

**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**km<sup>2</sup>

AP MINE CLEARANCE IN 2021

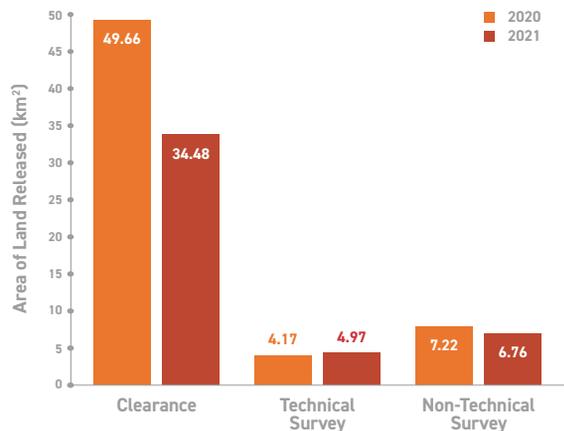
**34.48**km<sup>2</sup>

AP MINES DESTROYED IN 2021

**1,462**

(INCLUDING 230 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 2021, Croatia cleared 34km<sup>2</sup> of mined area (excluding military areas), falling short of its target for the year and a decrease of more than 30% on output in 2020. The national authorities blamed adverse weather in December 2021 for the missed target on the grounds that it delayed publication of land release certificates for some clearance projects. Release through technical survey in 2021 was an increase on the previous year but did not meet the target from its revised 2020–26 work plan published in 2020. Cancellation through non-technical survey was a decrease on the previous year but met the target in the 2020–2026 work plan. Release by the Ministry of Defence (MoD) was more than 4.7km<sup>2</sup> below its annual release target for 2021.

In April 2022, Croatia published a revised work plan for 2022–26, seeking to make up for the land release shortfalls in 2020 and 2021.<sup>1</sup> Given existing clearance capacity and output, however, Croatia will face a significant challenge in meeting its March 2026 Article 5 clearance deadline under the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- Civil Protection Directorate – Croatia Mine Action Center (CROMAC) should increase its survey and clearance capacity in order to meet the targets outlined in its revised work plan 2022–2026.
- In addition to survey of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs), 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 significantly increase clearance to release mined areas on military land, in line with Croatia's revised work plan 2022–26. The MoD should also report disaggregated figures for release through technical and non-technical survey.
- 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 and not for survey, should be amended.

<sup>1</sup> Republic of Croatia, Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, April 2022, p. 10.

## ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2021)	Score (2020)	Performance Commentary
<b>UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION</b> (20% of overall score)	7	6	Croatia considers its current national baseline of anti-personnel mine contamination to be reasonably accurate, evidence-based, and complete. One third of remaining mined area is suspected hazardous area (SHA), indicating the need for high-quality survey prior to clearance. Almost 99% of remaining mined area is in forest or on mountains, which can pose challenges for demining operations.
<b>NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT</b> (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 (MoI). In 2021, in order to address the slow progress in releasing mined areas under military control, CROMAC and the Ministry of Defence (MoD) discussed conducting joint non-technical and technical survey to identify and release confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) and SHAs within the MoD's responsibility.
<b>GENDER AND DIVERSITY</b> (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. CROMAC does not compile or disclose data regarding commercial demining companies. However, the proportion of women employed at CROMAC is low, following its incorporation into the MoI in 2019, during which a significant portion of woman (including in managerial positions) were transferred or promoted into other sectors.
<b>INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING</b> (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.
<b>PLANNING AND TASKING</b> (10% of overall score)	7	7	A "Mine Action Revised work plan 2020–26" was adopted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior, and a revised work plan for 2022–26 was adopted in April 2022. A new National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026 had been expected to secure Parliamentary approval in 2021 but it was revised and was expected to be approved by the end of 2022. 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.
<b>LAND RELEASE SYSTEM</b> (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 2021, hazardous areas which did not contain anti-personnel mines accounted for 20.8% of all cleared areas, although CROMAC said that clearance where no explosive ordnance was found accounted for only 3.13% of all demined land.
<b>LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE</b> (20% of overall score)	7	8	Clearance output in 2021 was a decrease of more than 30% on the previous year. While release through technical survey increased compared to 2020, that from non-technical survey decreased. The annual land release total fell short of the targets both in Croatia's revised work plan for 2020–26 and its annual work plan for 2021, reportedly due to adverse weather that prevented the finalisation of projects in December 2021. The deviation from the 2020–2026 work plan was most significant with respect to mined area under military control, with the MoD clearing only 12% of the 2021 annual work plan target.
<b>Average Score</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>	<b>Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE</b>

## DEMINING 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-two commercial demining companies are accredited for mine and CMR clearance operations.
- 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 areas<sup>2</sup> (see Mine Action Review's *Clearing Cluster Munition Remnants 2021* report on Croatia for further information on cluster munition remnants).

At the end of 2021, Croatia reported a total of more than 204km<sup>2</sup> of mined area remaining,<sup>3</sup> excluding military areas. Of this 136.79km<sup>2</sup> is in confirmed hazardous area (CHA), while mines were suspected to cover a further 67.6km<sup>2</sup> of SHA (see Table 1).<sup>4</sup> This represents an 18% decrease in estimated contamination excluding military areas compared to 249km<sup>2</sup> of mined area at the end of 2020.<sup>5</sup> Croatia believes that

hazardous areas, excluding the military zones, contain 13,856 anti-personnel mines and 921 anti-vehicle mines.<sup>6</sup>

A further 29.5km<sup>2</sup> of confirmed mined area existed in areas under military control as at the end of 2021<sup>7</sup> compared to 30.14km<sup>2</sup> as at the end of 2020.<sup>8</sup> This mined area, which is also contaminated with unexploded ordnance (UXO), is across military barracks, training sites, radar stations, and storage sites. The areas contain an estimated total of 25,276 anti-personnel mines.<sup>9</sup> The Ministry of Defence (MoD) Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment is responsible for clearing all military facilities.<sup>10</sup>

Survey in 2021 by the Civil Protection Directorate sector of CROMAC added 0.77km<sup>2</sup> of previously unrecorded mined areas to Croatia's information management database.<sup>11</sup>

**Table 1: Anti-personnel mined area (in civilian areas) (at end 2021)<sup>12</sup>**

County	Municipal areas with hazardous areas	CHA (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHA (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total mined area (m <sup>2</sup> )
Karlovac	6	21,774,899	16,364,025	38,138,924
Lika-Senj	9	63,203,329	23,510,685	86,714,014
Osijek-Baranja	6	9,667,885	1,435,418	11,103,303
Požega-Slavonija	1	4,432,452	1,856,396	6,288,848
Split-Dalmacija	2	14,740,294	3,348,229	18,088,523
Sisak-Moslavina	10	16,397,046	18,409,560	34,806,606
Šibenik-Knin	3	6,569,599	2,675,845	9,245,444
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>136,785,504</b>	<b>67,600,158</b>	<b>204,385,662</b>

A further 29.5km<sup>2</sup> of mined area exists in areas under military control.

