



**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
TO THE OSCE, UN AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS
VIENNA**

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NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe presents its compliments to all Permanent Missions and Delegations to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre and has the honor to submit the attached information regarding the Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects for year 2024.

The Permanent Mission of the Republic of Croatia to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe avails itself of this opportunity to renew to all Permanent Missions and Delegations to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre the assurances of its highest consideration. *MP*



Vienna, 28 April 2025

To

All Permanent Missions and Delegations to the OSCE,
The Conflict Prevention Centre.

REPUBLIC OF CROATIA
ANNUAL INFORMATION EXCHANGE ON NATIONAL IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE CODE OF CONDUCT ON POLITICO - MILITARY
ASPECTS OF SECURITY
(YEAR 2024)

SECTION I - INTER-STATE ELEMENTS

1. Account of measures to prevent and combat terrorism

1.1. To which agreements and arrangements (universal, regional, sub-regional and bilateral) related to preventing and combating terrorism is your State a party?

The Republic of Croatia condemns international terrorism and is strongly committed to combating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations at national, regional and global level. In order to counter efficiently this threat, Croatia recognizes the need for strong and intensive cooperation with-within-and-among the United Nations, regional organisations and all States.

Croatia firmly supports values and objectives of the UN Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, especially the position that all counterterrorism measures must comply with the undertaken obligations under international law, including the Charter of the United Nations and relevant international conventions and protocols, and in particular with human rights law, refugee law and international humanitarian law. Croatia has always acted in accordance with those values and in line with provisions set by the United Nations, in particular those set by Committees established pursuant to relevant Security Council Resolutions.

Regarding international agreements and conventions related to the fight against terrorism, Croatia has ratified fourteen (14) universal legal counter-terrorism instruments (UN conventions and protocols) while the two SUA 2005 protocols related to maritime security are in the ratification procedure.

Croatia is a state party to a number of agreements within the Council of Europe framework that in a broader sense relate to terrorism (along with other forms of criminal issues). Croatia has ratified Convention of the Council of Europe on the Prevention of Terrorism as well as Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation on of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism.

Enhancing international cooperation within the framework of international institutions and geopolitical alliances, Croatia actively participates in the global struggle against terrorism, through active cooperation within regional initiatives, such as SEEDM, SEI, SECI, SEECP, CEI the Adriatic-Ionian Initiative and the Budapest Process. Croatia is a state party to SELEC Convention, Agreement between the governments of Slovenia, Austria and Hungary on the operation of the Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation in Dolga Vas and Agreement on Cooperation in the Area of Witness Protection between Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia. Croatia joined these initiatives and organisations to achieve more efficient results in the exchange of information relevant for the suppression of terrorism. For the same reason, the Republic of Croatia joined the Regional Expert Group with the main goal of improving police cooperation.

The international agreement between the Republic of Croatia and the European Police Office was signed on 13 January 2006 and an official agreement on strengthening judicial

cooperation between Eurojust and Croatia was signed in Brussels on 9 November 2007. The purpose of this agreement is to formalise and develop closer co-operation between Croatia and Eurojust, in order to increase the effectiveness of their response to combating serious forms of international, cross-border and organised crime.

The Republic of Croatia, as a member of Interpol, actively participates in exchanges of information on the fight against terrorism. This co-operation has been especially intensified by the exchange of information with the Interpol Expert Working Group for the fight against terrorism (FUSION TASK FORCE), the aim of which is to identify terrorist organisations, groups and individuals, as well as their connections and sources of financing.

By acceding to the international anti-terrorist conventions, the European Convention on Extradition and both of its two protocols and signing numerous bilateral agreements on this topic, the Republic of Croatia has completely regulated the legal basis for the implementation of the *aut dedere aut judicare principle*.

In order to improve international co-operation in the field of the suppression of organised crime, drugs and terrorism, the Republic of Croatia has so far signed 36 governmental and 17 ministerial bilateral treaties on police co-operation with other countries and international organisations. It has signed bilateral agreements with all its neighbouring countries, while additional bilateral agreements are in the pipeline and/or about to be signed.

Bilateral Agreements on Police Cooperation include the following countries: Albania, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina (two agreements), Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Chile, Egypt, India, Italy (two agreements), Latvia, Hungary, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Slovenia (two agreements), Spain, Sri Lanka, Sweden, Turkey, Ukraine, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Austria, France, Germany, Hellenic Republic, Serbia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Malta, Poland and USA.

The Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia contracted 17 bilateral international acts with the Ministries of the Interior of the following countries: Poland, Ukraine, Austria, Montenegro, Bulgaria, China (two agreements), the Russian Federation (three agreements), Netherlands, USA, and Kosovo; with local governments: Federal State of Bavaria (three agreements) and the Federal State of Baden Württemberg.

Recently, prompted by the desire to establish an appropriate procedure for accessing and exchanging screening information concerning known or suspected terrorists, a Memorandum of Understanding was concluded between the Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Croatia and the Terrorist Screening Centre on the exchange of screening information concerning known or suspected terrorists on 31 August 2018, in Dubrovnik.

1.2. What national legislation has been adopted in your State to implement the above-mentioned agreements and arrangements?

In addition to the obligation of implementation of relevant resolutions of the UN Security Council, the prevention and suppression of terrorism and the active contribution of the Republic of Croatia to global efforts were defined among the national security priorities in the National Security Strategy adopted by the Croatian Parliament on 19 March 2002. This document underlines the importance of implementing a series of specific measures for the purpose of neutralising security risks such as terrorism and organised crime.

These measures comprise the following: establishment of an efficient system of border control in the Republic of Croatia; deepening of police and intelligence cooperation with neighbouring countries on the surveillance and prevention of the activities of terrorist groups and organised crime; precise legal regulation of the status of immigrants and asylum seekers; alignment of extradition procedures for persons accused of the said activities with procedures

in other EU countries (in particular with EU procedures); linking of relevant national databases with equivalent databases in other countries, in particular EU countries.

In October 2015 the Government of the Republic of Croatia amended the National Strategy for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism. The amendments of the Strategy emphasizes new terrorist *modus operandi* such as foreign terrorist fighters, using of Internet for terrorist purposes etc. Moreover, it sets out the general framework of counterterrorism activities of the Republic of Croatia by providing guidelines for the improvement of existing, and for the development of new measures, mechanisms and instruments for the prevention and suppression of terrorism. Croatian Parliament amended in 2015 the Criminal Code. This new document further improves previous 2008 and 2011 amendments and brings even more coherence in regards to terrorism related offences. It provides, inter alia, for the implementation of the resolution 2178 of the UN Security Council on foreign terrorist fighters, as well as the Additional Protocol of the Council of Europe's Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, CETS 196. One of the most important amendments of the Criminal Code regarding counterterrorism is the criminalisation of preparation measures for all terrorism related activities.

