

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 2023

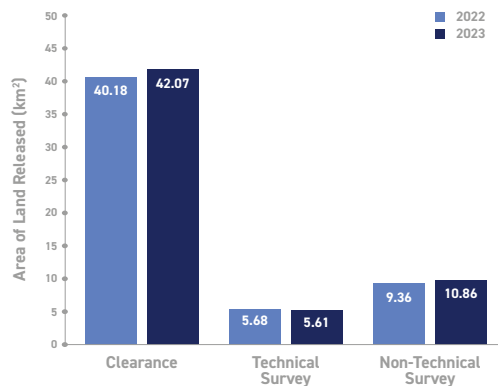
42.07 KM²

AP MINES
 DESTROYED IN 2023

969

(INCLUDING 172 HANDED
 IN TO THE POLICE BY
 THE PUBLIC)

LAND RELEASE OUTPUT



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

KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Croatia did not meet its targets for clearance or land release output in 2023 and in March 2024 submitted a revised work plan to 2026. Croatia should still be able to meet this deadline, although the amount of land cleared without any mines being found increased from 2022 and fewer anti-personnel (AP) mines were found per square metre, indicating a possible need for better survey and targeting of clearance.

FIVE-YEAR OVERVIEW

Croatia has achieved significant progress in mine clearance over the past five years. However, challenges remain regarding survey and especially the need for more precise targeting of clearance. While annual land release targets have largely been met, enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of these operations is crucial. With continued improvements in these areas, Croatia should be able to meet its Article 5 clearance deadline of March 2026.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION

- The Croatian Mine Action Centre (CROMAC) should conduct survey of suspected hazardous areas (SHAs) and review the basis on which confirmed hazardous areas (CHAs) are established. In particular, it should use survey to confirm evidence of mines before embarking on full clearance.
- CROMAC should increase its survey capacity to meet the targets in its 2024 Revised Work Plan.
- CROMAC should fulfil the pledge in Croatia's 2018 extension request to explore the potential for mine detection dogs (MDDs) to enhance technical survey efficiency. The 2015 demining law, which only allows MDDs to be used in clearance and not for survey, should be amended.

ASSESSMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

Criterion	Score (2023)	Score (2022)	Performance Commentary
UNDERSTANDING OF CONTAMINATION (20% of overall score)	7	7	Croatia considers its current national baseline of AP mined area to be reasonably accurate and evidence-based. But since the remaining mined area has a low density of contamination, continued survey remains necessary in order to target clearance efficiently.
NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT (10% of overall score)	8	8	There is strong national ownership of mine action, with good political will to implement Article 5. In 2023, Croatia contributed approximately €38 million (70% of the total) to the overall mine action budget. National funding has also been secured through to 2026.
GENDER AND DIVERSITY (10% of overall score)	5	5	The proportion of women employed at CROMAC remains low. However, Croatia began collecting data on the different needs, vulnerabilities, and perspectives of women, girls, boys, and men from diverse populations in 2023.
ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION* (10% of overall score)	7	Not Scored	Croatia lacks a stand-alone environmental management policy or national standard for environmental management specific to mine action. However, national legislation and policies on environmental management apply to mine action, with environmental management and nature protection designated as key goals in the National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026. Demining plans must identify and assess environmental issues and determine effective mitigation measures. Croatia also considers climate-related and extreme weather risks in its survey and clearance planning.
INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING (10% of overall score)	8	8	Croatia provides regular, accurate, and consistent updates on its progress in Article 5 implementation at Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) meetings and in its Article 7 reports. However, a more detailed breakdown of land release output should be provided in the reports.
PLANNING AND TASKING (10% of overall score)	7	7	Croatia approved an updated draft of its National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026 in 2023. In April 2024, Croatia submitted an updated work plan to 2026 with annual targets for land release.
LAND RELEASE SYSTEM** (10% of overall score)	5	5	Croatia amended the law on mine action in May 2023 to enhance the effectiveness of land release. However, there is a continued need to conduct survey prior to clearance, to avoid clearance of CHAs where no contamination is found. In 2023, hazardous areas which did not contain AP mines accounted for 28% of all cleared areas, an increase from 22% in 2022.
LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE (20% of overall score)	7	8	Clearance and survey output increased in 2023 but still fell short of the overall land release target for the year. No military area was released through survey in 2023 which accounted for the drop in land release output.
Average Score	6.8	6.8	Overall Programme Performance: AVERAGE

* New criterion introduced in 2024 to assess performance.

