end 2020)*¹³

County	No. of municipal areas with hazardous areas	CHA (m ²)	SHA (m ²)	Total mined area (m ²)
Karlovac	6	25,360,027	16,882,943	42,242,970
Lika-Senj	9	68,280,990	25,648,686	93,929,676
Osijek-Baranja	7	13,349,344	4,250,139	17,599,483
Požega-Slavonia	1	8,691,420	3,914,416	12,605,836
Split-Dalmatia	2	15,860,094	3,348,229	19,208,323
Sisak-Moslavina	9	20,406,675	21,781,136	42,187,811
Šibenik-Knin	4	8,718,283	3,899,112	12,617,395
Zadar	6	6,092,128	2,937,994	9,030,122
Totals	44	166,758,961	82,662,655	249,421,616

*A further 30.14km² of mined area exists in areas under military control.¹⁴

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In August 2018, the Croatian government decided that some 54 government agencies, including the Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) and the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA), were to be integrated within existing State administration bodies. This was formally concluded through legislation enacted in December 2018 and which entered into force on 1 January 2019.¹⁵ As a consequence, CROMAC and GOMA ceased to exist as separate government entities and CROMAC became an "operational sector" within the Civil Protection Directorate, under the Ministry of the Interior (MoI).¹⁶ The main rationale for this was said to be "the establishment of a more relevant and operationally wider national institution (Civil Protection Directorate) that could more efficiently and effectively tackle all of the aspects of civil protection in the Republic of Croatia, including mine action activities".¹⁷

Prior to 2019, both CROMAC (established in 1998 as the umbrella organisation for mine action coordination),¹⁸ and the GOMA (created in 2012 as a government focal point for mine action),¹⁹ had operated as independent entities.

A new law on mine action was adopted by the Croatian parliament on 21 October 2015.²⁰ While the Law marked an improvement in certain respects (for instance, by permitting land release through technical survey), there were concerns that it would impede efficient and effective mine action.²¹

Regarding accreditation, the MoI now provides three separate permits: approval for manual mine detection; approval for mechanical mine detection; and approval for operations by mine and explosive detection dogs (EDDs). This replaces the former unified accreditation licence.²²

In its 2018 Extension request, Croatia estimated that fulfilment of its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 obligations would cost a further €459 million in total.²³ Funding for the remainder of demining under the extension request is expected to come from, respectively, the national budget (52.3%); European Union (EU)/European structural and investment (ESI) funds (21.8%);

EU/cross-border cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) (15.3%); state budget of forest management positions (10.2%); and from private donations (0.4%).²⁴

Funds from the EU have steadily increased over the last few years. In 2020, approximately €31.7 million was provided by the Croatian government for survey and clearance of anti-personnel mined areas, which represents just over 57% of total financing for survey and clearance in 2020.²⁵ The 2020 State contribution for demining was a 3.6% reduction on earmarked funds.²⁶

Croatia does not have a resource mobilisation strategy in place for Article 5 implementation.²⁷ The Civil Protection Directorate reported in 2021 that an in-country platform for dialogue meets on a regular basis and consists of representatives from the MoI and the association of private companies in demining.²⁸

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

Gender Equality Act (Official Gazette 82/08 and 69/17), which establishes national guidelines for gender equality, regulates against gender-based discrimination, and creates equal opportunities for men and women, including with regard to employment.²⁹

According to the national authorities, women, men, boys and girls are all effectively consulted during survey and community liaison activities.³⁰ CROMAC gathers all relevant data during non-technical survey, in accordance with the SOPs.³¹

The Civil Protection Directorate does not compile or disclose data regarding commercial demining companies, which are privately owned.³² Within the Civil Protection Directorate of the MoI, CROMAC employs 89 people, of whom 10 (some 12%) are women. As at April 2021, no women were employed in managerial or supervisory level positions in CROMAC, and only 2% of CROMAC field operations positions were held by women.³³ According to Croatia, the low proportion of women is due to the fact that when CROMAC ceased to exist as an independent centre and was downsized when it was integrated within the Civil Protection Directorate/MoI in 2019, a significant portion of woman (including in managerial positions) were transferred or promoted into other sectors and managerial positions in the MoI or in other State or local authority institutions.³⁴

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

For the purpose of information management, CROMAC established a mine information system (MIS), which is said to be compliant with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and customised to meet CROMAC's needs. The MIS uses databases and a geographic information system (GIS) to deliver a fully integrated information management system.³⁵ There are ongoing efforts to improve the quality of mine-related data by CROMAC's survey personnel.³⁶

