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*Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia
to the OSCE and Other International Organizations in Vienna*

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Note Verbale

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE presents its compliments to Missions and Delegations to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre, and in accordance with Decision 7/04 of the Forum for Security Cooperation, has the honor to transmit herewith the reply to the OSCE Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Mines and Explosive Remnants of the War.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Serbia to the OSCE avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Missions, Delegations to the OSCE and the Conflict Prevention Centre the assurances of its highest consideration.



Vienna, 12 May 2017

Delegations/Permanent Missions to the OSCE
The Conflict Prevention Centre
Vienna

OSCE Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Mines

Republic of Serbia

- 1. Is your country a State Party to the 1996 Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices annexed to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW)?**

Yes it is.

- 2. Is your country considering ratification/accession to the Amended Protocol II?**

On 15 December 2010, the National Assembly of the Republic of Serbia adopted the Law on Ratification of the Protocol on Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices of 1980, as amended on 3 May 1996, annexed to the Convention on Prohibition or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects.

- 3. What measures have been taken to prevent the indiscriminate use of mines, booby-traps and other devices?**

Mines are not available for unauthorised persons; they are safeguarded in depots that are under constant surveillance; the possibility of misuse has been practically eliminated; the work on developing anti-personnel mines (APM) and booby-traps has been stopped.

On 28th January 2005, the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro concluded a contract under number LU-UM/4500137147 with NAMSA for the execution of the Project for demilitarisation of total quantities of APM. The organisations in charge of direct execution of the Project were the "TRZ Kragujevac" (Technical Repair Facility in Kragujevac) and the company "Prva Iskra – Namenska" Barič, at which the "TRZ Kragujevac" performed APM disassembling, and the "Prva iskra-namenska" Barič recycled military explosive by its conversion into a type for commercial purposes. Based upon these procedures, 1,404,819 APM (2,170 tons) were disassembled, out of which 1,393,313 pieces belonged to the Serbian and Montenegrin Armed Forces, and 11,506 pieces were taken over from the Ministry of Internal Affairs of the Republic of Serbia. Out of the total quantity of the destroyed APM, 199,387 pieces were in the territory of Montenegro, and all of them were transported to the "TRZ Kragujevac" and destroyed there.

Pursuant to the Ottawa Convention, the Republic of Serbia has retained 5,565 APM out of the total stockpiles, 5,104 pieces being kept for the purposes of the Armed Forces and 461 pieces for the purposes of the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia.

During 2008, in the Serbian Armed Forces, 1,905 pieces of APM were destroyed while 5 pieces were spent for testing of protective equipment in the Technical Testing Centre.

In 2009, 25 pieces of AP mines were discarded and destroyed, and 10 pieces of mines were spent for the testing of protective equipment in the Technical Testing Centre.

In 2010, the retained AP mines were not spent by the Serbian Armed Forces.

In 2011, 10 pieces of PMA-2 type mines were discarded and destroyed in TRZ Kragujevac. The mines were discarded and destroyed due to their unfavourable technical condition.

In 2012, 2013, 2014 and 2015, no retained AP mines were spent by the Serbian Armed Forces.

In 2016, 10 APMs (types: PMA-1 ... 4 pcs, PMA-2 ... 3 pcs, and PMA-3 ... 3 pcs) were disassembled. The disassembling process was done in order to use APM bodies for service dog training in explosive detection. The associated fuses were removed from PMA-2 and destroyed.

Accordingly, there are 3,139 pieces of APM in the Serbian Armed Forces.

4. Would your country be interested in receiving assistance related to the implementation of this Protocol? If so, please describe.

The Republic of Serbia has received assistance for destruction of APM according to the Project specified in item 3 of this Questionnaire. The total value of the Project is EUR 1,689,996, and the Contract value is EUR 1,350,343.31. The difference between the total Project value and the Contract value represents the Fund for covering the unanticipated costs and the costs of NAMSA for managing the Project.

5. Does your country have the capacity to assist others related to this Protocol? If so, please describe.

The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Serbia has the capacity to offer the services of the "TRZ Kragujevac", as the organisation in charge of performing the disassembly (destruction) of APM, at an average price of EUR 0.91 per piece.

6. Has your country ratified or acceded to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction?

Yes, the Republic of Serbia ratified the Convention on 18th September 2003 and became a State Party to it on 1st March 2004 (as the State Union of Serbia and Montenegro).

7. (a) If yes, please attach the most recent report submitted by your country in accordance with Article 7 of the Convention or give the appropriate electronic address for the report.

The full report under Article 7 of the Convention is developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Serbia based on the data of the competent line ministries (Ministry of Defence, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Justice and the Mine Action Centre of the Government of the Republic of Serbia).