Seven of Croatia's twenty-one counties are still mine-affected, one fewer than in 2020. At the end of 2021, 98.7% of mine contamination was on forested land, 1.11% was on agricultural land, and 0.19% was on other areas (e.g. marshland).<sup>13</sup> 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.<sup>14</sup>

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.<sup>15</sup> However, the high ratio of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) to CHAs, and the fact that mined areas continue to be cleared without anti-personnel mine contamination being encountered, calls this into question.

2 Statement of Croatia on Clearance, CCM Second Review Conference, 25–27 November 2020.

3 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Head of Unit, Civil Protection Directorate, Ministry of Interior, 23 May 2022.

4 Ibid.

5 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

6 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

7 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

8 Email from Ivana Odač, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.

9 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

10 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022; and 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25.

11 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

12 Ibid.; and Revised work plan 2022–2026, April 2022, pp. 8 and 9.

13 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022; and Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, April 2022, p. 9.

14 Interview with Nataša Mateković, CROMAC, Sisak, 18 May 2017.

15 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020.

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In August 2018, the Croatian government decided that 54 government agencies, including CROMAC and the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA), were to be integrated within existing State administration bodies. This was formally concluded through legislation which entered into force on 1 January 2019.<sup>16</sup> 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).<sup>17</sup> 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".<sup>18</sup>

Prior to 2019, both CROMAC (established in 1998 as the umbrella organisation for mine action coordination),<sup>19</sup> and the GOMA (created in 2012 as a government focal point for mine action),<sup>20</sup> had operated as independent entities.

A new law on mine action was adopted by the Croatian parliament on 21 October 2015.<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup>

Regarding accreditation, the MoI 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.<sup>23</sup>

The Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC is not responsible for survey and clearance of military areas, which comes under the remit of the MoD. However, in order to address the slow progress in release of mined areas under military control, CROMAC and the MoD held joint meetings to outline further cooperation between the ministries. This included plans for joint non-technical and technical survey to identify CHA and SHA which fall within the MoD's responsibility.<sup>24</sup>

In its 2018 Extension request, Croatia estimated that fulfilment of its APMBC Article 5 obligations would cost a further €459 million in total.<sup>25</sup> In its Revised Work Plan 2022–2026 Croatia estimated it would cost €219 million to clear the remaining hazardous area.<sup>26</sup> Funding for land release through to 2025, is expected to come from the Croatian government (51%) and from the European Union (EU) and other sources (49%).<sup>27</sup>

In 2021, the overall annual mine action budget for survey and clearance in Croatia was €47.6 million. The State contribution was almost 70% of the total (approx. €33.2 million),<sup>28</sup> an increase on the €31.7 million in 2020, when it was more than 57% of the budget.<sup>29</sup> EU funding remained a significant contribution in 2021 but fell from 40% of the total budget in 2020 to some 30% (€14.4 million) of the 2021 budget.

Croatia does not have a resource mobilisation strategy for Article 5 implementation.<sup>30</sup> The Civil Protection Directorate reported in 2022 that an in-country platform for dialogue, consisting of representatives from the MoI and the association of private companies in demining, meets on a regular basis.<sup>31</sup>

## ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

There are no specific standards for environmental management in Croatia, and several synchronised cross-ministry policies and laws regulate environmental protection.<sup>32</sup> In accordance with the 2015 Act on Mine Action (as amended) mine action operations are to minimise adverse impact on the environment. Furthermore, planning for mine action operations must identify and assess relevant environmental issues and determine appropriate and effective mitigation measures. Croatia's annual mine action plans are coordinated through several ministries, including the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development, and with local and regional administrations. Specific nature protection measures are described in detail within conceptual demining plans and operators are obliged to take all reasonable measures to ensure that the environment is left in a state suitable for its intended use once mine action operations cease.

16 Act on Amendments to the Act on Mine Action (OG No. 118/2018); and Act on Amendment to the Act on the Government (OG No. 116/2018).

17 Emails from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019 and 8 April 2020; and Article 7 Report (covering 2018), Form J; and Article 7 Report (covering 2019), p. 1.

18 Article 7 Report (covering 2019), Form 4.1.

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

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

21 OG No. 110/15; and Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form A.

22 Interviews with Neven Karas, CROMAC; and Tomislav Ban, Assistant Director and Head of Sector for Operational Planning and Programming, CROMAC, Sisak, 18 May 2017.

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

24 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

25 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 44.

26 Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, April 2022, p. 13.

27 Ibid.

28 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022; and Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

29 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.

30 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020.

31 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

32 Ibid.

For EU and international projects targeting Natura 2000 Ecological Network areas or nature or national park areas, particularly recent projects financed by the EU Cohesion Fund, the environmental considerations are more complex. Every clearance project is subject to a comprehensive environmental study, which details specific measures that must be performed prior, during, and after clearance.<sup>33</sup>

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## GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The Gender Equality Act,<sup>34</sup> which establishes national guidelines for gender equality, prohibits gender-based discrimination, and creates equal opportunities for men and women, including with regard to employment.<sup>35</sup>

According to the national authorities, women, men, boys and girls are all effectively consulted during survey and community liaison activities.<sup>36</sup> CROMAC gathers all relevant data during non-technical survey.<sup>37</sup>

The Civil Protection Directorate does not compile or disclose data regarding commercial demining companies, which are privately owned.<sup>38</sup> Within the Civil Protection Directorate of the MoI, CROMAC employs 89 people, of whom 10 (some 12%) are women. As at May 2022, no women were employed in managerial or supervisory level positions in CROMAC, and only 2.24% of CROMAC field operations positions were held by women, though others are employed as desk officers.<sup>39</sup> 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.<sup>40</sup>

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## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

For the purpose of mine action 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.<sup>41</sup> Efforts are ongoing to improve the quality of mine-related data by CROMAC's survey personnel.<sup>42</sup>

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. In May 2022, Croatia submitted its revised Article 5 work plan for 2022–2026 to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation.