Croatia submits annual Article 7 transparency reports and reports on its progress in Article 5 implementation at the APMBC intersessional meetings and meetings of States Parties. As at July 2021, however, Croatia had yet to submit its Article 7 report covering 2020.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Croatia's national mine action strategy for 2009–19 was drafted by CROMAC with the agreement of concerned ministries, the GOMA, the National Protection and Rescue Directorate, and local administration and self-administration bodies whose responsibility covers regions with hazardous areas.³⁷ The strategy, which was adopted by Parliament, included among its main goals the completion of mine clearance by 2019. This was not achieved.³⁸

A "Mine Action Revised work plan 2020–26" has been adopted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior. A new National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026 was set to be

approved by Parliament in the first half of 2021.³⁹ As at July 2021 it was still awaiting approval.⁴⁰

In 2018, Croatia submitted and was granted a seven-year request to extend its APMBC Article 5 deadline from 1 March 2019 to 1 March 2026. In its 2018 Article 5 deadline extension request, Croatia stated it has prioritised the remaining mined areas according to those which affect safety; pose barriers to socio-economic development; and impact the environment in other ways. Priorities at the operative level are elaborated in annual demining action plans.⁴¹

Based on approved funding, the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC drafts annual work plans, which are submitted to the responsible ministries and other State bodies for comment and approval.⁴²

In its 2020 annual mine action plan, the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC planned to release 49.8km² through clearance, approximately 5km² through technical survey, and approximately 9km² through non-technical survey.⁴³ According to a revised work plan (see Table 6) the total land release target for 2020 was subsequently increased to 70.1km²,⁴⁴ which Croatia fell well short of, releasing a total of 59.3km² of mined area in 2020.

In its 2021 annual work plan, the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC planned to release 42.4km² through clearance, 5km² through technical survey, and 6.8km² through

non-technical survey. This excludes land release in mined areas under the authority of the MoD.⁴⁵ The Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment is responsible for clearance of all mine-affected military facilities. The MoD submits its demining plan for military facilities to the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC annually.⁴⁶

According to its Croatia's Article 7 report submitted in August 2021 (covering 2020), Croatia's clearance priorities in 2020 were focused on environmental protection and agricultural production. Nearly 99% of the remaining hazardous area was forested land while 1% was agricultural land.⁴⁷

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The 2015 law on mine action allowed use of technical survey to confirm the presence or absence of contamination.⁴⁸ The law introduced a new procedure for "supplementary general survey" (a form of non-technical survey) and enabled "exclusion" (i.e. reduction) of SHAs through technical survey, which was not possible under the previous law.⁴⁹ The law also eliminated the need for standing operating procedures (SOPs), as all aspects of mine action were defined in detail.⁵⁰ National mine action standards are also encompassed within it.⁵¹

In recent years, a significant number of CHAs were cleared in which were found to have no anti-personnel mine contamination, although the Civil Protection Directorate said many of these areas did, however, contain anti-vehicle mines and other UXO. Furthermore, other large, inflated CHAs were cleared with very few anti-personnel mines discovered. In 2020, hazardous areas which did not contain anti-personnel mines accounted for 13 of 79 projects, although CROMAC said clearance where no explosive ordnance contamination was found accounted for only 3% of all demined land.⁵² This calls into question the efficiency of the demining and strongly suggests the need for better use of pre-clearance, evidence-based survey to confirm contamination before time- and cost-intensive full clearance is undertaken on mined areas recorded by the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC as "confirmed".

The Croatian Mine Action Centre's Centre for Testing, Development and Training (HCR-CTRO Ltd.) provides two testing sites for various clearance methods on different soil types. HCR-CTRO is also the coordinator of the NATO SPS Project entitled "Biological Method (Bees) for Explosive Detection", working in collaboration with the universities of Zagreb, St. Andrews, and Banja Luka. "The project aims to develop innovative methods and technologies for detection of mines and minefields, using trained honeybee colonies through three different techniques: training honeybees for explosive detection, polymer films as an explosive sensor, and honeybees imaging over the landmines. Two main methods will be used with the trained honeybee colonies: the passive and the active method that can be applied in suspected area reduction, or in internal and external quality control after completion of demining." The project started in 2017 and was extended to September 2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.⁵³

Croatia organises an annual Mine Action Symposium, which discusses new detection and clearance technologies. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 symposium was postponed until June 2021, and was organised by the MoI and the Centre for Testing, Development and Training, in cooperation with Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE Project Co-Ordinator in Ukraine).⁵⁴