The Criminal Procedure Act entered into force on 1 September 2011. The national legislation is in line with relevant documents of the United Nations, *EU acquis communautaire*, Council of Europe's conventions, legal standards of the European Court for Human Rights, as well as best practices of other comparatively relevant national legislations. In the process of aligning the Croatian criminal law with the legal norms and provisions of the EU, Croatia achieved complete harmonization with the Framework Council Decision on combating terrorism of June 2002 (definition of the criminal act of terrorism; criminal acts of association in the terrorist group; criminal acts connected to terrorist activities; inciting, aiding and attempting of terrorist acts; penalties and special circumstances; liabilities of legal entities and sanctions against legal entities; competence and criminal prosecution; protection of, and assistance to, victims).

The Criminal Code introduces important changes with regard to counterterrorism provisions. Some of the novelties are: amended definition of terrorism offence, financing of terrorism and introducing of the new terrorist organization offence. Articles in new Criminal Code that incriminates terrorism are: Terrorism, Article 97; Financing of Terrorism, Article 98; Public provocation to terrorism, Article 99; Recruitment for terrorism, Article 100; Training for terrorism, Article 101; Terrorist Organization, Article 102. Moreover, the Act on Proceedings for the Confiscation of Pecuniary Benefit Resulting from Criminal Offences and Misdemeanours also entered into force on 1 January 2011. This act has not only direct but also a preventive effect on all forms of organized crime as well as on terrorist activities.

Activities undertaken by competent national bodies with the purpose of eliminating the danger of terrorist activities are in line with the national political and legal framework, in line with all legal norms prescribed by international conventions. International treaties pertaining to the suppression of terrorism, to which Croatia is a state party, form integral part of the Croatian legal system. Pursuant to article 141 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia: "International agreements concluded and ratified in accordance with the Constitution and made public, and which are in force, shall be part of the internal legal order of the Republic of Croatia and shall be above law in terms of legal effects." For the purpose of combating terrorism Croatia applies a broad scope of legislation covering different forms of criminal activities (organised crime, corruption, money laundering, trafficking in narcotics, arms, human beings etc.).

On 1 October 2004 (in accordance with Article 9 of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, and on their Destruction) Croatian Parliament passed the Law on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling,

Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction (Official Gazette No. 141/2004). Croatian authorities continued their activities and have taken numerous steps in order to improve the national system of countering money laundering and financing of terrorism. One of the most important steps was conducting National Risk Assessment which included representatives of competent state authorities and agencies and private sector. Croatia conducted NRA using National Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing (ML/TF) Risk Assessment Tool developed and provided by the World Bank.

Furthermore, Action Plan for implementation of National Risk Assessment was adopted by Croatian Government in January 2017. The NRA Working Group (NRA WG) was composed of following competent state authorities and agencies and private sector:

- Anti-Money Laundering Office
- State Attorney's Office
- Office for Suppression Corruption and Organized Crime
- Croatian National Bank
- Croatian Financial Services Supervisory Agency (HANFA)
- The Financial Inspectorate
- Tax Administration
- Customs Administration
- Ministry of Interior
- Ministry of Justice
- Security and Intelligence Agency
- County Court in Zagreb
- The Faculty of Law in Zagreb
- Office for Combating Drug Abuse
- Office for Cooperating with NGO's
- Croatian Bureau of Statistics
- Representatives of different sectors of reporting entities (banks, insurance companies, notaries public, lawyers, representatives of organisers of games of chance, brokers, authorised exchange offices, money remittance companies, Croatian Post).

In 2008, the Croatian parliament passed the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Law in order to fully harmonize it with the international standards and commitments (3rd EU Directive on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing, FATF Recommendations (2003), EU Regulation No.1889/2005 on controls of cash entering or leaving the Community, EU Regulation No. 1781/2006 on information on the payer accompanying transfers of funds).

Furthermore, Croatian authorities formed a Working Group on harmonisation of Croatian AMLTF Law with Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing (4th EU AML Directive), and with FATF Recommendations (2012). Working Group consists of representatives of AMLO, Financial Inspectorate, Tax Administration, CNB and HANFA. The Draft Law was finalised and Croatian Government sent the Proposal of the Law to Croatian Parliament for further legislative procedure. Croatian parliament adopted the Act on Amendments to the Act on Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Act (Official Gazette 39/2019 – Croatian version only) in April 2019.

On 14 July 2017, the Croatian Parliament adopted the new National Security Strategy; the overarching strategic document defining the policies for national interests and achieving security conditions in view of the changed security paradigm, as no such document was composed since 2002. The National Security Strategy is a fundamental strategic document defining the policies and tools to achieve national interests and providing security conditions

to enable a balanced and continuous development of the country and the society.

Croatian Parliament amended in 2018 the **Criminal Code**. With amendments Republic of Croatia implemented all terms of the Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA. The Criminal Procedure Act entered into force on 1 September 2011. The national legislation is in line with relevant documents of the United Nations, EU *acquis communautaire*, Council of Europe's conventions, legal standards of the European Court for Human Rights, as well as best practices of other comparatively relevant national legislations.

After amendments of the Criminal Code, criminal offences of terrorism are: Terrorism, Article 97; Financing of Terrorism, Article 98; Public provocation to terrorism, Article 99; Recruitment for terrorism, Article 100; Training for terrorism, Article 101; Travel for Terrorist Purposes, Article 100 A; Terrorist Organization, Article 102, and Preparation of Criminal Acts Against Values Protected by International Law, Article 103.

1.3. What are the roles and missions of military, paramilitary and security forces and the police in preventing and combating terrorism in your State?

The Republic of Croatia has developed and maintained defence capabilities at appropriate readiness level for the purpose of timely reaction to changing circumstances and challenges from international environment. The main document that sets the strategic framework of the Republic of Croatia in this area is the National Strategy for the Prevention and Suppression of Terrorism. The goal of the Strategy is to provide the basis - by engaging and developing all necessary national resources - for the highest possible level of protection of the Republic of Croatia from terrorism, while providing the most effective contribution to international counterterrorism efforts as a key part of the national response to terrorism.