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## 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.<sup>43</sup> The strategy, which was adopted by Parliament, included among its main goals the completion of mine clearance by 2019. This was not achieved.<sup>44</sup> A new national mine action strategy 2020–2026 was set to be approved by Parliament in 2021.<sup>45</sup> As at May 2022, an updated revised draft of the National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026 had been sent to decision-makers, including the relevant government ministries and to mine action stakeholders. Approval was expected by the end of 2022.<sup>46</sup>

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33 Ibid.

34 Official Gazette 82/08 and 69/17.

35 Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form C; Statement of Croatia, APMBC Intersessional Meetings, Geneva, 7 June 2018; and email from Davor Laura, CROMAC, 6 April 2018.

36 Ibid.

37 Email from Ivana Odalj, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.

38 Ibid.

39 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

40 Email from Ivana Odalj, Civil Protection Directorate, 16 August 2021.

41 CROMAC website, "CROMAC's Mine Information System", accessed 26 June 2018.

42 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

43 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25.

44 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Protocol V Article 10 Report (covering 2015), Form B.

45 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

46 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

In 2018, Croatia was granted a seven-year request to extend its APMBC Article 5 deadline from 1 March 2019 to 1 March 2026. In its extension request, Croatia stated it had 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.<sup>47</sup>

A "Mine Action Revised work plan 2020–26" was adopted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior in 2019.<sup>48</sup> However, following Croatia's failure to meet work plan targets in 2020, annual clearance targets were increased and survey targets were decreased for 2021,<sup>49</sup> and a revised mine action work plan issued for 2022–2026.<sup>50</sup>

Based on approved funding, CROMAC drafts annual work plans, which are submitted to the responsible ministries

and other State bodies for comment and approval.<sup>51</sup> In its 2021 annual work plan, CROMAC planned to release 42.4km<sup>2</sup> through clearance, 5km<sup>2</sup> through technical survey, and 6.8km<sup>2</sup> through non-technical survey.<sup>52</sup> It fell well short of the annual work plan target for clearance, but broadly met the annual targets for survey. The MoD submits its demining plan for military facilities to CROMAC annually.<sup>53</sup> In 2021, the MoD's land release target was 5.4km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>54</sup>

Land release targets for 2022 were revised upwards after 2021 clearance targets were not met.<sup>55</sup> In its 2022 annual work plan, CROMAC planned to release 38.1km<sup>2</sup> through clearance: 3.8km<sup>2</sup> of "clearance in combination with technical survey", 7.8km<sup>2</sup> through technical survey, and 10km<sup>2</sup> through non-technical survey. In addition, the MoD has a land release target of 7.4km<sup>2</sup> for 2022.<sup>56</sup>

## 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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> The law also eliminated the need for standing operating procedures (SOPs), as all aspects of mine action were defined in detail.<sup>59</sup> National mine action standards are also encompassed within it<sup>60</sup> and no changes were made in 2021.<sup>61</sup>

In recent years, a significant number of CHAs have been cleared in which no anti-personnel mines were found, although the Civil Protection Directorate said many of these areas did, however, contain anti-vehicle mines or UXO. Furthermore, other oversized CHAs were cleared with very few anti-personnel mines discovered. In 2021, hazardous areas which did not contain anti-personnel mines accounted for 20.8% of all cleared areas,<sup>62</sup> although the Civil Protection Directorate said that only some 3.13km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was cleared without finding any explosive ordnance.<sup>63</sup>

The high proportion of cleared land containing no anti-personnel mine contamination in recent years 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 CROMAC as "confirmed".

The Croatian Mine Action Centre's Centre for Testing, Development and Training (HCR-CTRO) 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 were used with the trained honeybee colonies: the passive and the active method that can be applied in suspected area reduction,

47 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8 and 11.

48 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

49 Statement of Croatia on Clearing Mined Areas, 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

50 Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, p. 10.

51 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

52 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

53 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

54 Revised Work Plan 2020–2026, April 2022, p. 9.

55 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

56 Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, p. 10.

57 National Gazette No. 110/15; and CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form A.

58 CCM Article 7 Report (covering 2017), Form A; and emails from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 and 18 May 2016.

59 Email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and Article 7 Report (covering 2015), Form A.

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

61 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

62 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Senior Advisor for EU Funds and International Cooperation, Civil Protection Directorate, 3 August 2022.

63 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

or in internal and external quality control after completion of demining." The project, which started in 2017 and was extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic,<sup>64</sup> was completed in September 2021 and presented in Bratislava at the NATO EOD Demonstration and Trials in October 2021.<sup>65</sup> Further improvements to the methods used should lead to a new and complementary tool for landmine detection in the future.<sup>66</sup>

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).<sup>67</sup>

In August 2021, as part of a study conducted by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) on difficult terrain in mine action, the GICHD visited three areas of "difficult terrain". The primary objective of the study is to support national authorities in their efforts to address explosive hazards and return land to safe and productive use. CROMAC shared statistical data for the analysis with the GICHD research team, which will be used in the study.<sup>68</sup>

## OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

Non-technical survey and technical survey in Croatia are conducted by CROMAC. In 2021, it had 27 non-technical personnel and 39 personnel working on Quality Control (QC)/Quality Assurance (QA) tasks.<sup>69</sup> This is a slight decrease in non-technical personnel and an increase in technical personnel compared with the 30 non-technical and 26 technical survey staff members employed the previous year.<sup>70</sup> The Civil Protection Directorate did not expect any further changes to survey or clearance capacity in 2022.<sup>71</sup>

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.<sup>72</sup>

As at the end of 2021, 42 commercial companies were accredited to conduct mine and CMR clearance,<sup>73</sup> one fewer than in 2021.<sup>74</sup> Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are barred from competing for commercial tenders as CROMAC views their subsidy by other funds as unfair.<sup>75</sup> The Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment is responsible for clearing all military facilities.<sup>76</sup>

Clearance operations in Croatia are conducted manually as well as with mechanical assets and with the support of mine detection dogs (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.<sup>77</sup>

**Table 2: Clearance capacity (at end 2021)<sup>78</sup>**

Clearance capacity	No.	Comments
Deminers	397	Reduction from 424 in 2020
Mine detection dogs	104	Reduction from 163 in 2020 (the average number at any time is usually approx. 100 depending on the accreditation period of each MDD <sup>79</sup> )
Demining machines	43	Same as in 2020

COVID-19 did not significantly affect clearance and survey operations in Croatia in 2021.<sup>80</sup>

64 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

65 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

66 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 3 August 2022.