** The weighting of this criterion was previously 20% of overall performance score, but is now given a 10% weighting.

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-two commercial demining companies are accredited for mine clearance
- 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

At the end of 2023, Croatia reported a total of more than 92km² of mined area remaining, excluding military areas. Of this, 78.57km² is in CHAs and 13.56km² in SHAs (see Table 1).¹ This represents an 38% decrease in estimated contamination excluding military areas, compared to 149km² of mined area at the end of 2022 and is largely consistent with the land release reported for 2023.² Survey by the Civil Protection Directorate sector of CROMAC added 0.43km² of previously unrecorded mined area to the information management

database.³ Croatia believes that hazardous areas, excluding military zones, contain 9,301 AP mines and 751 anti-vehicle (AV) mines.⁴

A further 18.9km² of confirmed mined area existed in areas under military control as at the end of 2023, compared to 19.8km² as at the end of 2022.⁵ This mined area, which is also contaminated with unexploded ordnance (UXO), is across military barracks, training sites, radar stations, and storage sites.

Table 1: AP mined area (in civilian areas) (at end 2023)⁶

County	Municipal areas with hazardous areas*	CHA (m ²)	SHA (m ²)	Total mined area (m ²)
Karlovac	4	14,266,497	203,374	14,469,871
Lika-Senj	8	48,269,487	10,997,407	59,266,894
Split-Dalmacija	2	7954411	0	7954411
Sisak-Moslavina	7	8,084,164	2,358,240	10,442,404
Totals	21	78,574,559	13,559,021	92,133,580

* A further 18.9km² of mined area exists in areas under military control.

Four of Croatia's twenty-one counties are still mine-affected, two fewer than in 2022. At the end of 2023, 98.7% of mine contamination was on forested land while the other 1.3% was on agricultural land.⁷ 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.⁸

According to Croatia's Civil Protection Directorate, the baseline of AP mine contamination has been established through inclusive consultation. Croatia considers the baseline to be evidence-based and reasonably accurate.⁹ However, the fact that mined areas continue to be cleared without AP mines being found calls this into question.

OTHER EXPLOSIVE ORDNANCE CONTAMINATION

Croatia is also affected, though to a much lesser extent, by 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 all known or suspected cluster munition-contaminated areas.¹⁰

1 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Head of Unit, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

2 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

3 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

4 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

5 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

6 Ibid.; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

7 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

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

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

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

NATIONAL OWNERSHIP AND PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

In August 2018, the Croatian government decided to integrate 54 agencies, including CROMAC and the Government Office for Mine Action (GOMA), into existing State administration bodies. This was formalised through legislation effective from 1 January 2019.¹¹ As a result, CROMAC and GOMA ceased to exist as separate entities, and CROMAC became an “operational sector” within the Civil Protection Directorate under the Ministry of the Interior (MoI).¹² The aim was to create a more efficient Civil Protection Directorate to handle all aspects of civil protection, including mine action.¹³ Before 2019, CROMAC (established in 1998) and GOMA (created in 2012) operated independently.¹⁴

A new law on mine action was adopted by the Croatian parliament in 2015.¹⁵ While the Law marked an improvement in certain respects—for instance, by permitting land release through technical survey (TS)—there were concerns it would impede efficient and effective mine action.¹⁶ For accreditation, the MoI provides three separate permits: for manual mine detection, for mechanical mine detection, and for operations using mine and explosive detection dogs (EDDs). This replaces the former unified accreditation licence.¹⁷ On 26 May 2023, the Parliament passed an amendment to the mine action law, revising several regulations to enhance the effectiveness of land release.¹⁸

The Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC is not responsible for survey and clearance of military areas, which comes under the remit of the Ministry of Defence (MoD). But to address the slow progress in release of mined areas under

military control, CROMAC and the MoD met to improve cooperation between them. This included plans for joint NTS and TS to identify CHAs and SHAs which fall within the MoD’s responsibility.¹⁹

In its 2018 Article 5 deadline extension request, Croatia estimated that fulfilment of its Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) obligations would cost a further €459 million.²⁰ In its Revised Work Plan 2022–2026, Croatia estimated it would cost €219 million to clear the remaining hazardous area.²¹ Half of the funding for land release through to 2025 is expected to come from the Croatian government with the remainder coming from the European Union (EU) and other sources.²² In 2023, the overall annual mine action budget for survey and clearance in Croatia was €54.2 million.²³ The State contribution was 70.3% of the total (approx. €38 million),²⁴ an increase on the €35 million in 2022.²⁵ EU funding remained a significant contribution in 2023 at 27.6% of the total, while the Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme contributed 2.1%.²⁶

