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PERMANENT MISSION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA TO
THE INTERNATIONAL
ORGANIZATIONS
VIENNA

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Note Verbale

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Albania to the International Organizations in Vienna presents its compliments to all Permanent Delegations and Missions 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 Albania's reply to the OSCE Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Landmines and on Explosive Remnants of War.

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

Vienna, 29th of May 2020



**To: All Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE
The OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre
The OSCE Secretariat**



REPUBLIC OF ALBANIA

QUESTIONNAIRE
ON ANTI-PERSONNEL LANDMINES

(FSC.DEC/7/04)

OSCE

2020

OSCE QUESTIONNAIRE

(Covering period January – December 2019)

PART I

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, Albania is a State Party to the Amended Protocol II of the CCW. (28 August 2002)

2. **If yes:**

If no:

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

N/A

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

Since April 2006, Albania has approved a new Law on the implementation of the APM Ban Convention, which imposes administrative and penal sanctions on any activity involving indiscriminate use of anti-personnel mines.

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

N/A

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

No

PART II

7. ***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?***

Albania has ratified the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel mines and on their destruction since 29-th February 2000.

8. ***(a) If yes, please attaches 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.***

<http://www.unog.ch>

- (b) If no, is your country considering ratification/accession to the Convention?***

N/A

- (c) 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?***

On April 2006, Albanian has approved a new Law on the implementation of the APM Ban Convention, which imposes administrative and penal sanctions on any activity prohibited for a State Party to the Antipersonnel-Mine Ban Convention undertaken by persons or on Albanian territory, and confirms the Minister of Defence as the authority in charge for all mine action activities in the country.

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

There are at least 1006 UXO casualties (152 killed and 854 injured) all over Albania and the data are disaggregated by age and gender. The aiming to support the mine and UXO victims throughout Albania, complies with Disarmament International Treaties ratified by Albania, such as Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons and Convention on Cluster Munitions Convention. The implementation of this plan is contributing to the emergency and continuing medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychosocial support, socio-economic reintegration, data collection, relevant laws and policies for all mine/UXO victims throughout Albania.

Emergency and on-going health care capacities are improving in Albania. Medical equipment's for former mine /UXO affected region are provided by donors and government. A Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation (PMR) programme supported by donor and the government have developed a sustainable national response to the PMR needs of mine/UXO victims and other people in Albania.

Around 35 students are enrolled at the state University of Medicine/ Faculty of Nursing, Physiotherapy branch and around the same number are graduated on yearly bases. This programme is fully integrated with State Faculty and supported by the government. The rehabilitation unit is established at former mine affected region is supported with raw materials and equipments and upgraded to repair and produce prostheses.

During 2019, at least at least **16 new prostheses** are done to amputees in need at the Prosthetic Workshop in Kukës Regional Hospital and at **1,895 physiotherapy** sessions are done to **533 patients**. This prosthetic workshop is fully integrated within the structures of the government hospital. More staff is added in the structure of the physiotherapy unit in order to fulfil the needs of mine/UXO survivors and other people with disabilities.

Albania established for all health professionals the “National Centre of Continuing Education (NCCE)” a public institution that functions as a technical agency of the Ministry of Health. The units of the centre work together to plan, coordinate, monitor and evaluate continuing education activities of health professionals.

In terms of socio-economic employments, 120 mine/UXO survivors and their family members completed vocational training courses, supported by donors through the mine action programme. Recently, the government with support and technical assistance of donors opened vocational training schools in the country and young people are encouraged to register in these schools. The vocational training centres available almost in every region in Albania are designed to support also persons with disabilities, including mine/UXO survivors.

Survivors of mine/UXO, people with disabilities and NGOs involved in the disability issues, are active in organizing awareness activities on the rights of the people with disabilities. As usual, they are participating in these activities and make appeals to the representatives of the local government in order to receive more attention to mine/UXO survivors and other people with disabilities.

Mine/UXO survivors and other persons with disabilities widely participate in meetings, round tables, seminars, other public events, etc, and lobbying for their rights, raising voices on their needs and problems they face in everyday life.

Regarding the physical barriers, since 2007 by law, new buildings, roads, sidewalks must be according to known standards for PwD. Also, old building, sidewalks etc are continuously being made accessible for Persons with Disabilities.

The government in recent years has increased the capacities including the financial resources and aims to do more to fulfil the needs of survivors and other people with disabilities. These requests also are distributed geographically especially the rehabilitation services. Albania needs support to further address the needs of Mine/UXO survivors and other persons with Disabilities and has already identified the financial gaps in order to

fulfil obligations under the disarmament conventions and the CRPD.

A “Needs Assessment of Social-Economic and Medical needs of marginalized Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) victims in Albania” supported by the Austrian and US Government has been completed. Below are the identified needs of survivors and/or their families.

Medical/Rehabilitation Needs

- 527 persons with amputations need to be fitted and periodic maintenance of their prosthesis, orthoses; this number includes below and upper limb prostheses, including partial foot and lose of fingers.
- 528 injured persons need to have regular medical checks.
- 610 persons need to attend physiotherapy sessions.
- 137 injured survivors should have periodic checks of their eyes from the specialists.
- 12 injured survivors should undergo operation for their vision.