67 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

68 Email from GICHD, 22 September 2022.

69 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

70 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

71 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

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

73 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

74 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

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

76 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

77 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

78 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

79 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 3 August 2022.

80 Ibid.

With the adoption of the new law in 2015, which enables use of technical survey, CROMAC planned to target demining on CHAs and to conduct technical survey on the remaining SHAs.<sup>81</sup> 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.<sup>82</sup> 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 2021

In total, almost 46.5km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was released in 2021 (including military areas), of which more than 34km<sup>2</sup> was cleared by commercial demining companies, nearly 5km<sup>2</sup> was reduced by CROMAC through technical survey, and nearly 6.8km<sup>2</sup> was cancelled through non-technical survey.<sup>83</sup> A total of 0.67km<sup>2</sup> was released by the Croatian army on military sites, including 0.38km<sup>2</sup> that was cleared.<sup>84</sup>

Land release outputs in 2021 were overall lower than in 2020 when a total of 61km<sup>2</sup> was released, of which 49.2km<sup>2</sup> was cleared by commercial demining companies, a further 0.4km<sup>2</sup> was cleared by the Croatian army, nearly 4.2km<sup>2</sup> was reduced by CROMAC through technical survey, and more than 7.2km<sup>2</sup> was cancelled through non-technical survey.<sup>85</sup>

### SURVEY IN 2021

CROMAC released a total of more than 11.73km<sup>2</sup> through survey in 2021, a slight increase on the 11.39km<sup>2</sup> released through survey in 2020.<sup>86</sup> Close to 6.76km<sup>2</sup> was cancelled through non-technical survey and more than 4.97km<sup>2</sup> was reduced through technical survey in 2021 (see Tables 3 and 4).<sup>87</sup> In addition, the MoD "searched" more than 0.64km<sup>2</sup> of military areas, of which nearly 0.38km<sup>2</sup> was cleared,<sup>88</sup> and the remaining almost 0.27km<sup>2</sup> of uncontaminated area was released.<sup>89</sup>

**Table 3: Cancellation through non-technical survey in 2021<sup>90</sup>**

County	Operator	Area cancelled (m <sup>2</sup> )
Karlovac	CROMAC	518,175
Lika-Senj	CROMAC	910,765
Osijek-Baranja	CROMAC	1,634,406
Požega-Slavonija	CROMAC	14,886
Split-Dalmacija	CROMAC	114,988
Sisak-Moslavina	CROMAC	1,930,226
Šibenik-Knin	CROMAC	1,632,096
Zadar	CROMAC	2,868
<b>Total</b>		<b>6,758,410</b>

**Table 4: Reduction through technical survey in 2021<sup>91</sup>**

County	Operator	Area reduced (m <sup>2</sup> )
Lika-Senj	CROMAC	97,072
Osijek-Baranja	CROMAC	490,679
Požega-Slavonija	CROMAC	1,436,426
Zadar County	CROMAC	2,949,468
<b>Total</b>		<b>4,973,645</b>

Non-technical survey in 2021 also resulted in the addition of 0.77km<sup>2</sup> of previously unrecorded mined area to Croatia's baseline of contamination in its national information management database.<sup>92</sup>

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

82 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 43, 44, and 45; and Additional information submitted 21 June 2018, p. 1.

83 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

84 Ibid.

85 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

86 Emails from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021 and 23 May 2022.

87 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021; and Article 7 Report (covering 2020), Form C.

88 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

89 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 3 August 2022.

90 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

91 Ibid.

92 Ibid.

## CLEARANCE IN 2021

In 2021, nearly 34.5km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was released through clearance (nearly 34.11km<sup>2</sup> by operators working under the direction of CROMAC (see Table 5) and a further 0.38km<sup>2</sup> by the Croatian army). During land release, a total of 1,462 anti-personnel mines were destroyed (1,214 by the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC; 18 by the MoD; and 230 by the MoI (as part of the “less arms, fewer tragedies” programme)); along with 79 anti-vehicle mines (48 by the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC and 31 by the MoI (as part of the “less arms, fewer tragedies” programme)).<sup>93</sup>

The 34.48km<sup>2</sup> of total mined area cleared in 2021 is a decrease of more than 30% on 2020, when nearly 49.66km<sup>2</sup> of mined area was released through clearance (nearly 49.24km<sup>2</sup> by operators working under the direction of CROMAC and a further 0.42km<sup>2</sup> by the Croatian army).<sup>94</sup> CROMAC has indicated that it would have met its clearance target of 42.4km<sup>2</sup> in 2021 but for adverse weather conditions in December 2021 that delayed the geodetic measurement of cleared areas and the issuance of official certificates of land

release. Certificates for 11km<sup>2</sup> of cleared land on the Velika Kapela mountain (Karlovac project) were due to be issued in the first quarter of 2022.<sup>95</sup> Certificates were issued in the first quarter of 2022 for 10.5km<sup>2</sup>.<sup>96</sup>

The 375,961m<sup>2</sup> of military facilities cleared in 2021 by the Pioneer company of the Engineering Regiment of the Croatian army was a decrease from the 415,756m<sup>2</sup> of military facilities cleared in 2020.<sup>97</sup>

The total of 1,462 anti-personnel mines destroyed in 2021 represents a sharp fall compared to 2020, when a total of 5,154 anti-personnel mines destroyed (4,883 by CROMAC; 70 by the MoD; and 201 by the MoI (as part of the “less arms, fewer tragedies” programme)).<sup>98</sup> The 79 anti-vehicle mines found and destroyed in 2021 represented a similar dramatic drop from 2020, when 527 were found and destroyed in 2020 (493 by CROMAC and 34 by the MoI (as part of the programme)).<sup>99</sup>