Croatia does not have a resource mobilisation strategy for Article 5 implementation and the Civil Protection Directorate has indicated that such a strategy is unnecessary, as the financial framework for completing clearance and survey operations is fully defined through to 2026.²⁷ The Civil Protection Directorate reported in 2023 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.²⁸

GENDER AND DIVERSITY

The Gender Equality Act,²⁹ which establishes national guidelines for gender equality, prohibits gender-based discrimination and requires equal opportunities for men

and women, including in employment.³⁰ The Civil Protection Directorate does not compile or disclose data regarding commercial demining companies, which are privately

11 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).

12 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.

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

14 CROMAC, “National Mine Action Strategy of Croatia 2009–2019”, Zagreb, June 2009, p. 2; interviews with Dijana Pleština, Director, GOMA, in Geneva, 23 May 2012 and 10 April 2014; and email from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 4 July 2013.

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

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

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

18 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form A.

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

20 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 44.

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

22 Ibid.

23 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

24 Ibid.

25 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

26 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024; and Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form C.

27 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

28 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

29 Official Gazette 82/08 and 69/17.

30 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.

owned.³¹ According to Croatia, the very low proportion of women working in the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC (see Table 2) 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, many women (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.³² In 2023, CROMAC hired a new female employee for a non-operational (office-based) role.³³

Table 2: Gender composition of CROMAC in 2023³⁴

Total staff	Women staff	Total staff in managerial or supervisory positions	Women in managerial or supervisory positions	Total operations staff	Women in operational positions
82	10 (12%)	8	0	69	2 (3%)

In 2023, a Swiss-Croatian Cooperation Programme was completed, an output of which is the establishment of a comprehensive database on explosive ordnance where information has been collected on the different needs, vulnerabilities, and perspectives of women, girls, boys, and men from diverse populations.³⁵

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICIES AND ACTION

Croatia has no plans to develop a stand-alone environmental management policy for mine action or specific national standards for environmental management as they feel this is already incorporated into current legislation. Several synchronised cross-ministry policies and laws already regulate environmental protection and sustainable waste management, and these also apply to mine action.³⁶ In addition, the 2015 Mine Action Act (as amended) requires that mine action operations minimise their adverse impact on the environment. Environmental management and nature protection are designated key goals in the National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026.³⁷

Croatia's annual mine action plans are coordinated through several ministries, including the Ministry of Economy and Sustainable Development and local and regional administrations. Planning for mine action operations must identify and assess environmental issues and determine effective mitigation measures, which are then evaluated by county-level authorities. These plans are assessed for their impact, and prescribed protection measures must be strictly followed by the companies performing clearance activities. The recent Comprehensive Risk Office Support System (CROSS) project funded by the European Regional Development Fund, which is focused on improving risk management and operational efficiency in mine clearance, includes environmental protection as a key outcome.³⁸

For EU and international projects targeting Natura 2000 Ecological Network areas 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 before, during, and after clearance.³⁹ Three of these projects—“Naturavita”, “Fearless Velebit”, and “Karlovac Karst”—where clearance was completed in 2022, were subject to strict restrictions on when and how clearance could take place so as to minimise disruption to local species and habitats. As a high proportion of the remaining mined area land is in forests, Croatia is putting sustainable development and environmental stewardship at the forefront with a focus on preserving and restoring forest ecosystems.⁴⁰

Croatia takes climate-related and extreme weather risks into account when planning and prioritizing survey and clearance tasks. There is a heightened risks of potentially uncontrollable forest fires and, in certain areas, floods. These risks are addressed in the “Disaster Risk Management Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030”,⁴¹ which was officially adopted by the Croatian Government and developed by the Civil Protection Directorate. This strategy is the first document to provide a comprehensive, unified, and proactive approach to disaster risk management. It directs activities and investments across all phases of risk management.⁴²

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

32 Ibid.

33 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

34 Ibid.

35 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

36 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2022; and European Committee of the Regions, “Croatia - Environment & the Fight against Climate Change”, at: <https://bit.ly/4fdDZbZ>.

