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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 and Other International Organizations presents its compliments to Missions and Delegations to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre, and in accordance with the 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 and Other International Organizations 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, 31 May 2018



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

O S C E
Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Mines

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)?

Republic of Serbia is a State Party to the 1996 Amended Protocole II.

2. Is your country considering ratification/accesion to the Amended Protocol II?

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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.

In 2017, 5 APMs (types: PMA-1 ... 2 pcs, PMA-2 ... 1 pc, and PMA-3 ... 2 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 3,134 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.

Please find attached the Article 7 report for 2017 submitted in April 2018.

(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.

After ratification of the Convention, it became the integral part of the domestic legislation.

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

In line with recommendations under the Maputo Action Plan, the Government of the Republic of Serbia adopted on February 15th 2015 the Decision on the establishment of the Working group for the application of the Ottawa Convention.

The Working Group is considering actions related to the needs of mine victims, the availability and gaps in services, requirements for disability, health education, employment, development and poverty reduction activities. The specific tasks of the Group are:

- Proposing measures to enhance the position of the victims of anti-personal mines;
- 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 programmes 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;

The Working Group is formed by the representatives of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development and Mine Action Centre of the Republic of Serbia. The Working Group has the necessary authorization and funds that would enable it to undertake all necessary actions for the benefit of the victims. Members of nongovernmental organizations are also expected to participate in the activities of the Working Group.

In June 2017 the Department for Antidiscrimination Policy and Promotion of Gender Equality was established within the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs as a national executive mechanism for strengthening, encouraging, planning, guidance and active administration in the area of antidiscrimination and promotion of gender equality in accordance with the policy of the Government of the Republic of Serbia. Another task of the Department is to raise awareness about antidiscrimination and gender equality among the citizens of Serbia.

The Republic of Serbia is also implementing the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. According to the Law, civilian disabled veterans are entitled to a number of benefits (personal disability allowance; allowance for care and assistance by another person; orthotics allowance; health care and financial benefits related to provision of health care, free and subsidized transport; food and accommodation benefits during travel and stay in places other than one's place of residence; at the request of the relevant authority; monthly financial allowance; and compensation for funeral expenses.

According to the information from the database of the Ministry of Labour, Employment, Veterans affairs and Social Policy, the number of civilian disabled veterans totals 1 123 out of which 790 men and 333 women. Civilian disabled veterans are disaggregated according to the degree of physical impairment. The rights of this category of people are stipulated by the Law regulating the rights of civilian disabled veterans, enforced from 1 January 1997.

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

a) 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.

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 2018, the suspected mine hazardous area totals around 2.240.940 square meters. Republic of Serbia's current deadline for completing their Antipersonnel Mine Ban Convention Article 5 obligations is 1 March 2019. However, due to the fact that Serbia has been facing a number of difficulties, such as the lack of adequate financial resources to support our demining projects, and presence of areas contaminated with cluster munitions, air bombs-rockets and other UXO in addition to mine contaminated areas, Serbia is in no position to meet their deadline and will need a 4 year extension period to complete their obligations.

Accordingly, in March 2018, Serbia submitted a request for their deadline to be extended to 1 March 2023.

The remaining areas contaminated by mines do not have registries and had not been planted in specific patterns.

These are groups of mines, not minefields. On most of these areas deaths of humans or animals occurred or a mine was accidentally detected.

All these circumstances aggravate survey and clearance efforts, namely survey results are subject to alterations. Survey results in previous period showed that there are not sufficient indicators for the mine suspected areas to be classified as confirmed hazardous areas, so that the area in previous period regarded as such has been classified as suspected hazardous area.

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.

O S C E
Questionnaire on Explosive Remnants of War

1. Has your country notified the Depository 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?

Possibility of accession to the 2003 CCW Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War is still under consideration.

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

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

a) 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.

The Serbian Armed Forces is interested in getting assistance in equipment and training in detection, excavation and disposal of unexploded air bombs, great mass rocket and other projectiles at depths exceeding 0.5 metres.

In 2017, a project organised by USEUCOM, was launched to train demining instructors and medical personnel in accordance with the Programme of Human Demining in three stages, with 6 months long interruptions between the phases.

The first phase of the training for 21 members of the Serbian Armed Forces was carried out from 6th to 28th April 2017, in line with the Programme. The coordination of the conduct of the second and third phases of the Project is in progress.

The US Department of Defence has donated to the Ministry of Defence – Serbian Armed Forces demining equipment in the value of 266,428.14 US dollars and medical equipment used for humanitarian demining in the value of 69,393.82 US dollars.

Upon NATO proposal a project was launched titled “Strengthening capabilities of Serbian Armed Forces for disposal of unexploded ordnance” that would be financed from the NATO Programme “Science for Peace and Security”. The initial estimated value of the project is 400,000 euros with possible increase to over a million euros. The aim of the project is to enhance the capabilities of the Serbian Armed Forces in the field of demining and disposal of unexploded ordnance in military complexes. The envisaged duration of the project is 36 months from the date of adoption.

b) 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 2.500.000 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 18.500.000 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- downstream 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 organised by the Mine Action Center of the Republic of Serbia and its partners.