Croatian Armed Forces have been developing capabilities of the conduct of combat operations within defence of their own territory on land, at sea and in the air as well as in cyber space, independently or in cooperation with allies, till activation of the collective defence mechanism. The missions of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, as the basic proponent of the defence function, are defence of the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Croatia and defence of allies, contribution to international security and support to civilian institutions. Membership of the Republic of Croatia in NATO ensures a convincing guarantee of collective defence as an important factor of deterrence and defence of the population, territory and national sovereignty.

Article 39 Paragraphs (1) and (2) of the Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019 and 155/2023) defines the tasks of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia:

1. Armed Forces shall protect the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Croatia and defend its territorial integrity.
2. Armed Forces may, subject to the conditions stipulated by the Constitution, international treaties and law:
 - participate in peace support operations, crisis response operations, humanitarian operations and other activities abroad;
 - render assistance in the defence of allied states in case of armed attack against one or more of them as stipulated under concluded international treaties;

- participate in joint efforts of the European Union, in a spirit of solidarity should any member state be exposed to a terrorist attack or had been the victim of a natural or by human activity provoked disaster;
 - be used as an assistance to the institutions of civil authority, organizations and services designated for protection and rescue operations, and to assist the population in case of disasters and major accidents, search and rescue, transport of injured or sick persons, including emergency medical flights.
 - secure real estate owned by the Republic of Croatia, handled by the Office of the President of Republic of Croatia and used in the function of the President of the Republic.
3. The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia are forces for defence of the Republic of Croatia and allies with military means as well as for other forms of use in accordance with national law and international law.

Article 62 a Paragraph (1) of the Defence Act states that the Armed Forces may provide support to police forces regarding the state border protection tasks, in compliance with the law on border control.

Concerning international military tasks and missions in the prevention and fight against terrorism, the Republic of Croatia actively participates in different NATO, EU and UN led peace support missions, operations and activities.

1.4. Provide any additional relevant information on national efforts to prevent and combat terrorism, e.g., those pertaining *inter alia* to:

Financing of terrorism: Border controls: Travel document security: Container and supply chain security: Security of radioactive sources: Use of the Internet and other information networks for terrorist purposes: Legal co-operation including extradition: Safe havens and shelter to terrorists and terrorist organizations:

The General Police Directorate and Security and Intelligence Agency, as two main national authorities responsible for prevention and suppression of terrorism, have regular operational coordination meetings, and discuss about all available information that are possibly related to terrorism, radicalization and violent extremism.

With the Amendments of the Criminal Code (Official Gazette no. 118/18) the description of the term “money laundering” from article 265. has been fully amended.

The Interagency Working Group for Suppression of Terrorism is the Government’s main body responsible for coordinating national mechanisms for the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 1373 and 1566 and other important documents in the domain of the UN, the EU, NATO, the OSCE, and the Council of Europe. In addition, the International Restrictive Measures Act was adopted on 21 November, 2008. This Act enables a more comprehensive and efficient implementation of the sanctions regimes (including the sanctions regime against Al’ Qaida and Taliban, UNSC Resolution 1267), counting as well existing counterterrorism sanctions, that are adopted within the framework of the UN and the European Union (and other international organizations), including also those restrictive measures that the Republic of Croatia introduces in accordance with other obligations that are in conformity with international law.

In the Law on Coast Guard, passed by Croatian Parliament at the session on 03 October 2007 (Official Gazette No. 125/2019 28 December 2019) in Chapter IV, the Republic of Croatia regulates the scope of work and assignments of the Coast Guard in the “Suppression and Prohibition of Terrorism, International Organized Crime and Proliferation of the Weapons for Mass Destruction”, and in Chapter V “Suppression of Piracy and Other Forms of Open Seas Usage for Non-peaceful Purposes”.

The Government of the Republic of Croatia adopted in year 2009, a National Small Arms and Light Weapons Control Strategy and Action Plan. In the same period the Government of the Republic of Croatia established the inter-ministerial National Authority coordinated by the MFEA with a responsibility for ensuring effective implementation of abovementioned documents.

The close link between terrorism and other forms of criminal activities has always been in the focus of all counter-terrorism strategies and effective measures. Since the main prerequisite for the preparation of terrorist actions is the accumulation of financial means, it is obvious why it must be dealt with the outmost vigorousness and resolve. To this end, a careful consideration must also be given to the full protection of human rights, especially to the right of personal privacy. For this reason, the Republic of Croatia attaches great importance to the legal basis for the prevention of financing terrorism, which, in addition to being contained in several international agreements, is also contained in the Criminal Code, the Anti-Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Act, the Banking Act, the National Payment System Act, the Foreign Exchange Act, and the Act on Seizure.

The supervision over transactions pursuant to the Foreign Exchange Act is exercised by the Croatian National Bank and the Ministry of Finance - Financial Inspectorate and Customs Administration. The Croatian National Bank supervises banks and the Financial Inspectorate supervises exchange offices. Supervisory bodies exchange information needed in the process of supervision and inform each other of any irregularities found in the course of supervision, provided such findings are relevant to the work of the other supervisory body.

In December 1997, the Anti-Money Laundering Office (AMLO) was established within Ministry of Finance, as an independent administrative and analytical body authorised for receiving information on financial transaction from obligated entities, relevant state authorities - supervisory authorities within the Ministry of Finance (Financial Police, Customs, Tax Department, Supervision of Foreign Transactions Department), the Ministry of Interior, and appropriate authorities and organizations, as well as to international organizations responsible for preventing money laundering. The Croatian Parliament has passed Anti Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Act at its session held on 15 July 2008. The Act entered into force on 1 January 2009. It prescribes measures and actions in banking and non-banking financial operations, money-related and other operations taken for the purpose of the prevention and detection of money laundering and terrorist financing, reporting entities subject to the Act obliged to implement the measures and actions, supervision over reporting entities in their implementation of measures and actions in banking and non-banking financial operations, cash and other operations, which measures and actions shall be taken for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing prevention and detection, tasks and jurisdictions of the Anti-Money Laundering Office as a Financial Intelligence Unit international co-operation of the Office, jurisdictions and actions of other state bodies and legal persons with public authorities in the detection of money laundering and terrorist financing, and other issues of significance for the development of the preventive system within the scope of money laundering and terrorist financing prevention. The provisions contained in the above mentioned Act concerning money laundering prevention equally apply to the countering of terrorist financing for the purpose of preventing and detecting activities of individuals, legal persons, groups and organizations in relation with terrorist financing.