37 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

41 ‘Disaster Risk Management Strategy of the Republic of Croatia until 2030’, at: <https://shorturl.at/6t6HS>.

42 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

CROMAC established its own 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.⁴³ Croatia was accepted into the eurozone in 2022, so all financial data was converted into euros.⁴⁴

Croatia submits timely and accurate annual Article 7 transparency reports and reports on its progress in Article 5 implementation at the APMBIC intersessional meetings and meetings of States Parties. It would, however, be useful if Croatia were to provide a more detailed breakdown of its land release output in its Article 7 reports.

PLANNING AND TASKING

Croatia has a National Mine Action Strategy 2020–2026, an updated draft of which was submitted to the relevant government ministries and mine action stakeholders and approved in February 2023.⁴⁵ In 2018, Croatia was granted a seven-year request to extend its Article 5 deadline 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, or impact the environment in other ways. Priorities at the operational level are elaborated in annual demining action plans.⁴⁶

A "Mine Action Revised Work Plan 2020–26" was adopted by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior in 2019.⁴⁷ However, following Croatia's failure to meet work plan targets in 2020, a further revision was issued for 2022–26.⁴⁸ This sets out how Croatia proposes to release the remaining

234km² of mined area as at the end of 2021 (204.4km² under the MoI/Civil Protection Directorate and 29.5km² under the MoD's jurisdiction), with higher land release targets to make up for previous shortfalls.

In April 2024, Croatia submitted a newly updated work plan to 2026, in accordance with the decision by States Parties on its extension request. From 2019 to 2023, Croatia released almost 275.3km² compared to the 279.4km² planned in the extension request.⁴⁹ Croatia has provided land release targets for 2024 to 2026 with a total of 108.4km² of mined area, including 18.9km² under the MoD's jurisdiction, to be released (see Table 3).⁵⁰ The planned land release output of 89.5km² excludes 2.6km² of UXO contamination in Karlovac, which has been incorrectly reported by Croatia in its Article 7 reports as mined area.

Table 3: Planned land release of mined area (km²) (2024–26)⁵¹

County	Total	2024	2025	2026
Karlovac	11.8	11.8	0*	0
Lika-Senj	59.3	22.0	37.3	0
Sisak-Moslavina	10.4	9.3	1.1	0
Split-Dalmacija	8	8.0	0	0
Subtotals	89.5	51.1	38.4	0
Croatian Army (MoD area)	18.9	7.1	11.8	0
Totals	108.4	58.2	50.2	0

* Planned release of 2.6km² of UXO-contaminated area

Based on approved funding, CROMAC drafts annual work plans, which are submitted to the responsible ministries and other State bodies for comment and approval.⁵² CROMAC

planned to release 43km² through clearance in 2023, along with 7.4km² through TS and 12.6km² through NTS, totalling 63km² (up from the 60.6km² in its work plan).⁵³ In 2024,

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

44 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

45 Ibid.

46 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 8 and 11.

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

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

49 Revised Work Plan 2024–2026, April 2024, p. 3.

50 Ibid., p. 14.

51 Ibid.

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

53 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

CROMAC planned to release 41.1km² through clearance, 5.4km² through TS, and 5km² through NTS, totalling 51.5 km² (up slightly from the 51.1km² in the workplan), as well as 7.1km² in military areas.⁵⁴

The army was set to release mined area at military training grounds and barracks totalling 910,000m² in 2024. But since, due to its limited demining capacity, the MoD will not be able on its own to complete clearance of the remaining mined areas under its responsibility by 2026, release of mined area

at the “Eugen Kvaternik – Slunj” military training ground will be undertaken with the help of the Civil Protection Directorate and CROMAC. The necessary financial resources will be allocated from the State budget to carry out the demining plan for military locations in 2024.

In 2025, Croatia plans to release 38.4km² of mined area in civilian areas and 11.8km² of military mined area totalling 52.8km².⁵⁵

LAND RELEASE SYSTEM

STANDARDS AND LAND RELEASE EFFICIENCY

The 2015 law on mine action allowed use of TS to confirm the presence or absence of contamination.⁵⁶ The law introduced a new procedure for “supplementary general survey” (a form of NTS) and enabled “exclusion” (i.e. reduction) of SHAs through TS, which was not possible under the previous law.⁵⁷ The law also eliminated the need for standing operating procedures (SOPs), as all aspects of mine action were defined in detail.⁵⁸ National mine action standards are also encompassed within it.⁵⁹ The law was amended in May 2023, with revisions said to have been made to several regulations to enhance the effectiveness of land release operations.⁶⁰