**Table 5: Mine clearance in 2021 (excluding military clearance)<sup>100</sup>**

County	Operator	Area cleared (m <sup>2</sup> )*	AP mines destroyed*	AV mines destroyed*	UXO destroyed
Karlovac	Dok-ing/ COR/ Piper/ Capsula Interna	3,586,132	118	3	4
Lika-Senj	Titan/Istraživač/Dok-ing/ Piton/ Piper/Maper/Zeleni kvadrat/Rumital/Capsula Interna	6,229,149	201	20	128
Osijek-Baranja	Dok-ing/Istraživač/ Zeleni kvadrat/ Capsula Interna/Titan/Piper	4,371,502	37	18	203
Požega-Slavonija	Diz-Eko/Capsula Interna/ Titan/Zeleni kvadrat/ Istraživač/Dok-ing	4,865,810	38	5	23
Split-Dalmacija	Capsula Interna/Piton/Titan	921,413	7	0	0
Sisak-Moslavina	Maper/Manang/Istraživač/ Dok-ing/ Capsula Interna/Zeleni kvadrat/Titan/ Alfa razminiranje/ Rumital/Piper	6,179,442	622	2	291
Šibenik-Knin	Manang/Istraživač/Dok-ing/ Piper/ Capsula Interna	1,857,802	46	0	4
Zadar	Istraživač/Dok-ing/ Capsula Interna/ Zeleni kvadrat/Titan/ Piper/Diz-Eko	6,096,039	145	0	157
<b>Totals</b>		<b>34,107,289</b>	<b>1,214</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>810</b>

AP = Anti-personnel AV = Anti-vehicle

\* An additional 375,961m<sup>2</sup> of mined area was cleared by the MoD on military areas and 18 AP mines destroyed.

93 Ibid.

94 Ibid.

95 Ibid.

96 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 3 August 2022.

97 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

100 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

Clearance output equates to approximately one anti-personnel mine destroyed for every 28,000 square metres of cleared area (excluding the items of UXO and anti-vehicle mines destroyed). This is a huge decline on the 10,000 square metre average of the previous year, which already indicated either very low density of contamination or poor targeting of clearance (or both).

## ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMB (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 to fall considerably behind schedule.

In November 2021, having failed to reach the target output of 70.1km in 2020, Croatia indicated that the difference would be tackled over coming years with updated annual implementation and financial projections harmonised with the Oslo Action Plan. The goal is a mine-free Croatia by 2026.<sup>101</sup> The changes would mostly be reflected in the scope of annual mine clearance by the MoD, with Croatia referencing the MoD's limited capacities.<sup>102</sup>

Croatia failed to meet its land release targets in 2020 and 2021, missing by a total of 17%, releasing a total of 106.4km<sup>2</sup> across both years (including MoD areas) against a target

of 128.7km<sup>2</sup>. The authorities have explained that COVID-19 reduced land release in 2020, when clearance and survey operations were closed for 55 days, and that in 2021, adverse weather in December delayed the issuance of land release certificates for nearly 11km<sup>2</sup> of clearance.<sup>103</sup> The limited land release capacity of the MoD between 2020 and 2022 is reported to have affected land release outputs.<sup>104</sup> Despite this, and a decline in the capacities of authorised commercial clearance companies since the end of 2019,<sup>105</sup> Croatia remains confident that survey and clearance operations will be completed by the end of 2025, leaving only administrative/paperwork issues to be settled at the beginning of 2026 before its Article 5 deadline of 1 March 2026.<sup>106</sup>

Croatia's second updated work plan (2022–2026), published in Spring 2022, sets out how it proposes to release the remaining 234km<sup>2</sup> of mined area at the end of 2021 (204.4km<sup>2</sup> under the MoD/Civil Protection Directorate and 29.5km<sup>2</sup> under the MoD's jurisdiction), with higher land release targets to make up for previous shortfalls (see Table 6).

**Table 6: Planned land release output in km<sup>2</sup> (2022–26)<sup>107</sup>**

	Total	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026
Clearance	136.8	34.3	34.6	33.1	34.8	0
Clearance in combination with Technical Survey	17.4	3.8	8.4	5.2	0	0
Technical Survey	19.8	7.8	5.0	5.0	2.0	0
Non-Technical Survey	30.4	10.0	12.6	7.8	0	0
<b>Subtotals</b>	<b>204.4</b>	<b>55.9</b>	<b>60.6</b>	<b>51.1</b>	<b>36.8</b>	<b>0</b>
Croatian Army (MoD area)	29.5	7.4	3.1	8.8	10.2	0

101 Statement of Croatia on Clearing Mined Areas, 19<sup>th</sup> Meeting of States Parties (virtual meeting), 15–19 November 2021.

102 Ibid.

103 Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, April 2022, p. 3.

104 Ibid.

105 Ibid., p. 12.

106 Ibid., p. 11.

107 Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, April 2022, p. 10.

Meeting demining targets for military areas remains a particular challenge. The annual release targets in Croatia's revised work plan for 2022–26 are substantially higher than the area the armed forces has cleared in recent years. Between 2018 and 2020 the MoD cleared less than 0.5km<sup>2</sup> per annum, rising slightly to 0.64km<sup>2</sup> in 2020.<sup>108</sup> In 2021, the MoD released a total of 0.64km<sup>2</sup> (of which 0.38km<sup>2</sup> was cleared) against its annual land release target of 5.4km<sup>2</sup> for the year. As previously mentioned, in 2021 CROMAC discussed with the MoD joint survey activities in military areas to address the lack of progress with land release on military sites.

Releasing land for which CROMAC is responsible will also be challenging and questions remain over whether Croatia has sufficient (and sufficiently capable) survey and clearance capacity to meet its annual targets. With an estimated 234km<sup>2</sup> of mined area still to be released at the end of 2021, the Article 5 deadline for clearance and release of land by March 2026 is very ambitious, at least without increased capacity or improved efficiency.

The situation is made more difficult as the remaining areas to be released are mainly forested (98.7%), therefore there will be a significant reduction in the use of demining machinery, especially medium and heavy machines.<sup>109</sup> Croatia foresees that more use will be made of small, mobile machines that can be efficiently transported and used in affected areas, and that the resulting increase in manual demining will reduce

productivity and increase the cost of clearance and technical survey. Use of mechanical assets is also further restricted in the "Natura 2000" protected area.<sup>110</sup>

A total of more than 200km<sup>2</sup> of mined area has been cleared over the last five years (see Table 7).

**Table 7: Five-year summary of anti-personnel mine clearance**

Year	Area cleared (km <sup>2</sup> )
2021	34.48
2020	49.66
2019	39.16
2018	49.01
2017	30.38
<b>Total</b>	<b>202.69</b>

In order to ensure that Croatia meets its Article 5 obligation by 1 March 2026, CROMAC will need to significantly increase its capacity and implementation of survey to determine the size and location of contamination more accurately before starting clearance, and to cancel and reduce areas in which no evidence of contamination is found.

## PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

The Civil Protection Directorate has continued research cooperation and discussions with the GICHD on the issue of national survey and clearance capacity to address explosive ordnance discovered after the release of contaminated areas or post completion (i.e. residual contamination). In August 2019, a joint study entitled "National capacities and residual contamination – Croatia" was published, documenting the progress made on this issue so far and highlighting the importance of a participatory and transparent long-term strategic planning progress.<sup>111</sup>

The integration of CROMAC within the MoI, which took effect from January 2019, is reported to be one of the first steps to deal with residual risk and liability, and it is believed this will elevate the importance of the issue within the MoI.<sup>112</sup> The integration also means that the challenge of residual risk will be handled within the responsibilities of the MoI – Police Directorate EOD teams and CROMAC.<sup>113</sup> Activities which must be conducted upon discovery of residual contamination are predefined by the Act on Mine Action.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>108</sup> Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022.

<sup>109</sup> Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021; and 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 43.

<sup>110</sup> 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 45; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

<sup>111</sup> GICHD, "National capacities and residual contamination – Croatia", August 2019, at: <http://bit.ly/2EwKcTt>.

<sup>112</sup> Emails from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019 and 8 April 2020.

<sup>113</sup> Emails from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 8 April 2020 and 30 April 2021; Statement of Croatia on Clearance, CCM Second Review Conference (Part 1, virtual meeting), 25–27 November 2020; and Croatia, Article 4 Declaration of Compliance, 1 August 2020.

<sup>114</sup> Statement of Croatia on Clearance, CCM Second Review Conference (Part 1, virtual meeting), 25–27 November 2020.

**ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE: 1 JULY 2025**

NOT ON TRACK TO MEET DEADLINE (LACK OF EFFECTIVE CONTROL)

## KEY DATA

### ANTI-PERSONNEL (AP) MINE CONTAMINATION: LIGHT

MINE ACTION REVIEW ESTIMATE

**1** KM<sup>2</sup>

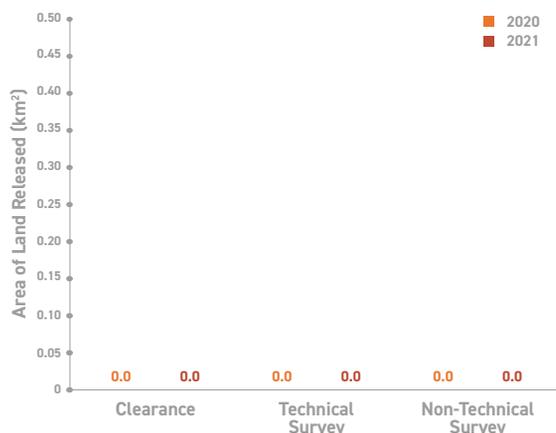
AP MINE  
CLEARANCE IN 2021

**0** M<sup>2</sup>

AP MINES  
DESTROYED IN 2021

**0**

## LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Cyprus sought and was granted a further three-year extension to its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) Article 5 deadline in 2021 on the basis that it still does not have effective control over areas in the north in which anti-personnel mines have been or are suspected to have been emplaced. There was no progress towards the Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities in northern Cyprus reaching an agreement on the way forward for mine clearance on the island and in 2021, for a second consecutive year, no mined area was released.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Republic of Cyprus and the Turkish Cypriot authorities in northern Cyprus should comply with the UN Security Council's call for leaders of the two communities to agree and continue a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus, and make expeditious progress towards releasing the 29 remaining hazardous areas on the island.<sup>1</sup>
- The Republic of Cyprus and the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) should update, consolidate and align data on remaining mined areas.

## DEMINING CAPACITY

### MANAGEMENT CAPACITY

- No national mine action authority or mine action centre

### NATIONAL OPERATORS

- None

### INTERNATIONAL OPERATORS

- None (Mines Advisory Group (MAG) and DOK-ING were last active in 2017)

### OTHER ACTORS

- UN-supported mine action in Cyprus is coordinated by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) on behalf of the UN Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)

1 UN Security Council Resolution 2646 (2022) operative para. 16.

## UNDERSTANDING OF AP MINE CONTAMINATION

The precise extent of anti-personnel mine contamination in Cyprus is unclear. The Article 7 Report submitted by Cyprus in May 2022 stated that 21 anti-personnel minefields laid by Turkish forces remained: one in the buffer zone and the other twenty north of but “overwhelmingly situated adjacent to the buffer zone”. Cyprus said it did not know the size of these mined areas or if they contained mines other than anti-personnel mines.<sup>2</sup>

Contamination data in the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP)’s mine action database, cited by the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), differs significantly from that provided by Cyprus. It showed that across Cyprus

there were 29 mined areas covering a total of 1.5km<sup>2</sup> at the end of 2021, a level unchanged since the end of 2019,<sup>3</sup> but that contamination consisted mostly of anti-vehicle mines (see Table 1). North of the buffer zone, mined areas include one confirmed hazardous area (CHA) and five suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) thought to contain a mixture of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines. Nineteen hazardous areas recorded south of the buffer zone contain only anti-vehicle mines (13 CHAs and 6 SHAs), as do three of four CHAs within the buffer zone (the mine type in the fourth was unknown).<sup>4</sup>

**Table 1: Mined area (at December 2021)<sup>5</sup>**

Location	CHAs	Contamination	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	SHAs	Contamination	Area (m <sup>2</sup> )	Total SHA/CHA	Total area (m <sup>2</sup> )
South of the buffer zone (territory controlled by Cyprus)	13	AV mines	418,543	6	AV mines	174,014	19	592,557
Buffer Zone	4	AV mines (3 areas) Unknown (1 area)	703,581	0	N/A	N/A	4	703,581
North of the buffer zone (territory controlled by Turkish Cypriot authorities)	1	Mixed (AV mines and AP mines)	170,493	5	Mixed	65,281	6	235,774
<b>Totals</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>1,292,617</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>239,295</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>1,531,912</b>

AV = Anti-vehicle AP = Anti-personnel

Cyprus has been divided geographically and politically since 1974 by a 180km-long buffer zone, following Turkish Forces’ operations in the north of the island. Minefields were laid by both the Greek Cypriot National Guard and the Turkish Armed Forces. Permission for UNFICYP to access areas within and outside the buffer zone remains limited.<sup>6</sup>