(b) Has your country adopted legislation to address the humanitarian objectives of the Convention, or taken any specific measures regarding the use, production, storage, transfer and destruction of anti-personnel landmines? In case a moratorium has been introduced, what is its scope and duration and when was it introduced?

The Republic of Serbia has not adopted specific legislation to address the humanitarian objectives of the Convention because the ratification of the Convention implies that the Convention has become a part of the positive law in place in the Republic of Serbia (under the responsibility of the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Serbia).

8. Does your country have any specific measures in place to provide assistance to victims?

There are no specific measures in place for rendering assistance to victims. Hospitals and rehabilitation centres provide all necessary assistance to mine victims – prosthetic devices, rehabilitation and education in the field of social and legal protection (under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia).

9. Does your country require assistance in mine clearance, stockpile destruction, mine awareness and/or victim assistance? If so, please describe.

Coordination of activities related to humanitarian demining and management of projects related to the implementation of Article 5 of the Convention "Destruction of mines in mined areas" is the responsibility of the Mine Action Centre of the Government of the Republic Serbia.

Mine stockpiles destruction was performed at the "TRZ Kragujevac" in the period from 1st July 2005 to 7th May 2007 as per Contract No. LU-UM/4500137147 of 28th March 2005, concluded with NAMSA.

This Project was funded by donations from eleven countries. The leading donor countries were Canada and Austria with € 500,000 each. Apart from them the Project was also financially supported

by Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Switzerland and Spain with amounts between EUR 10,000 and EUR 200,000.

Assistance to victims is provided in specialised institutions which need donations in equipment, education and prostheses (under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia).

Having in mind the specificity of mine clearance problem in the Republic of Serbia, and in particular the fact that in the territory of Serbia, apart from mines, there is large contamination with unexploded cluster munitions, air bombs – rockets and other unexploded ordnance (UXO), Serbia requires international financial assistance for conducting mine clearance operations.

As of May 2017, the suspected mine hazardous area totals around 2.600.000 square meters, which will be subject to additional survey in order to confirm or reject suspicion of the existence of groups of mines. Namely, based on the results of demining in previous period, when on a relatively large area a relatively small number of mines was discovered, as well as on the results of survey operations and subsequent statements of the local population, the Mine Action Centre of the Republic of Serbia has decided to convey the area initially categorized as confirmed hazardous area (defined as such according to then available relevant indicators) into mine suspected hazardous area, which will be, in order to achieve effectiveness and cost efficiency, treated with an integrated approach that includes survey, manual demining, MDD, as well as mechanical demining. Namely, the goal is to reduce the area to as much as possible small area that will eventually be subjected to clearance and that larger part of the area is land released by other methods that are much more cost efficient, thus demonstrating responsibility both to international and local demining community.

Hospitals and rehabilitation centres provide all necessary assistance to mine victims – prosthetic devices, rehabilitation and education in the field of social and legal protection (under the responsibility of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Serbia and Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs). The Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia is in charge of ensuring protection, rights and financial support to disabled civilian veterans, family members of disabled civilian veterans and family members of civilian war victims. The Ministry is also in charge for victim assistance. All municipalities in Serbia have services for the protection of veterans and the disabled that can be contacted by disabled civilian veterans for specific types of assistance. In remote rural areas, there are social protection services designed to extend quality assistance in the field of social welfare.

The Government adopted in 2015 the Decision on establishment of the Intersectional Working group on application of the Ottawa Convention, which includes representatives of this Ministry, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Mine action Centre of the Republic of Serbia.

The purpose of the Working Group for Victims Assistance is to monitor the progress made in providing assistance to victims within national plans and legal framework.

The Working Group is dealing with the following:

- Proposing measures to enhance the position of the Anti – personal mine victims;
- Proposing measures to enhance the legislative framework for the protection of the anti-personal mine victims;
- Monitoring alignment with the applicable legislation regulating the protection of the APM victims with international legislation and national law;
- Proposing special programs and measures to promote and make the APM victims capable for public life;
- Cooperation with the association of the APM victims and civil society organizations involved in enhancement of the position of the APM victims;
- Cooperation with relevant institutions from abroad, international organizations and national working groups of the equivalent or similar profile with view to experience and good practice sharing;
- Monitoring progress regarding the provision of assistance to the APM victims within wider national plans and legal framework;
- Mapping all the existing services;

When the Intersectional Working group was established it was agreed that there should be stronger coordination between victims and relevant authorities. It is further decided to ensure more intensive media engagement, holding of education sessions, conferences, and create a central database

which would include the causes of injuries. As certain data exist in a number of national institutions, the research project needs to take this into accurate causes of wounds, traumas, and lesions of civilians disabled in war.