In recent years, a significant number of CHAs have been cleared in which no AP mines were found, although the Civil Protection Directorate said many of these areas did contain AV mines or UXO. Other oversized CHAs were cleared with very few AP mines discovered. In 2023, hazardous areas that did not contain AP mines accounted for 28% of all cleared areas, an increase from 22% in 2022.⁶¹ The high proportion of

cleared land containing no AP mines in recent years calls into question the efficiency of the demining. It strongly suggests a need for better use of evidence-based survey to confirm contamination before time- and cost-intensive full clearance of mined areas recorded by CROMAC as “confirmed”.

Croatia organises an annual Mine Action Symposium, which discusses new detection and clearance technologies. The 2023 symposium brought together more than 200 participants from 35 countries and was focused on mine action in Ukraine, mine victims, infrastructure safety, mine action in Azerbaijan, and new technology research, with equipment demonstrations at the Benkovac Test Site.⁶² Also in 2023, Croatia hosted an EOD [explosive ordnance disposal] Level 1 training course, a visit from the Tajikistan mine action centre, and the first international donor conference for demining in Ukraine, with a bilateral agreement on cooperation in mine action signed between Croatia and Ukraine.⁶³

OPERATORS AND OPERATIONAL TOOLS

In 2023, 40 commercial companies were engaged in mine clearance operations in Croatia (see Table 4). But all survey is conducted by CROMAC, with two NTS personnel and 24 TS personnel deployed in 2023. Additionally, 19 deminers are assigned for quality control (QC). No significant changes to NTS, TS, or clearance capacity were planned for 2024.⁶⁴ 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. NGOs are barred from competing for commercial tenders as CROMAC views their subsidy by other funds as unfair.⁶⁵ The Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment is responsible for clearing all military facilities.⁶⁶

54 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

55 Ibid; and Revised Work Plan 2024–2026, April 2024, p. 14.

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

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

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

59 Emails from Miljenko Vahtarić, CROMAC, 13 May 2016; and Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

60 Article 7 Report (covering 2023), Form A; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

61 Emails from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023; and Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

62 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

63 Ibid.

64 Ibid.

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

66 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 25; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021.

Table 4: Clearance capacity (in 2023)⁶⁷

Clearance capacity	No.	Comments
Deminers	362	Reduction from 388 in 2022.
Mine detection dogs	44	Reduction from 46 in 2022.
Demining machines	55	Increase from 44 in 2022.

Croatia has calculated that with the clearance capacity currently available, manual deminers would be able to release a total of 30.4km² per year, "work site leaders" 8.2km² per year, MDDs 4.4km² per year, and demining machines 19.3km² per year, giving an annual total of 62.3km² per year. That said, the figure given in the workplan is 43.04km² per year.⁶⁸

Table 5: Clearance output from current capacity⁶⁹

Clearance capacity	No.	Daily	Workdays	Totals
Deminers	362	400	210	30,408,000
Work site leaders	98	400	210	8,232,000
Mine detection dogs	44	1,000	100	4,400,000
Demining machines	55	3,500	100	19,250,000
Totals	559	5,300	620	62,290,000

Clearance operations 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 TS.⁷⁰ Croatia had previously reported plans to develop methods and techniques for use of MDDs for TS, as a potentially more effective tool to address mined areas in mountainous terrain.⁷¹ However, this would require amendment of the 2015 demining law. The Civil Protection Directorate reported to Mine Action Review in 2024 that, due to existing challenges and the dense forested areas, there were no plans to use MDDs for TS in Croatia.⁷²

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS AND ARTICLE 5 COMPLIANCE

LAND RELEASE OUTPUTS IN 2023

In total, 58.6km² of mined area was released in 2023 (including military areas), of which more than 41.5km² was cleared by commercial demining companies and 0.6km² by the Croatian army on military sites; more than 5.6km² was reduced by CROMAC through TS; and nearly 10.9km² was cancelled through NTS. A total of 969 AP mines were destroyed.⁷³

SURVEY IN 2023

CROMAC released a total of more than 16.5km² through survey in 2022, a 10% increase on the 15.04km² released through survey in 2022.⁷⁴ Nearly 10.9km² was cancelled through NTS and just over 5.6km² was reduced through TS in 2023 (see Tables 6 and 7).⁷⁵ No military area was released through survey in 2023, a decrease from the 9.2km² cancelled through NTS in 2022.⁷⁶

67 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

68 Revised Work Plan 2024-2026, April 2024, p. 13.

69 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

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

71 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, pp. 43, 44, and 45; and Additional information submitted 21 June 2018, p. 1.