In February 2021, Cyprus renewed its request to extend its Article 5 deadline due to its continued inability to fulfil the mine clearance obligations in parts of the territory which are outside its effective control.<sup>7</sup> The request was granted and the deadline extended until 1 July 2025.<sup>8</sup>

Cyprus confirmed that, in 2019, 18 SHAs (nine under the effective control of Cyprus and nine in the north of the island) were checked and declared mine-free.<sup>9</sup> UNICYP had defined the 18 areas as potentially hazardous as a result of mines laid in the areas. The successful inspection of the 18 SHAs was achieved following a 2019 agreement between the President of the Republic of Cyprus and the leader of the Turkish Cypriot community in the context of confidence building measures.<sup>10</sup>

Despite repeated calls from the Security Council for the two sides to agree on “a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus” most recently in July 2022,<sup>11</sup> 2021 passed without

<sup>2</sup> Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

<sup>3</sup> Emails from Mark Connelly, Chief of Operations, United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), 8 April 2020, 26 June 2020, 28 May 2021, and 12 May 2022.

<sup>4</sup> Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 28 May 2021 and 12 May 2022.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 26 September 2017.

<sup>7</sup> Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 9 February 2021.

<sup>8</sup> Decision of the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties, November 2021.

<sup>9</sup> Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, Additional Information, 11 August 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., and email from Aysan Mullahasan Atilgan, Director for Political Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (MoFA TRNC), 12 August 2022.

<sup>11</sup> UN Security Council 2646 (2022) operative para. 16.

progress and there was no change in the situation as of July 2022.<sup>12</sup> UNFICYP has followed up on the call by the Security Council, engaging with military representatives on both sides in order to make progress towards releasing the 29 remaining suspected hazardous areas on the island.<sup>13</sup> While the Turkish Cypriot authorities have expressed potential interest if it involved reciprocity from the other side, the Greek Cypriot National Guard did not wish to discuss the matter.<sup>14</sup> UNFICYP's Mine Action Service has indicated that it will continue to consider options for the next phase of clearance activities to be presented to the two sides, with a particular focus on the buffer zone.<sup>15</sup>

#### TERRITORY CONTROLLED BY THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

Cyprus' latest Article 7 report stated that no anti-personnel mines remained in the minefields laid by the National Guard that are in territory under its effective control.<sup>16</sup> In total, between becoming a State Party on 1 July 2003 and its original Article 5 deadline of 1 July 2013, Cyprus released all 20 mined areas under its effective control.<sup>17</sup>

#### BUFFER ZONE

Four mined areas remained in the Buffer Zone at the end of 2021, three of which belong to the Greek Cypriot National Guard and contain only anti-vehicle mines. The fourth belongs to Turkish Forces and the mine type is unknown.<sup>18</sup> The Government of Cyprus considers the three minefields with only anti-vehicle mines to be under its control and not within the buffer zone.<sup>19</sup>

#### TURKISH-CONTROLLED TERRITORY IN NORTHERN CYPRUS

The extent of mine contamination in areas controlled by Turkish Forces is not known. Cyprus made its 2021 Article 5 extension deadline request, for the same reason as the previous three extension requests (in 2012, 2015, and 2018), on the grounds that certain parts of its territory outside its effective control contained mined areas "in which anti-personnel mines have been or are suspected to be emplaced."<sup>20</sup> Since the end of 2019, Cyprus has estimated that 20 Turkish-laid minefields remain north of and mostly adjacent to the buffer zone, plus one in the buffer zone near Deryneia village. The size of the minefields and whether they include mines other than anti-personnel mines, was reported as unknown.<sup>21</sup>

One minefield has been reported just north of the buffer zone in Mammari, where heavy rains led to mines being washed into the buffer zone in 2014 and 2015. UNFICYP has raised the issue of clearance of this minefield with the Turkish forces and has offered assistance in this regard.<sup>22</sup> In 2017, a small area of the Mammari minefield was cleared by a Croatian commercial operator contracted by the Turkish Armed Forces.<sup>23</sup>

## NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are coordinated by UNMAS on behalf of UNFICYP.<sup>24</sup> UNMAS is a component of UNFICYP, providing expertise in mine action planning and coordination, quality assurance (QA) oversight, and management of mine action information.<sup>25</sup> UNMAS also provides assistance to the Committee on Missing Persons (CMP) to ensure safe access to areas where it conducts activities and to UNFICYP for explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) call-out tasks.<sup>26</sup>

#### ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

There was no available information on environmental policies relevant to demining in Cyprus, but given that UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS),<sup>27</sup> it is assumed that this includes IMAS environmental standards.

12 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN Doc S/2022/533, 5 July 2022, operative para. 18.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., and email from Aysan Mullahasan Atilgan, MoFA TRNC, 12 August 2022.

15 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN Doc S/2022/533, 5 July 2022, operative para. 18.

16 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

17 Committee on Article 5 Implementation, "Observations on implementation of Article 5 by Cyprus", 23 June 2015; and Article 7 Report (covering 2013), Form G.

18 Emails from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018; and Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 17 July 2019 and 12 May 2022. Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/676, 6 July 2018, para. 44.

19 Interview with Demetris Samuel, Deputy Permanent Representative, Cyprus Permanent Mission to the UN in Geneva, Geneva, 19 May 2016.

20 Cyprus Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 9 February 2021.

21 Article 7 Report (covering 2021), Form C.

22 Ibid.; and email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

23 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Stefan De Coninck, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 10 September 2018.

24 Ibid.

25 UNMAS, "Cyprus" webpage, accessed 18 August 2022, at: <http://bit.ly/2GtXje>.

26 Report of the Secretary-General on the UN operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/25, 9 January 2018, para. 12.

27 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

## INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

UNFICYP uses the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) database and in 2020 upgraded it from Version 6 to New Generation.<sup>28</sup>

In 2017, a review and reconciliation of all minefield database information revealed that a number of SHAs had already been cleared and/or cancelled. However, due to capacity limitations between 2011 and 2016, the information had not been removed from the database. The review resulted in the removal of seven SHAs (totalling more than 950,000m<sup>2</sup>) from the database.<sup>29</sup>

Cyprus has submitted annual Article 7 reports regularly since acceding to the APMBC in July 2003, most recently in 2022, for calendar year 2021. Cyprus has submitted four Article 5 deadline extension requests: in 2012, 2015, 2018, and most recently in 2021. Cyprus submitted most of the reports in a timely manner but provided only limited information due to it not having effective control over the remaining anti-personnel mined areas.