Economic reintegration/income generation activities

- 583 survivors need further economic support such as; employment opportunities, income generation activities and support with micro - loans for family home-based businesses.
- 347 survivors wish to attend vocational training Courses.

Psycho-Social/Peer Support, Sport Activities

- 262 injured survivors should attend psycho-social sessions
- 32 injured survivors have special needs such as following: supplies with reading tools for blind persons (Braille), Sign language media (sound with brails), Somniferous books (special books with sound with brails)
- Almost all survivors want to participate in recreational activities and psychosocial support to overcome the trauma, including in the peer support programs.

Upon request a concept paper or detailed project can be shared.

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

No

PART III

- 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?***

Albania is a State Party to Protocol V of the CCW on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW).

- 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.***

In addition to the contamination along the northeastern border Albania is still suffering also the contamination from unexploded ordnances hotspots created because of civil unrests in 1997. During these unrests and later, there were a number of explosions at Ammunition Storage Sites (ASS) across Albania. According to AAF estimates at the time, 38 army depots (storages) were destroyed due to the detonation of about 5,700 tons of ammunition in 15 different locations. The explosions killed and injured many civilians while thrown-out ammunition contaminated vast areas around the ASS.

The ammunition contamination of the territory is still a problem in Albania. Among the causes of such contamination are the unplanned explosions at Ammunition Storage Sites (ASS) across the country during the civil unrest in 1997, the unexploded remains of the WW II as well as former army ammunition demolition areas which need to be cleared of explosive remnants.

UXO hotspots have been created also in few former army demolition areas and shooting or firing ranges polygons (former shooting & training sites), which have been closed recently by the AAF. Most of these areas need a full subsurface clearance at a depth of up to 50 cm, before being used by the army or being released to the local community. New accidents have been recorded with ammunitions.

The Government and the Ministry of Defence have outlined a new Plan of Action for Elimination of Excess Ammunition in Albania aiming to dispose of all its surplus stockpiled ammunition by 2015 and to clear all the UXO/ERW hotspot areas by 2021.

Albanian Mine and Munitions Coordination Office (AMMCO) have carried out technical and socio-economic impact assessments in 19 identified UXO hotspot areas. The purpose of these assessments was to obtain a real picture of the remaining threat such as: exact location, estimation of threat, to determine the details of clearance operation requirements, impact to the communities and to propose due action. More than 1, 9 million square meters were identified as dangerous in these hotspots, due to the

presence of ammunition remnants.

The Ministry of Defence requested UNDP's assistance to deal with the UXO hotspots problem by engaging AMMCO (Albanian Mine & Munitions Coordination Office) as a professional structure to contribute through the same institutional arrangement and role, inclusive of its know-how in mine victim assistance and risk education/community liaison activities, in the area of hotspots clearance and ammunition disposal, to help ensure that these components are carried out in accordance with the International Humanitarian Standards. Currently the coordination and monitoring activities are supported financially from US Department of State through ITF and UNDP Albania.

From 2000 to 2019, the United States provided more than \$47.2 million to Albania for CWD efforts that included hotspot clearance, PSSM, and SALW projects.

In 2019, the Department of State supported the following implementing partners:

ITF Enhancing Human Security (ITF) and NPA cleared and released 166,828 square meters (41 acres) of land and found and destroyed 4,798 UXO and 16,159 SAA at Sinanaj, Tepelenë, a former munitions depot site, completing all existing work at the site. ITF and NPA also continued TS and clearance of contaminated hotspots in Jube Sukth, returning 16,789 square meters (4 acres) of land to the local community and removing over 231 pieces of UXO.

Also, the EOD of Albanian Armed Forces are doing clearance of Hotspots in Albania with financial support from the Albanian Government.

During the reporting period **January-December 2019**, AMMCO was carrying out Coordination and Quality Management (Quality Assurance & Quality Control) of the cleared areas in UXO hotspots of Sinanaj Tepelene and Jube-Sukth Durres. The achievements in land clearance are respectively;

- **188,178 square meters** of contaminated land cleared by Norwegian People's Aid (NPA) and the AAF teams, while AMMCO QM Team provided quality assurance and quality control in the UXO hotspot of Sinanaj (171,389 square meters) and Jube-Sukth phase two (16,789 square meters).
- **5,076 items of UXO** (different calibers of artillery ammunitions, fuses hand grenades), **17,000 (SSA)** items of small arms and ammunitions (≤ 23 mm and bullets) are found during the reporting period in UXO hotspots of Sinanaj Tepelene and Jube-Sukth Durres. All dangers items found are destroyed in situ from EOD team of AAF and others were collected and stored in the military depo and they weredestroyed on the demolition range of Biza from the EOD AAF team, coordinated and monitored from AMMCO.

The AAF Support Command provides all the necessary logistic arrangements according to safety regulations and respective international standards for the ammunition collected in the hotspots by the clearance company and considered safe for transport. In addition, the EOD experts of AAF dispose on the spot all dangerous ammunition was unsafe for transportation. AMMCO coordinates and closely monitors the UXO clearance and disposal operations in order to ensure that these are carried out in strict compliance with the international humanitarian standards. Community Liaison and Risk Education activities are carried out also along with the UXO clearance operations in order to inform the communities aware of the ammunition risk.