72 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

73 Ibid.

74 Emails from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024; and Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

75 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

76 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

Table 6: Release of mined area through NTS in 2023⁷⁷

County	Operator	Areas cancelled	Area cancelled (m ²)
Karlovac	CROMAC	3	636,960
Lika-Senj	CROMAC	6	2,437,695
Osijek-Baranja	CROMAC	1	2,093,773
Split-Dalmacija	CROMAC	1	914,586
Šibenik-Knin	CROMAC	1	29
Sisak-Moslavina	CROMAC	5	4,781,586
Totals		17	10,864,629

Table 7: Release of mined area through TS in 2023⁷⁸

County	Operator	No. of areas reduced	Area reduced (m ²)
Karlovac	CROMAC	4	2,047,357
Lika-Senj	CROMAC	1	626,494
Sisak-Moslavina	CROMAC	2	1,110,375
Šibenik-Knin	CROMAC	4	1,822,134
Totals		11	5,606,360

CLEARANCE IN 2023

In 2023, a total of almost 42.07km² of mined area was released through clearance (41.5km² by operators working under the direction of CROMAC and almost 0.6km² by the Croatian army). During land release, a total of 969 AP mines were destroyed (790 by the Civil Protection Directorate – CROMAC, 172 by the police department, and 7 by the MoD).⁷⁹ This is a 3% increase on the 40.7km² of mined area released through clearance in 2022.⁸⁰

The Pioneer Company of the Engineering Regiment cleared 561,677m² of military facilities in 2023 with 7 AP mines and 888 items of UXO destroyed.⁸¹ This is up from the 488,200m² cleared in 2022.⁸²

Table 8: Mine clearance in 2023 (excluding military clearance)⁸³

County	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)*	AP mines destroyed*	AV mines destroyed*	UXO destroyed
Lika-Senj/ Sisak-Moslavina	5	2,308,484	63	0	11
Šibenik-Knin/ Sisak-Moslavina/ Lika-Senj/ Osijek-Baranja	4	2,462,714	62	1	1,166
Sisak-Moslavina/ Lika-Senj	3	1,306,904	6	2	0
Lika-Senj/ Sisak-Moslavina/ Split-Dalmacija	7	4,532,806	174	12	92
Sisak-Moslavina/ Lika-Senj/ Split-Dalmacija	4	2,841,088	24	0	9

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

78 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

79 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

80 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023; and Article 7 Report (covering 2022), Form C.

81 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

82 Emails from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

83 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

Table 8 Continued

County	Areas cleared	Area cleared (m ²)*	AP mines destroyed*	AV mines destroyed*	UXO destroyed
Šibenik-Knin/ Sisak-Moslavina/ Osijek-Baranja	4	2,258,499	82	0	17
Karlovac	2	294,083	15	0	0
Sisak-Moslavina/ Lika-Senj/ Šibenik-Knin/ Split-Dalmacija	7	5,697,958	43	0	225
Split-Dalmacija	2	1,699,496	24	0	1
Karlovac/ Šibenik-Knin	2	315,540	18	0	43
Šibenik-Knin/ Osijek-Baranja/ Split-Dalmacija	4	2,893,747	21	0	18
Šibenik-Knin/ Karlovac/ Lika-Senj/ Sisak-Moslavina/ Osijek-Baranja	7	3,511,764	96	1	47
Sisak-Moslavina/ Lika-Senj/ Karlovac	3	1,153,333	38	0	5
Šibenik-Knin/ Sisak-Moslavina/ Osijek-Baranja	3	2,430,327	7	0	6
Sisak-Moslavina/ Lika-Senj/ Split-Dalmacija	6	4,190,458	55	0	1,290
Sisak-Moslavina/ Lika-Senj	6	3,609,759	62	3	398
Totals	69	41,506,960	790	19	3,328

* A further 561,677m² of mined area was cleared by the MoD on military areas, with 7 AP mines and 1 AV mine destroyed.