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Non-technical survey and technical survey in Croatia are conducted by the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC. In 2020, it had 30 non-technical personnel and 26 technical survey personnel.⁵⁵ This is an increase in survey capacity compared to the two non-technical survey personnel and twenty-two technical survey personnel in 2019.⁵⁶ Technical survey and non-technical survey personnel employed by CROMAC were not taken on by the MoI following CROMAC's integration within the Civil Protection Directorate at the start of 2019. Some of the survey personnel previously employed by CROMAC were retired or moved to other companies.⁵⁷ The Civil Protection Directorate did not expect any further changes to survey capacity in 2020.⁵⁸

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. 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.⁵⁹

As at the end of 2020, 43 commercial companies were accredited to conduct mine and CMR clearance.⁶⁰ Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are barred from competing for commercial tenders as CROMAC views their subsidy by other funds as unfair.⁶¹ The Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment is responsible for clearing all military facilities.⁶²

Table 2: Clearance capacity (at end 2020)⁶³

Clearance capacity	Number	Comments
Deminers	424	Reduction from 534 deminers in 2019, due to various factors such as retirement and termination of contracts (mutually agreed and business-related).
Auxiliary workers (demining support staff)	82	Compared to 107 auxiliary workers in 2019.
Mine detection dogs	163	Increase on 108 MDDs in 2019.
Demining machines	43	An increase in one machine compared to 2019.

Clearance operations in Croatia are conducted manually as well as with mechanical assets and with the support of MDDs. In accordance with the 2015 Act on Mine Action and its prescribed demining methodologies, MDDs are used only for clearance and not technical survey.⁶⁴

A 2014 needs assessment by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) observed that in the preceding years the number of demining companies in Croatia had grown, but capacity overall had decreased.⁶⁵ A representative of the Croatian Employers' Association (CEA)'s Humanitarian Demining Association reported that the 2015 mine action law had resulted in more demining organisations in Croatia.⁶⁶ This rise is in part due to deminers leaving employment and starting new firms, with the 2015 Law requiring a minimum of only five deminers per company.⁶⁷ The current number of demining companies is disproportionate to the number of deminers, and according to a representative from CROMAC, it would be better to have half the number of companies, but with each one being properly managed.⁶⁸

In 2014, CROMAC reported it had started issuing larger value tenders, to allow companies to reduce the cost of their operations, saying this had provided an incentive for companies to do better planning and to cooperate with each other.⁶⁹ A CROMAC representative claimed that although prices were lower, the larger tenders allowed continual work, resulted in fewer stoppages, and enabled companies to negotiate on better terms with hotels and services in their project areas.⁷⁰

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 clearance.⁷¹ However, operations are planned on a yearly basis, in accordance with the annual and three-year demining plans set by the Government.⁷²

UNDP also noted that the current contracting of defined polygons is suitable for mine clearance but would not be conducive to effective technical survey, and called for a new procedure to be elaborated once the law is changed.⁷³ The Humanitarian Demining Association said it would be preferable if, where possible, technical survey had already been undertaken on project tasks prior to tendering them, so that commercial companies have as much information as possible to accurately plan for the tender.⁷⁴

With the adoption of the new law, which enables use of technical survey, CROMAC planned to target demining on CHAs and to conduct technical survey on the remaining SHAs.⁷⁵ Croatia also reported previously that it planned to research and develop methods and techniques for the use of MDDs, especially for technical survey operations, as a potentially more effective tool to address mined areas in mountainous terrain.⁷⁶ However, this would require amendment to the 2015 demining law, which does not currently permit use of MDDs for technical survey.

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2020

More than 61km² of mined area was released in 2020, of which more than 49.2km² was cleared by commercial demining companies, a further 0.4km² was cleared by the Croatian army on military sites, nearly 4.2km² was reduced by CROMAC through technical survey, and more than 7.2km² was cancelled through non-technical survey.⁷⁷

Land release outputs in 2020 were all higher than the previous year when 39.16km² was cleared, 3.34km² cancelled through non-technical survey, and almost 3.89km² reduced through technical survey.⁷⁸ The increase in 2020 was because projects were finalised in late 2019, but accounted for in 2020, due to the administrative procedure of issuing a certificate of land release. In addition, all planned projects on rocky areas of Velebit mountain (some 16km²) were completed ahead of schedule due to very favourable weather conditions.⁷⁹

SURVEY IN 2020

CROMAC released a total of more than 11.39km² through survey in 2020, of which more than 7.22km² was cancelled through non-technical survey and almost 4.17km² was reduced through technical survey (see Tables 3 and 4).⁸⁰ This is an increase on the nearly 3.34km² cancelled through non-technical survey and almost 3.89km² reduced through technical survey in 2019.⁸¹

No data were available on the results of survey by the MoD.