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## PLANNING AND TASKING

Neither Cyprus nor Turkish Cypriot-controlled northern Cyprus has disclosed plans to survey and clear the remaining mine contamination. The self-styled Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC) reported to Mine Action Review, however, that it made a recent proposal for a mine-free island on 8 July 2022 (see *Land Release Outputs and Article 5 Compliance* below for further detail) and that it had previously made comprehensive proposals for clearing mines from the island in 2014, 2015, and 2018.<sup>30</sup>

As indicated above, non-technical survey conducted in 2019 was initiated as a confidence-building measure agreed in February 2019 by President of Cyprus, Nicos Anastasiades, and President of TRNC Mustafa Akıncı in the context of long-running discussions on a political settlement and "with a view to working towards a mine-free Cyprus".<sup>31</sup>

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## LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

### STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

All UN-supported mine action operations in Cyprus are said to be conducted in accordance with IMAS.<sup>32</sup> In 2016, UNMAS updated the national technical standards and guidelines that are used in UNFICYP to reflect current best practice and to ensure the highest standards are applied for UNFICYP clearance operations.<sup>33</sup>

### OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

UNMAS conducts non-technical and technical survey in cooperation with representatives of the National Guard and Turkish Cypriot Security Force.<sup>34</sup> No clearance has been conducted since 2017 when the Turkish Armed Forces contracted DOK-ING to conduct clearance, and Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to conduct QA of demining in the Mammari minefield.<sup>35</sup>

The focus for UNFICYP is the four CHAs in the buffer zone (three anti-vehicle minefields belonging to Cyprus, and one mined area, where the mine type is unknown, which is the responsibility of Turkish forces). It does, though, have a mandate to support the removal of all mines in Cyprus.<sup>36</sup>

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## LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

### LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2021

No mine survey or clearance was reported in Cyprus in 2021 or 2020.<sup>37</sup>

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28 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 16 June 2021.

29 Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations operation in Cyprus, UN doc. S/2018/25, 9 January 2018, para. 12.

30 Email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılgan, MoFA TRNC, 12 August 2022.

31 Security Council Press Statement on Cyprus, 27 February 2019, UN doc. SC/13722, at: <http://bit.ly/2JKyYus>.

32 Email from Julie Myers, UNMAS (based on information provided by Joseph Huber, UNMAS, and Maj. Rich Pearce, UNFICYP), 24 July 2017.

33 Ibid.

34 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 July 2019.

35 Ibid.

36 Email from Mark Connelly, 12 May 2022.

37 Article 7 Reports (covering 2020 and 2021), Forms C and F; emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 28 May 2021 and 12 May 2022.

The last land release occurred in 2019 when UNFICYP announced release of 18 SHAs covering 210,882m<sup>2</sup> under confidence-building measures agreed in February 2019.<sup>38</sup> The SHAs included nine on each side of the island divide and were selected by UNMAS in cooperation with the National Guard and forces in the Turkish Cypriot-controlled north. The respective militaries conducted non-technical survey and UNMAS and UNFICYP then visited one site in the north and one site in the south to receive documentation certifying completion of the tasks. Some of the sites were located in military areas and respective military forces took the opportunity to conduct training resulting in some area reduction but no items were found.<sup>39</sup>

UNMAS reported that in 2021, there had been no developments from the situation the preceding year. UNFICYP continues to raise the issue of demining in accordance with its mandate, but despite continued dialogue between UNFICYP senior managers and key leaders, there has been no agreement on options to continue demining yet.<sup>40</sup> In its recent proposal for a mine-free island dated 8 July 2022, reported to have been conveyed to the authorities of the Republic of Cyprus through the United Nations Secretary-General, the TRNC said that it proposed that: the ultimate goal shall be the clearance of the 29 remaining SHAs to free the Island from all landmines; demining activities shall be facilitated by UNFICYP in coordination with the two sides; demining activities shall commence in areas adjacent to the buffer zone (one minefield under the "jurisdiction" of the Turkish Cypriot authorities in Deryneia, the other three under Cypriot control); demining activities in each side shall be conducted proportionately and simultaneously; and that both sides shall convene to discuss, in detail, the modalities of the implementation of the demining operations.<sup>41</sup>

## ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Cyprus is obligated to destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than 1 July 2025.

Cyprus reported clearing all anti-personnel mines in mined areas that it accepted were under its control within ten years of becoming a State Party, namely by 1 July 2013. In 2012, Cyprus submitted the first of four Article 5 deadline extension requests, on the grounds that Cyprus does not have effective control over remaining contaminated areas in the north under the control of Turkish forces.<sup>42</sup> Cyprus has provided the same justification for all subsequent extension requests. The fourth request, submitted in February 2021, sought an extension of three years until 1 July 2025,<sup>43</sup> which was granted at the Nineteenth Meeting of States Parties.

Turkey (now renamed Türkiye) received a three-year, nine-month extension to its Article 5 clearance deadline until 31 December 2025 but did not request additional time for clearance of the areas it controls in northern Cyprus.<sup>44</sup>

As indicated above, the UN Security Council continues to urge both sides in Cyprus to agree upon and implement a plan of work to achieve a mine-free Cyprus, most recently in July 2022.<sup>45</sup>

## PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

It is not known whether plans are in place to address residual contamination once Cyprus' Article 5 obligations have been fulfilled.

38 UNFICYP, "18 Suspected Hazardous Areas declared mine free", Press release, 9 December 2019.

39 Emails from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 26 June and 3 July 2020.

40 Email from Mark Connelly, UNMAS, 12 May 2022.

41 'Proposal of the TRNC for a Mine-Free Island', provided via an email from Aysan Mullahasan Atılğan, MoFA TRNC, 12 August 2022.

42 2021 Article 5 deadline Extension Request.

43 Ibid.

44 Turkey's Article 5 deadline Extension Request, 31 March 2021. On the issue of Turkish jurisdiction, see, e.g., European Court of Human Rights, *Güzelyurtlu and others v. Cyprus and Turkey*, Judgment (Grand Chamber), 29 January 2019.

45 UN Security Council Resolution 2646 (2022), operative para. 16.