Croatian authorities formed a Working Group on harmonisation of Croatian AMLTF Law with Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing (4th EU AML Directive), and with FATF Recommendations (2012). Working Group consists of representatives of AMLO, Financial Inspectorate, Tax

Administration, CNB and HANFA. The Draft Law was finalised and Croatian Government sent the Proposal of the Law to Croatian Parliament for further legislative procedure.

The Anti-Money Laundering Office is an independent organisational unit within the structure of the Ministry of Finance, performing tasks aimed at money laundering and terrorist financing prevention, as well as other tasks as provided for in the Act. As a Financial Intelligence Unit, AMLO collects, stores, analyses and submits data, information and documentation on suspicious transactions to competent government bodies for further proceeding for the purpose of money laundering and terrorist financing prevention and detection in keeping with the provisions contained in the Act. In the money laundering and terrorist financing prevention and detection, AMLO cooperates with the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia, the Ministry of the Interior - the General Police Directorate, the supervisory services of the Ministry of Finance (the Financial Inspectorate, the Customs Administration and the Tax Administration), the Croatian Financial Services Supervision Agency, the Croatian National Bank, the Security-Intelligence Agency, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, the Ministry of Justice and with other state bodies.

For the purpose of achieving the strategic and operational objectives, the above-mentioned bodies (including AMLO) signed a protocol on cooperation and on the establishment of an inter-institutional money laundering and terrorist financing working group. Furthermore, AMLO has a timely access, direct or indirect, to financial, administrative and security data, information and documentation relative to the implementation of the Law and regulations passed on the basis of the Act for the purpose of the AMLO's tasks performance, including the suspicious transactions analyses.

Within the framework of international cooperation in the field of global prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing, the Anti-Money Laundering Office as a Croatian Financial Intelligence Unit has actively participated in the work of the Egmont Group of Financial Intelligence Units (FIUs) since June of 1998. Furthermore, Anti-Money Laundering Office is a member of decentralised computer network FIU.NET, and uses its secure facilities for the exchange of information with FIUs from Member States. International standards pertaining to the prevention, uncovering and punishing money laundering are incorporated in the Croatian respective legislation (UN Convention against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances; Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime; Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism; FATF 40 + IX Recommendations ; 3rd EU AML Directive etc.).The new AMLTF Law will incorporate the 4th EU AML Directive as well as FATF Recommendations adopted in 2012.

International police co-operation is defined in the Police Act, the Criminal Proceedings Act, and The Act on International Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, as well as in bilateral agreements and international acts mentioned under 1. (b). As of July 1, 2013 the Republic of Croatia as new EU Member State cooperate with European Police Office on the basis of Council decision on establishment of EUROPOL and which replaced Agreement on Operational and Strategic Cooperation between the Republic of Croatia and EUROPOL signed in 2006.

In 2016, the III phase of VTMISS/PNDGM System upgrading was completed. Existing Vessel Traffic Management Information System (VTMISS) owned by the Ministry of Sea, Traffic and Infrastructure was upgraded with 4 new radars, 19 day/night long range cameras and 7 thermovision long range cameras. Thus enabling better detection, recognition and finally also identification of security interesting targets in the maritime area.

When selecting the location, care was taken to improve surveillance of maritime borders and the southern part of the Adriatic area where we expect the greatest threats. The

System upgrade was completed on 21st December 2016, and was funded by Schengen Facility Fund.

All cameras are completely integrated into the system, by choosing an object on the screen, the camera was automatically directed and honed in on the target. If the target is moving, the camera follow the target object. In that way, depending on the distance of the target and weather conditions, it is possible to recognize the type of vessel (fishing vessel, pleasure craft), number of person on deck and even read the name of the vessel.

The surveillance of the blue border and the maritime area with the VTMIS/PNDGM system, on the national level is conducted at the National Maritime Centre for Data Collecting in Zadar and National Coordination Centre in Zagreb, on the regional level at the maritime police stations in Pula, Rijeka, Zadar, Šibenik, Split and Dubrovnik and on the local level on the police vessels by simplified WEB Application.

On 15 March 2017 the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union adopted Regulation (EU) 2017/458 amending Regulation (EU) 2016/399 as regards the reinforcement of checks against relevant databases at external borders whose provisions are implemented by the Croatian authorities at state borders.

Bilateral agreements on police cooperation:

- Bulgaria in combating organized crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and terrorism, signed at Sofia on 26 November 1996. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 10/2003, entered into force on 1 August 1996 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 15/2003).

- Czech Republic on co-operation in combating organized crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, terrorism as well as other kinds of dangerous criminal activities, signed at Prague on 30 November 1999. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 8/2001, entered into force on 1 September 2002 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 11/2002).

- Egypt on co-operation in combating organized crime, signed at Cairo on 22 November 2004. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 5/2005, entered into force on 30 July 2005 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 9/2005)

- India in combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, international terrorism and organized crime, signed at New Delhi on 4 May 2001. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 2/2002, entered into force on 21 February 2002 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 5/2002).

- Italy on cooperation in combating illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, and organized crime, signed at Rome on 28 May 1993. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 13/1993, entered into force on 4 May 1994.

- Latvia on cooperation in combating terrorism, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs, and organized crime, signed at Zagreb on 23 February 2001. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 11/2003, entered into force 15 August 2003 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 17/2003).

- Macedonia on police cooperation signed at Skopje on 28 May 2012. Ratified and published

in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 5/2013, entered into force on 18 August 2013 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 9/2013).

- Romania on cooperation in combating terrorism, organized crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, as well as other kinds of illegal activities, signed at Zagreb on 30 September 2000. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 6/2002, entered into force on 21 May 2002 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 7/2002).

- Slovakia on cooperation in combating organized crime, signed at Bratislava on 30 November 2000. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 5/2001. Entered into force on 30 November 2011. Additional Agreement signed at Zagreb on 17 Nov 2010, entered into force on 15 June 2011.

- Slovenia in combating terrorism, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and drug abuse, as well as organized crime, signed at Zagreb on 4 June 1993. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 13/1993, entered into force on 29 May 1994 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 1/1997); and Agreement on cross-border police cooperation, signed at Berlin on 6 Nov 2002, entered into force on 16 April 2003.

- Sweden on co-operation in combating crime, signed at Zagreb on 3 October 2005. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 9/2006, entered into force on 30 November 2006 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 1/2007)

- Cooperation in combating serious crime, organized crime, trafficking in narcotic drugs, trafficking in persons, trade in human beings, international terrorism and related issues of mutual concern - concluded between the Croatian Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Finance and Public Attorney's Office on one side, and the representatives of the Police Administration of Great Britain and Northern Ireland on the other, signed at Zagreb on 1 March 2002. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 11/2002, entered into force on 1 March 2002.