In addition, survey in 2020 resulted in the addition of 0.31km² of previously unrecorded mined area to Croatia's estimate of contamination in its national information management database.⁸²

Table 3: Cancellation through non-technical survey in 2020⁸³

County	Operator	Area cancelled (m ²)
Karlovac	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	826,563
Osijek-Baranja	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	4,145,465
Požega-Slavonia	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	43,335
Sisak-Moslavina	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	1,299,548
Šibenik-Knin	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	903,414
Zadar	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	2,576
Total		7,220,901

Table 4: Reduction through technical survey in 2020⁸⁴

County	Operator	Area reduced (m ²)
Karlovac	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	426,029
Lika-Senj	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	330,701
Osijek-Baranja	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	607,994
Požega-Slavonia	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	1,271,860
Sisak-Moslavina	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	579,412
Šibenik-Knin	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	135,185
Zadar	Civil Protection Directorate - CROMAC	818,041
Total		4,169,222

CLEARANCE IN 2020

In 2020, nearly 49.66km² of mined area was released through clearance (nearly 49.24km² by operators working under the direction of the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC (see Table 5) and a further 0.42km² by the Croatian army. During land release, a total of 5,154 anti-personnel mines were destroyed (4,883 by the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC; 70 by the MoD; and 201 by the MoI (as part of the “less arms, fewer tragedies” programme)); along with 527 anti-vehicle mines (493 by the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC and 34 by the MoI (as part of the “less arms, fewer tragedies” programme)).⁸⁵

The 49.66m² of total mined area cleared in 2020 is an increase of more than 26% on 2019, when nearly 39.16km² of mined area was released through clearance (nearly 38.86km² by operators working under the direction of CROMAC and a further 0.3km² by the Croatian army).⁸⁶

Table 5: Mine clearance in 2020⁸⁷

County	Operator	Area cleared (m ²)	AP mines destroyed	AV mines destroyed	UXO destroyed
Karlovac	Piton/Titan/Zeleni Kvadrat	710,046	27	2	6
Lika-Senj	Capsula Interna/ Cor/Diz-Eko/Dok-Ing razminiranje/Fas/Harpija/Istraživač /Heksogen/Maper/Mina Plus/Orkan /Piton/Pipe/Rumital/Titan/Zeleni Kvadrat	15,865,558	663	112	1,823
Osijek-Baranja	Heksogen/Cor/Detektor/Detektor /Piper/Zeleni Kvadrat/Titan/Dok-Ing Razminiranje/Titan	10,128,947	705	365	87
Požega-Slavonia	Istraživač	708,961	2	0	2
Sisak-Moslavina	Capsula Interna/Tornado Razminiranje/Manang/Dok-Ing Razminiranje/Istraživač/Orkan/Piton Ltd./Piper/Titan/Zeleni Kvadrat	9,601,583	3,157	14	1,174
Šibenik-Knin	Dok-Ing Razminiranje/Titan/Zeleni Kvadrat	2,207,814	142	0	14
Zadar	Capsula Interna/Tornado Razminiranje/Manang/Harpija/Dok-Ing Razminiranje/Istraživač/Piper/Rumital/Titan/Zeleni Kvadrat	10,021,041	187	0	941
Totals	79 demining projects	49,243,950	4,883	493	4,047

AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle

Clearance output equates to approximately one anti-personnel mine destroyed for every 10,000 square metres of cleared area. Although this is better than the 16,000 square metre average of the previous year, it still indicates either very low density of contamination or poor targeting of clearance (or both). In 13 of 79 demining projects, totalling an area of 4.19km², no anti-personnel mines were found, though 10 anti-vehicle mines and 231 items of UXO were found and destroyed.⁸⁸

In addition, the Pioneer company of the Engineering Regiment of the Croatian army cleared 415,756m² of military facilities in 2020, during which 70 anti-personnel mines and 184 items of UXO were found and destroyed.⁸⁹ This is an increase on the 298,880m² of military facilities cleared in 2019.⁹⁰ As part of explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) spot tasks and the continued “less arms, fewer tragedies” programme, the Croatian Police also collected 201 anti-personnel mines and 34 anti-vehicle mines, along with items of UXO and abandoned explosive ordnance, which were subsequently transported to Croatian military facilities and destroyed.⁹¹

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBC (and in accordance with the second extension (for seven years) granted by States Parties in 2018), 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 2026. It is unclear whether Croatia will meet this deadline, with clearance of military facilities in particular seeming falling way behind schedule.