While the amount of area cleared in 2023 increased over the previous year, the proportion of mines cleared per square metre equates to approximately one AP mine destroyed for every 52,000m² of cleared area (excluding the items of UXO and AV mines destroyed). This is a decline from the—already poor—average of one AP mine per 36,000m² Croatia managed in 2022, and is a continuing decline from previous years. This indicates very poor targeting of clearance and suggests that Croatia could be releasing much greater areas through survey. CROMAC reported that in 2023, 23 tasks totalling over 11.84km² were cleared with no AP mines found, a 35% increase from 2022 and a poor use of limited resources.⁸⁴

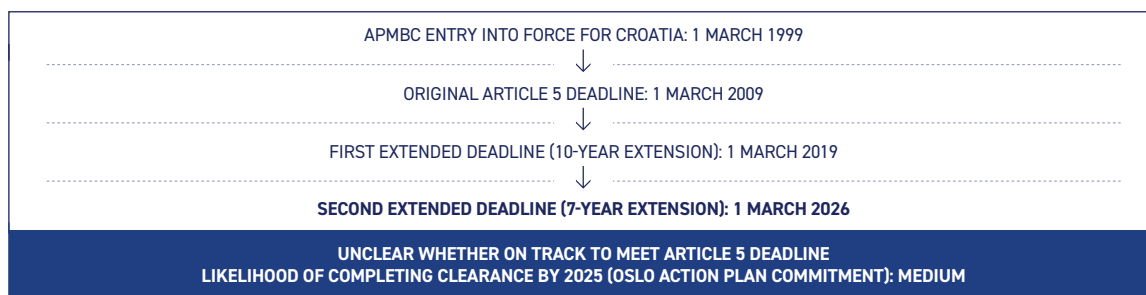
DEMINER SAFETY

In 2023, two deminers died during mine clearance when a PROM-1 AP mine detonated. An official police investigation was conducted in collaboration with Civil Protection Directorate/CROMAC officials.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

ARTICLE 5 DEADLINE AND COMPLIANCE



Under Article 5 of the APMBBC, Croatia is required to destroy all AP 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.

Croatia was just short of its clearance target of 43km² in 2023 and did not meet its overall land release target of 63km², instead releasing 58.6km². Croatia plans to release around 51km² in 2024 and 38km² in 2025 with clearance of all remaining contamination completed by the end of 2025. In addition, Croatia has nearly 19km² of mined area in military areas. This will be cleared by the Croatian Army and by operators assigned by the Civil Protection Unit and survey will be undertaken by CROMAC.⁸⁶ A total of more than 206km² of mined area has been cleared over the last five years (see Table 9).

Table 9: Five-year summary of AP mine clearance

Year	Area cleared (km ²)
2023	42.07
2022	40.67
2021	34.48
2020	49.66
2019	39.16
Total	206.04

Croatia remains confident that demining will be completed by the end of 2025, leaving only administrative issues to be finalised before the Article 5 deadline of March 2026.⁸⁷ This is an ambitious goal, made more difficult as the remaining areas to be released are mainly forested (98.7%), implying a significant reduction in the use of medium and heavy machines.⁸⁸ Croatia expects to make more use of small machines that can be easily transported to and used in the affected areas, but cautions that the resultant increase in manual demining will reduce productivity and increase the cost of clearance and TS. Use of mechanical assets is restricted in the “Natura 2000” protected area.⁸⁹

In order to ensure that Croatia meets its Article 5 obligation and that clearance assets are deployed effectively and efficiently, CROMAC will need to implement 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. Croatia deployed only two personnel for NTS in 2023 who between them managed to cancel over 10km². Croatia should consider increasing its NTS capacity in 2024 and 2025.

PLANNING FOR MANAGEMENT OF RESIDUAL CONTAMINATION

CROMAC has reported that managing residual contamination will be the joint responsibility of several departments within the MoI.⁹⁰ Activities which must be conducted upon discovery of residual contamination are predefined in law by the Mine Action Act.⁹¹

86 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024; and Revised Work Plan 2024-2026, April 2024, p. 13.

87 Email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 21 May 2024.

88 Emails from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 30 April 2021 and 21 May 2024; and 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 43.

89 2018 Article 5 deadline Extension Request, p. 45; and email from Slavenka Ivšić, Civil Protection Directorate, 23 May 2019.

90 Email from Dejan Rendulić, Civil Protection Directorate, 7 April 2023.

91 Statement of Croatia on Clearance, CCM Second Review Conference (Part 1, virtual meeting), 25-27 November 2020.