- Bosnia and Herzegovina on co-operation in border control, signed at Sarajevo on 29 March 2007. Ratified and published in Official Gazette – International Treaties 10/2007, entered into force on 16 December 2007 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 1/2008) and the Agreement on co-operation in combating border crime, signed at Sarajevo on 17 September 2010, entered into force on 28 January 2012.

- Hungary on cooperation in combating cross border crime, signed at Heviz, on 4 October 2008. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 4/2009, entered into force on 7 August 2009 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 8/2009).

- France on Police Cooperation, signed at Paris on 10 October 2007. Ratified and published in Official Gazette – International Treaties 7/2008, entered into force on 1 September 2009 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 7/2009).

- Greece on co-operation in combating illicit international trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, international terrorism and organized crime, signed at Athens on 23 November 1998. Ratified and published in Official Gazette – International Treaties 11/2009, entered into force on 3 January 2010 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 13/2009)

- Israel on co-operation in combating organized crime, signed at Jerusalem, on 16 September 2009. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 1/2010, entered into force on 1 April 2010 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 3/2010)
- Serbia on police co-operation, signed at Rijeka, on 25 September 2009. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 1/2010, entered into force on 7 May 2010 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 3/2010)
- Moldova on co-operation in combating organized crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, terrorism as well as other kinds of serious crime, signed at Chisinau on 16 February 2006. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 1/2010, entered into force on 28 March 2010 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 4/2010)
- Malta on the Fight against Illicit Trafficking in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Organized Crime and International Terrorism, signed at Zagreb on 7 April 2010. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 9/2010, entered into force on 5 January 2011.
- USA Agreement on the promotion of cooperation in preventing and combating serious crime, signed at Washington DC on 18 Feb 2011, entered into force on 19 Aug 2011.
- Spain, Agreement on fight against crime and on security issues signed at Madrid on 1 jan 2012, entered in to force on 1 Jan 2013.
- Montenegro, Agreement on police cooperation, signed at Budva on 17 March 2011, entered into force on 27 Feb 2013.
- Germany, Agreement on cooperation in combating organized and serious crime, signed at Berlin on 10 March 2009, entered into force on 28 June 2012
- Kazakhstan, on the cooperation in suppressing organized crime, illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, terrorism and other dangerous criminal activities, signed at Astana on 5 July 2007, entered into force on 20 June 2012.
- Belgium, Agreement on Police Cooperation signed at Zagreb on 19 October 2004, ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 5/2005 and entered into force on 01 December 2013 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 12/2013).

List of bilateral agreements on interim bases:

- Albania in the fight against terrorism, illegal trafficking and abuse in drugs and organized crime, signed at Zagreb on 14 December 1993. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 6/1994, entered into force on an interim bases on 14 December 1993.

The following bilateral agreements have not entered into force (only signed or ratified):

- Chile in the prevention and control of abuse and illicit trafficking in narcotic drugs and

psychotropic substances, signed at Santiago on 15 June 2001. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 11/2004, not entered into force.

- Ukraine in combating terrorism, trafficking in narcotic drugs and drug abuse, as well as organized crime, signed at Kiev on 26 October 1993. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 3/1994, not entered into force.

- Turkey on co-operation in combating international trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, international terrorism and organized crime, signed at Ankara on 7 November 1995. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 7/1996, not entered into force.

- Sri Lanka on co-operation in combating illicit international trafficking in narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, international terrorism and organized crime, signed at Colombo on 7 May 2001. Ratified and published in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 4/2002, not entered into force.

- Poland on cooperation in the fight against crime, signed at Dubrovnik on 9 July 2010. Not entered into force.

- Italy signed at Zagreb on 05 July 2011.

List of bilateral agreements between the Ministries of Interior:

- Baden-Württemberg on cooperation and improvement of standards of police performance, signed on 18 November 1998.

- Bavarian Ministry of Internal Affairs on fight against international organized crime, illicit trafficking of drugs and terrorism, signed in München on 28 November 1994, new Declaration signed at Zagreb on 24 May 2000, as well as the Joint Declaration on International Police Cooperation signed at Kašteli on 8 August 2012.

- Bulgaria on co-operation in police matters, signed in 2005.

- Montenegro on co-operation in police matters, signed at Zagreb, 22 November 2005.

- China, signed in Beijing on 26 February 1997; and with the Ministry of Public Security on Police Cooperation, signed at Beijing on 03 December 2012.

- Poland, signed in Warsaw on 8 November 1994

- Service of the Russian Federation for Narcotics Traffic Control on cooperation in combating illicit traffic of narcotic drugs, psychotropic substances and their precursors, signed at Zagreb, 7 July 2007; Agreement on Cooperation, signed at Istanbul on 23 November 2012 and the Protocol on Cooperation between 2013 and 2015 signed in Moscow on 27 June 2013.

- Ukraine, signed at Zagreb on 24 May 1993.

- Netherlands in the field of internal affairs, signed at Cannes, France, on 7 July 2008, on combating crime, signed in Zagreb on 16 July 2009.

- Kosovo, signed at Pristina on 5 October 2009.
- USA, on the exchange of screening information concerning known or suspected terrorists concluded on 31 August 2018, in Dubrovnik.

Multilateral agreements:

- Border Crime and the Chapter on Organization and power of the Southeast Cooperation Initiative (SECI) Regional Centre for Fighting Cross-Border Crime, signed in Bucharest on 16 November 1999 and ratified on 27 September 2000 (Official Gazette 104/00);
- South East European Law Enforcement Center (SELEC), signed in Bucharest on 9 December 2009, ratified and published on 16 March 2011 in the Official Gazette – International Treaties 5/2011, entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 7 October 2011 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 12/2011);
- Trilateral Center Dolga Vas - Agreement between the governments of Slovenia, Austria and Hungary on the Center for Police Cooperation in Dolga Vas, agreed upon in Bruxelles on 8 November 2007, ratified and published on April 20 2011 in Official Gazette – International Treaties 6/2011, entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 12 September 2011 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 117/2011);
- Danube Police-Security Coordination Center, Agreement between the governments of Hungary and Croatia (open for all Danube states), signed in Matrahazi on 11 October 2012, ratified and published on 10 May 2013 in Official Gazette – International Treaties 3/2013, entered into force on 26 June 2013 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 7/2013);
- Agreement on the Witness Protection Cooperation, between Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia, signed in Štírin on 24 May 2012, ratified and published on 6 November 2013 in Official Gazette – International Treaties 11/2013, entered into force on 1 February 2014 (Official Gazette – International Treaties 13/2014).