10. Does your country have the capacity to assist others in mine action? If so, please describe.

The Serbian Armed Forces and the “TRZ Kragujevac” are qualified and equipped for rendering assistance to other countries in organisation, training and during the process of anti-personnel landmines destruction itself.

The Serbian Mine Action Centre retains vast expertise in mine clearance, in particular as regards survey, project tasks developing, quality control and governing of mine clearance project tasks. Serbia is willing to share experience and lessons learned from the ongoing and completed operations.

The Ministry of Labor, Employment, Veterans and Social Affairs of the Republic of Serbia is willing to learn new lessons in the field of Victim assistance.

OSCE Questionnaire on Explosive Remnants of War Republic of Serbia

- 1. Has your country notified the Depositary of its consent to be bound by the 2003 CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) once it enters into force? Is your country considering doing so?**

After the MoD Emergency Situations Department that had been responsible for the implementation of activities in the field of implementation of Protocol V was disbanded, the responsibility for this area was transferred to the Department of Emergency Situations of the Ministry of the Interior as of 1st July 2010. The process of ratification is still in the preparatory phase.

- 2. If yes, at what stage is the process?**

- 3. Would your country be interested in receiving assistance in clearing or otherwise minimizing the risks and effects of ERW? If so, please describe.**

The Republic of Serbia is interested in eliminating from its territory all unexploded ordnance either remnants of war or dispersed as a result of an emergency.

The Serbian Armed Forces is qualified for finding, deactivating and destroying explosive ordnance and clearing mine fields and minimizing the risks and effects of remnants of war in the territory of its home country. For the realisation of these tasks, it is necessary to provide additional funds for equipment, insurance and fringe benefits for units – expert teams that would conduct these activities.

The International Trust Fund for Demining and Mine Victims Assistance (ITF) has accepted the proposal submitted by the Mine Action Centre to organise in the Republic of Serbia a Basic course for training EOD specialists in accordance with the International Humanitarian Demining Standards. According to the ITF schedule, this Course was conducted in the period from 3rd December 2007 to 27th March 2008 with 35 attendees from the MoD and the Serbian Armed Forces, who completed the Course. In addition to this, seven students who excelled have also completed the Team Leaders Course.

In addition to the contamination with landmines, the Republic of Serbia suffers from additional contamination by Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) as follows:

The area of about 3.000.000 square meters is contaminated with cluster munitions.

It is assumed that since the 1999 bombing, about 150 air bombs – rockets weighing up to 930 kg are located throughout Serbia in the ground at a depth of up to 20 m.

It is suspected that after fire and explosions in military depots in Paraćin, Vranje, Kraljevo, Požarevac, Valjevo, Novi Sad, Smederevo, Raška, Grdelica, Kragujevac, outside of military objects, in an area of around 14.000.000 square meters, there are various types of ERW.

From the 1999 bombing of our country, unexploded air bombs-rockets can be found in the Sava River and the Danube River: (Bridge Bogojevo – Erdut, Bridge Bačka Palanka – Ilok, Novi Sad 1 – upstream the Sloboda bridge, Novi Sad 2- downsternam the railway bridge, Pančevo Port, Transmission line Ritopek – Ivanovo, Bridge Smederevo – Kovin, Prahovo Port, Šabac, Obrenovac 1 – in the vicinity of thermal power plant, Obrenovac 2 – in the vicinity of Barič factory).

It is suspected that in the Sava River, in the area of the Jamena Village, there are improvised mines remaining from the 1999-1995 conflicts.

In the Đerdap Gorge, on the Danube River, in the vicinity of Prahovo, in 1944, German war vessels containing large quantity of unexploded ordnance, including anti-ship mines, were sunken. In 2006, a survey was conducted and the positions of 23 sunken vessels were determined as well as the existence of various types of UXO and anti-ship mines on 4 vessels. These UXO

pose a threat to people and environment and significantly obstruct navigation in this part of the Danube.

Given the above and the complexity of the problem, Serbia would be interested in receiving international financial assistance for conducting clearance operations.

4. Does your country have the capacity to assist others in clearing and minimizing the risks and effects of ERW? If so, please describe.

The Serbian Armed Forces and the “TRZ Kragujevac” are qualified and equipped for providing assistance to other countries in organising, training and in the process of mine clearance and minimising the risks and effects of the explosive remnants of war. Upon the completion of the Course, according to the schedule of activities and organised by the ITF, 35 persons are qualified to perform basic activities and 7 to be team leaders, all in accordance with the International Humanitarian Demining Standards.

Serbia is willing to share experience and lessons learned from the ongoing and completed operations.