ITF and UNDP, with U.S. funding, continued support to the Albanian Mine and Munitions Coordination Office.

Since the Government of Albania is currently struggling with several priorities, the international financial support is a crucial need for both clearance and the monitoring process of the clearance of these UXO/ERW hotspots, and Victim Assistance in order to be cleared within the set deadlines and so ensure the safety of the surrounding communities in ensure the medical and socio-economic rehabilitation of survivors.

Table: Updated List of UXO Hotspots as of 31 December 2019

No	UXO Hotspot	Suspected Area in m ²	Cleared area in m ² as of December 2019	Remaining area in m ² as of January 2020
1	Jubë-Sukth, Durres	1,326,714	404.069	922.645

In addition to the UXO Hotspots Clearance the EOD unit of Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) perform the EOD response based on the request from police and local authorities which are classified as non-criminal act. During the reporting period the EOD company responded to **55** EOD tasks where **11.973 items** of unexploded ordnance of different calibres, **143** Antitank Mines, **3** bombs from WW II and **4.832 items** of small arms and ammunitions (SAA≤ 23 mm and bullets) were found and destroyed in total during the EOD tasks.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)/South Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) completed security upgrades for the Ministry of Interior facility in Mullet to international standards, allowing safer and more secure weapons storage by the Albanian State Police (ASP). UNDP/SEESAC also conducted capacity building training to 20 ASP participants in stockpile management.

UNDP/SEESAC continued physical security and safety upgrades at the Ministry of Defense's (MOD) Mirakë and Zall-Herr facilities.

With funding from the Department of Defense, the U.S. European Command (USEUCOM) utilized the New Jersey National Guard through the State Partnership Program (SPP), and U.S. Air Forces in Europe (USAFE) to conduct EOD Level 2 train-the-trainer events with the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF).

EUCOM funded an EOD training range upgrade. And, USEUCOM, the New Jersey National Guard, HDTC, Joint Munitions Command, and Golden West completed an International Ammunition Technical Guidelines (IATG) Risk Reduction Process (RRPL) Assessment of two strategic depots and one-unit level depot.

The Underwater Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) contamination problem in Albania.

Due to our turbulent history, and as a result of various parties dumping large quantities of munitions during both World Wars, we have a significant problem with underwater unexploded ordnance along the entire coast of Albania. The most significantly contaminated area is in Vlora bay, but other areas, particularly in southern Albania coast also have dumped of unexploded ordnance in the waters. Additional surveys need still to be carried out around these areas.

During the reporting period January - December 2019, the EOD divers was carried out the reconnaissance and clearance operations in the contaminated area such as: - Porto Romano bay, Durrës; - Seman outfall; - Vlora Bay; - Sazan Island; - Karaboruni Peninsula. In these operations are found and destroyed 2 Aviation Bombs, 429 shells of deferent calibers and 5,200 fuses during the reporting period.

The EOD diver's teams have conducted reconnaissance operations in several places in Saranda Bay, Boat Quayside, nearby the Qefali's Cape in Saranda to determine the underwater unexploded ordnance contaminated areas. On these operations are detected a quantity around 15 tons unexploded ordnance of different calibers mortars and artillery shells. There are plans for cleaning of these underwater unexploded ordnance contaminated areas.

The Diving Center conduct its annual training which is focused on training of young divers (including the EOD teams), as well as keeping the level of professional training of divers. An excellent cooperation between Albanian NAVY Force and French NAVY Force has continuing annually on training and clearance operation of contaminated areas.

During 2019, a Joint Training Exercise was conducted for tracing and clearing the underwater UXO/ERW which were involved EOD personnel of Albanian Diving Center and personnel of “CMT Lyre- 648 of (Marine Nationale)” French Naval Force as part of the NATO Shipping Group (SNMCMMG2).

The Albanian government has requested the necessary equipment's for underwater clearance operation which will enable to make a serious commitment to cleaning up our coastal waters, and thus making these safer for our citizens. There are already identified underwater UXO/ERW contaminated areas and our experts' prepared plans for cleaning those contaminated areas. Therefore, any kind of support from the international organizations will be appreciated to fulfill those projects.

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 Albanian Ministry of Defense provided the EOD team of Albanian Armed Forces in the European Union mission to assist with European Union Military Committee (EUMC) in EOD training in Mali.

Its mission is to provide security and full support for the destruction of unexploded ordnance (UXO) to the Armed Forces of Mali, to maintain the proper security level at the KTC (Koulikoro Training Camp), including the response from the threats arising from UXO and explosive remnants of war. Also another task is the development of Countering Improvised Explosive Devices (C-IED) training with the combat units of Armed Forces of Mali.

On November 2019, the 9th contingent of the Albanian Armed Forces EOD team was deployed as a part of the European Union Training Mission (EUTM) in Mali. This team consists of four EOD specialists, three of them from Engineering Battalion of Support Command and one specialist from the NCO Academy, who are well-trained and prepared for this mission.