2. Stationing of armed forces on foreign territory

2.1. Provide information on stationing of your States armed forces on the territory of other participating States in accordance with freely negotiated agreements as well as in accordance with international law.

The Republic of Croatia acceded to the Agreement among the States Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty and the other States Participating in the Partnership for Peace Regarding the Status of their Forces with the Additional Protocol (PfP SOFA). The Agreement entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 10 February 2002 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 14/2001).

After becoming a NATO member, the Republic of Croatia acceded to the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty Regarding the Status of their Forces (NATO SOFA). It was ratified by the Croatian Parliament on 10 July 2009 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 7/2009). The Agreement entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 22 October 2009 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No.11/2009).

The Republic of Croatia acceded to the Protocol on the Status of International Military Headquarters set up pursuant to the North Atlantic Treaty. It was ratified by the Croatian Parliament on 10 July 2009 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 7/2009). The Protocol entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 22 October 2009 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 11/2009).

The Republic of Croatia signed the Agreement on the Status of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, National Representatives and International Staff. It was ratified by the Croatian Parliament on 01 October 2010 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 7/2010). The Agreement entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 29 October 2010 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 9/2010).

The Republic of Croatia signed the Agreement on the Status of Missions and Representatives of Third States to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. It was ratified by the Croatian Parliament on 11 December 2009 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 13/2009). The Agreement entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 28 January 2010 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 2/2010).

The Republic of Croatia signed the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty for Co-operation regarding Atomic Information with Secret Technical Annex to the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty for Co-operation regarding Atomic Information and Confidential Security Annex to the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty for Co-operation regarding Atomic Information. The Agreement with Annexes was ratified by the Croatian Parliament on 10 December 2010 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 10/2010). The Agreement with Annexes entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 20 January 2011 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 1/2011).

The Republic of Croatia signed the Protocol Amending the Security Annex to the Agreement between the Parties to the North Atlantic Treaty for Co-operation regarding Atomic Information. The Protocol was ratified by the Croatian Parliament on 11 May 2012 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 5/2012).

Article 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 85/2010 – consolidated text and 5/2014) states:

“The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia shall protect its sovereignty and independence and defend its territorial integrity.

Assistance in the protection of sovereignty and independence and defence of territorial integrity may also be rendered to the Republic of Croatia by allied states, pursuant to ratified international treaties.

The armed forces of allied states may cross the national border and enter the Republic of Croatia or operate within the national borders thereof, as stipulated under ratified international treaties, pursuant to a decision by the Croatian Parliament, proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia with the prior consent of the President of the Republic of Croatia.

The Republic of Croatia may render assistance to allied states in case of armed aggression on one or more thereof, as stipulated under ratified international treaties, pursuant to a decision of the Croatian Parliament proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia with the prior consent of the President of the Republic of Croatia.

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia may cross its national borders or operate across its borders pursuant to a decision of the Croatian Parliament, proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia with the prior consent of the President of the Republic of Croatia.

The decision specified in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of this Article shall be made by the Croatian Parliament by a majority vote of all of its members.

Insofar as the President of the Republic of Croatia denies the consent specified in paragraphs 3, 4 and 5 of this Article, the Croatian Parliament shall make the decision by a two-thirds majority of votes of all of its members.

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia may cross the national borders of the Republic of Croatia for the purpose of military exercises and training within the framework of international organizations to which the Republic of Croatia has acceded or is in the process of acceding pursuant to international treaties and for the purpose of rendering humanitarian assistance, pursuant to a decision by the Government of the Republic of Croatia with the prior consent of the President of the Republic of Croatia.

The armed forces of allied states may cross the national borders of the Republic of Croatia for the purpose of military exercises and training within the framework of international organisations to which the Republic of Croatia has acceded or is in the process of acceding pursuant to international treaties and for the purpose of rendering humanitarian assistance, pursuant to a decision of the Government of the Republic of Croatia with the prior consent of the President of the Republic of Croatia.

Under the circumstances specified in Articles 17 and 101 of the Constitution, the Armed Forces may, if necessitated by the nature of a threat, be deployed to assist the police and other state bodies.

The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia may also be deployed to assist fire-fighting and rescue operations and surveillance and protection of the rights of the Republic of Croatia at sea.

The defence structure, chain of command, administration and democratic oversight of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia shall be regulated by the Constitution and law.”

The participation of members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia in peacekeeping operations and other activities abroad is regulated by the Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019 and 155/2023), the Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 50/2016, 30/2018, 125/2019, 155/2023, 158/2023 and 14/2024) and by the Ordinance on Participation of Members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia in Peacekeeping Operations, Crisis Response Operations, Humanitarian Operations and Other Activities Abroad (Official Gazette, No. 86/2017 and 2/2021).

Article 46 paragraph 1 of the Defence Act regulates the use of the Armed Forces, as follows:

“The Croatian Parliament, the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence decide on the use of the Armed Forces in accordance with the Constitution and this Act.”

In addition to regulating the use of the Armed Forces in a state of war and state of imminent threat, an entire Section of the Defence Act is dedicated to crossing the state border and operations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia outside the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

Article 49 of the Defence Act regulates the decision making process concerning deployment and operations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia outside the territory of the Republic of Croatia as follows:

“(1) The Armed Forces may cross the borders of the Republic of Croatia and act across its borders pursuant to a decision of the Croatian Parliament proposed by the Government with the prior consent of the President of the Republic.

(2) Based on a decision of the Croatian Parliament referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, the President of the Republic orders the use of the Armed Forces.”

The provisions of the Defence Act regulate the use of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia for the following purposes:

- in providing assistance in defence of allied states (Article 51);
- in providing assistance in defence of the member states of the European Union (Article 52);
- in accordance with the European Union's solidarity clause (Article 53);
- in building international security (Article 54),; and
- in providing international humanitarian assistance (Article 56).

During 2024, the Republic of Croatia participated in a total of 13 international missions and operations: 3 UN (MINURSO, UNIFIL, UNMOGIP), 3 NATO led missions and operations (KFOR, NATO Mission Iraq, Operation Sea Guardian,), 1 Coalition operation (OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE), NATO activity Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP BG in Poland), 1 NATO activity Enhanced Vigilant Activity (eVABG in Hungary), 1 NATO activity SNMCMG2, 1 NATO activity Enhanced Vigilant Activity (eVA BG in the Republic of Bulgaria) and 2 EU operations (EU NAVFOR Somalia – ATALANTA and EU NAVFOR MED IRINI), with a total of 968 members of the Croatian Armed Forces.