Croatia’s 2018 request for a further seven-year extension to its Article 5 deadline was submitted on “the basis that this is a realistic but not unambitious amount of time given the extent of the remaining problem and the human, material and financial resources available or expected, and the demining and survey capacities currently available.”⁹² All relevant stakeholders in the Croatian mine action system are reported to have been involved in the analysis conducted as part of extension request process, and the request has also been “verified by the Croatian Government, which adopted the text of the 2nd Request thus giving it much needed political weight.”⁹³

While Croatia has requested an extended deadline of 1 March 2026, it foresees that survey and clearance operations will be completed by the end of 2025,⁹⁴ leaving only administrative/paperwork issues to be settled in the beginning of 2026.⁹⁵

In 2019, Croatia prepared an updated work plan for release of the 341km² of mined area remaining as at the end of 2019 (309.7km² under the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC and 31.4km² under the MoD’s jurisdiction). In its revised work plan, Croatia planned to release 70.1km² in 2020; 58.6km² in 2021; 61.1km² in 2022; 151.6km² in 2023; 63.1km² in 2024; and 18.8km² in 2025 (see Table 6).⁹⁶ The vision of the plan remains to achieve fulfilment of Article 5 by 1 March 2026, and it envisages accelerated release of military sites.⁹⁷

Table 6: Planned land release output in km² (2020–26)⁹⁸

	Total	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Clearance	210.4	51.1	39.1	37.1	38.3	35.0	9.8	0
Technical Survey	48.0	5.0	7.6	8.9	11.1	10.4	5.0	0
Non-Technical Survey	51.3	9.0	6.2	9.2	14.3	12.6	0.0	0
Subtotals	309.7	65.1	52.9	55.2	63.7	58.0	14.8	0
Croatian Army (MoD area)	31.4	5	5.4	6.0	6.0	5.0	4.0	0
Sum totals	341.1	70.1	58.3	61.2	69.7	63	18.8	0

Considering that most of the remaining mined area is in more challenging terrain, which will significantly reduce the potential to use demining machinery, the 341km² of land release forecast by the end of 2025 is very ambitious, at the least without increased capacity or improved efficiency.

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- 26 Statement of Croatia on Clearing Mined Areas, APMB 18th Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 16–20 November 2020.
- 27 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020.
- 28 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 29 Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form C; Statement of Croatia, APMB Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 7 June 2018; and email from Davor Laura, CROMAC, 6 April 2018.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Email from Ivana Odalj, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 34 Email from Ivana Odalj, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.
- 35 CROMAC website, "CROMAC's Mine Information System", accessed 26 June 2018.
- 36 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.
- 37 2018 APMB Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25.
- 38 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2015), Form B.
- 39 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 40 Email from Ivana Odalj, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.
- 41 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8 and 11.
- 42 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.
- 43 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 44 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 4.2.
- 45 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 46 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 47 Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.
- 48 National Gazette No. 110/15; and CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form A.
- 49 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form A; and emails from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 and 18 May 2016.
- 50 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form A.
- 51 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.
- 52 Email from Ivana Odalj, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.
- 53 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 54 Ibid.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020.
- 57 Ibid.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016.
- 60 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 61 Interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, Sisak, 14 April 2014.
- 62 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 63 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 64 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.
- 65 UNDP, "Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia", 2014, p. 16.
- 66 Interview with a representative of the CEA, Humanitarian Demining Association, Zagreb, 17 May 2017.
- 67 Interviews with Hrvoje Debač, GOMA, 17 May 2017, Zagreb; and Tomislav Ban, CROMAC, Sisak, 18 May 2017.
- 68 Interview with Tomislav Ban, CROMAC, Sisak, 18 May 2017.
- 69 Interview with Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, in Zagreb, 16 March 2015.
- 70 Ibid.
- 71 UNDP, "Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia", 2014, p. 4.
- 72 Interview with Hrvoje Debač, GOMA, 17 May 2017, Zagreb.
- 73 UNDP, "Mine Action Recovery Needs Assessment for Flooded Areas in Eastern Croatia", 2014, p. 4.
- 74 Interview with a representative of the CEA, Humanitarian Demining Association, Zagreb, 17 May 2017.
- 75 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 21 October 2016.
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- 77 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.
- 78 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020.
- 79 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 80 Ibid; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.
- 81 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020.
- 82 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 83 Ibid.
- 84 Ibid.
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 4.1.
- 87 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 4.1.
- 91 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 92 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 8.
- 93 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional information submitted 21 June 2018, p. 1.
- 94 Ibid; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.
- 95 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional information submitted 21 June 2018, p. 1.
- 96 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 4.1; and Revised work plan 2020–26.
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- 101 Ibid.; and 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 43.
- 102 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 45; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.
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- 107 Statement of Croatia on Clearance, CCM Second Review Conference (Part 1, virtual meeting), 25–27 November 2020.