NATO

During 2024, the Republic of Croatia participated in three NATO led missions and operations (KFOR, NATO Mission Iraq, Operation Sea Guardian), 1 Coalition operation (OPERATION INHERENT RESOLVE), one NATO activity Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP BG in the Republic of Poland), one NATO activity Enhanced Vigilant Activity (eVA BG in Hungary), one NATO activity Enhanced Vigilant Activity (eVA BG in the Republic of Bulgaria) and 1 NATO activity SNMCMG2.

A total of 313 members of the Croatian Army have been deployed in NATO KFOR operation in the Republic of Kosovo, in two Croatian contingents, the 41st Croatian contingent from May and the 42nd Croatian contingent from November 2024. In addition to contributing to the operation with helicopter assets, helicopter crews, staff officers and military advisors to the NATO Advisory and Liaison Team (NALT), the Croatian Army provided additional support to the overall NATO efforts by assigning personnel to ISR (Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance) battalion.

The Croatian Navy's "Dubrovnik" gun-missile boat has recently been deployed and served as a platform for the 32-strong in two Croatian contingents in the Sea Guardian, NATO-led operation in the central Mediterranean, the 9th Croatian contingent throughout May and June, and the 10th Croatian contingent throughout November and December 2024. Their task involved support for maritime situational awareness; ensuring freedom of navigation; naval interdiction; maritime counterterrorism; and contribution to capacity building; the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction; and the protection of critical infrastructure.

As part of the activities supporting the NATO Counter-Terrorism Action Plan, as well as the efforts of the Global Coalition to Combat ISIL, the Republic of Croatia has been participating in the NATO mission Iraq since December 2018. In two rotations in 2024, 14

members of the Croatian Armed Forces participated in the mission in advisors and trainers positions.

At the NATO Summit in Warsaw in 2016, as part of the Alliance's defence and deterrence posture, a decision was made to deploy NATO forces to the Alliance's eastern and southeastern borders. As part of the Enhanced Forward Presence (eFP) at the eastern borders of the Alliance, the Republic of Croatia continued its participation in the United States-led battle group in the Republic of Poland in 2024. A total of 73 members of the Croatian Army were deployed in two rotations of Croatian contingents, the 13th Croatian contingent with a self-propelled howitzer battery (PZH 2000HRV cal. 155 mm) from February to August 2024 and 14th Croatian contingent with 4 staff positions from August 2024 to February 2025.

As part of the NATO activity Enhanced Vigilant Activity (eVABG in Hungary), the Republic of Croatia continued its participation as part of the Hungary-led battle group in the Hungary in 2024. A total of 128 members of the Croatian Army were deployed in two rotations of Croatian contingents, the 4th Croatian contingent from February to August 2024 and the 5th Croatian contingent from August 2024 to February 2025 (on six-month basis national C2, FP team, MP platoon, CIMIC team, EOD team, MMT and eVABG-HUN HQ staff personnel).

In addition, in one NATO activity Enhanced Vigilant Activity (eVABG in the Republic of Bulgaria), as part of the Italian Republic-led battle group in the Republic of Bulgaria, two Croatian contingents (in total of 8 members) were deployed on a six-month basis (JTAC teams), the 1st Croatian contingent from February to August 2024 and the 2nd Croatian contingent from August 2024 to February 2025.

As part of the NATO led activity SNMCMG2 (Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group Two), from February 2021, CAF is participating with one 4-members team as part of the ITA Navy ship. In 2024 there were 2 rotations, with a total of 7 members from Croatian Navy (rotations January–March and September–November 2024).

Also, one member of the Croatian Army from 1st NSB from NATO CIS Group has been deployed for support in NATO mission NMI in Iraq, from May to August 2024.

As part of NATO activity NATO Defence Education Enhancement Programme, in the NATO MATT team, one member of the Croatian Army has been deployed for support in the NATO mission NMI in Iraq, throughout November 2024.

A total of 609 personnel were engaged in NATO operations, missions and activities during 2024.

Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR)

In September 2017, the Republic of Croatia started to participate in Operation Inherent Resolve (OIR) with one staff officer in CJTF-OIR (Combined Joint Task Force Operation Inherent Resolve) at Camp "ARIFJAN", the State of Kuwait. The Republic of Croatia has taken over the staff position in CJTF-OIR MAG (INFO OPS Advisor) in Camp "UNION III" in Iraq, during November 2021, instead of the staff position in Camp "ARIFJAN", the State of Kuwait. CJTF- OIR continues to engage, along with regional partners, in carrying out the operations against the forces of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic (ISIS), in order to remove the threat they pose for Iraq, the region, and the wider international community.

During 2024 the Croatian Armed Forces continued participation in OIR with two members.

EU

The Republic of Croatia continues to strongly support a credible and efficient EU in its security and defence dimension. This includes an enhanced and clearer role of the Common Security and Defence Policy, complementary with NATO as the main strategic partner of the EU. It also includes a stronger political will, solidarity, and common action by all member states.

In 2024, the Republic of Croatia continued with its participation in the European Union Naval Force Somalia Operation ATALANTA (EU NAVFOR). The Republic of Croatia has participated in this operation since 2009, and it recognizes the importance of its objectives as part of the overall EU efforts in deterring, preventing, and repressing piracy and armed robbery off the Somali coast. In 2024, the Republic of Croatia participated in the operation with two members by filling staff officer positions in Operation Headquarters without participating and rotation of Autonomous Vessel Protection Detachment (AVPD Team).

From September 2017 until March 2020, the Republic of Croatia participated in the European Union military operation in the Southern Central Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED operation SOPHIA) with the mission core mandate to undertake systematic efforts to identify, capture, and dispose of vessels used for smuggling and trafficking networks in the Southern Central Mediterranean and prevent further loss of life at sea. After the launching of the new EU operation in Mediterranean (EUNAVFOR MED IRINI), Croatia joined the operation, filling a position in the Operation Headquarters. During 2024, the Republic of Croatia participated in the EU NAVFOR MED IRINI with 7 members, on a six-month basis rotation.

A total of 9 personnel were engaged in EU operations during 2024.

The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia, in collaboration with the Ministries of Defence of the Republic of Estonia, Kingdom of the Netherlands, Republic of Poland, and Romania, has signed the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for participation in the Permanent Structured Cooperation of the European Union project “Cyber Rapid Response Teams and Mutual Assistance in Cyber Security” as of March 2020.

The Republic of Croatia maintained its involvement in the PESCO CRRT in 2024, with a team of two members that was activated in accordance with the CRRT Council’s decision. The team was responsible for three activities: in May 2024, activity was conducted in the Republic of Moldova with remote access from the Republic of Poland; in June 2024, activity was conducted in the Republic of Lithuania; finally, in October 2024, activity was conducted in the Republic of Moldova.

UN

14 members of the Croatian Armed Forces took part in three UN missions in 2024, on behalf of the Republic of Croatia:

- 8 military observers who have been actively participating in UNMOGIP (United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan) since 2004;
- 5 military observers who have been actively participating in MINURSO (United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara) since 2004;
- 1 military observer who have been actively participating in UNIFIL (United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon) since 2007.

3. Implementation of other international commitments related to the Code of Conduct

3.1 Provide information on how your State ensures that commitments in the field of arms control, disarmament and confidence and security building as an element of indivisible security are implemented in good faith.

The Republic of Croatia regulated the field of arms control, disarmament and confidence and security building in its strategic documents. The Republic of Croatia has signed all relevant treaties in the field of preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (NPT, CTBT, BTWC, CWC). The said documents are all incorporated in the national legislation. The Republic of Croatia has also renounced the use of anti-personnel landmines and cluster munitions (Ottawa Convention, CCM). The Republic of Croatia consistently performs its obligations assumed in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 and takes an active part in the PSI. For the purpose of the further development of regional cooperation and exchange of experiences, last year the Republic of Croatia hosted a PSI cabinet exercise.

Through the committed implementation of major international conventions, protocols and regimes on the prohibition of particular kinds of weapons and strict export control regimes, the Republic of Croatia actively contributes to minimizing threats on all levels, as an element of indivisible security and in good faith. The Republic of Croatia has continuously been providing leadership in the framework of the different conventions and protocols.

Croatian Government adopted The National Strategy and the Action Plan for the Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction on 10 January 2013. The Strategy defines the general framework of actions of the Republic of Croatia pertaining to the suppression of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and provides guidelines for improvement of the existing and development of new measures, mechanisms and instruments for the prevention and suppression of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The Strategy provides guidelines for strengthening coordination and integration of activities of state and public authorities and other legal entities in the Republic of Croatia, and cooperation with bodies of other states and international organisations. The Strategy is an integral part of the entire national crisis management system. The Strategy shows how Croatia contributes to the global, regional and national security through its active and responsible approach to international cooperation in WMD non-proliferation, meeting all of the commitments stemming from the UN Security Council resolutions, and adaptation to the relevant NATO and EU standards. The Strategy and the Action Plan represent guidelines for improving the system on the level of state administration bodies, better cooperation and coordination between them, as well as cooperation between the relevant Croatian bodies, relevant bodies from other countries and international organizations. Following the Strategy, National Commission on the Prevention of Weapons of Mass Destruction Proliferation was established and consists of representatives of relevant state administration bodies. Croatia, USEUCOM and RACVIAC - Centre for Security Cooperation, during 2014, started joint regional outreach project ***"Counter WMD Network of Governmental experts"*** for the countries of the SEE with aim to assist them in drafting and developing national strategies and action plans for non-proliferation of WMD. The aim of the Network is to assist members with the implementation of international obligations, developing strategic documents, building national capacities and strengthening regional cooperation in the field of non-proliferation. Phase 2 of the project started in February 2020 with 4 new projects and expanded regional cooperation (CWMD Regional Risk Atlas, led by North Macedonia; Common approach to biosafety and the prevention of the malicious use of the biological sciences led by Romania, Dual use and Emerging technologies

led by Croatia, Monte Negro and Kosovo; and Annual Trend Assessment Conference led by Bosnia and Herzegovina).

Croatia is a state party to:

- 1) Arms Trade Treaty, ratified 31st January 2014 (Official Gazette No. 1/2014);
- 2) Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines, and on their Destruction, dated 4th December, 1997 - ratified 24th April, 1998 (Official Gazette No. 7/1998);
- 3) Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. Regardless of the Aim from 10th October 1980 that came into force on 2nd December, 1983, and the five Protocols to the Convention - the Protocol on Non- Detectable Fragments (Protocol I) from 1980, the Protocol on Prohibition or Restriction on Use of Landmines, Booby Traps and other Devices (AP II) from 1980, the Protocol on Prohibition or Restriction on Use of Incendiary Weapons (Protocol III) from 1980, Amended Protocol II from 1996, entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 25 October 2002 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 13/2011) and the Supplementary Protocol IV on Blinding Lasers Weapons from 1995 (entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 25 October 2002); Amendment to Article 1 of the 2001 Convention and the 2003 Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War (Protocol V), (Official Gazette No. 11/2004), entered into force for Croatia on 12 November 2006 (Official Gazette No. 5/2006);
- 4) Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction from 1993 dated 13 January 1993, ratified 10 March 1995 (Official Gazette No. 4/1995);
- 5) Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction dated 10 April 1972 (Official Gazette SFRJ/International Agreements No. 43/1974, Official Gazette No. 12/1993- note of succession);
- 6) Protocol additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Adoption of an Additional Distinctive Emblem (Protocol III)- ratified by Croatian Parliament on 30 March 2007; entered into force for Croatia on 13 December 2007 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 7/2007);
- 7) 1925 Geneva Protocol (Protocol for the Prohibition of the Use of Asphyxiating, Poisonous or Other Gases, and of Bacteriological Methods of Warfare) (Official Gazette No. 7/2006), ratified by Croatian Parliament on 30 June, 2006; entered into force for Croatia on 18 December 2006 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 1/2007);
- 8) Protocol Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, ratified 10 November 2004 (Official Gazette No. 11/2004);
- 9) Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) dated 01 July 1968 (Official Gazette SFRJ/International Agreements No. 10/1970; Official Gazette No. 12/1993-note of succession);
- 10) Convention of the Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials (CPPNM) together with its amendments dated 26 October 1979 (Official Gazette SFRJ/International Agreements No. 9/1985; Official Gazette No. 12/1993- note of succession);
- 11) Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism, ratified by Croatian Parliament on 30 March 2007; entered into force for Croatia on 07 July 2007 (Official Gazette No. 9/2007);

- 12) Convention on Cluster Munitions in Oslo, 3 December 2008, ratified by the Croatian Parliament on 5 June 2009 (Official Gazette No. 5/2009) and entered into force for the Republic of Croatia on 01 August 2010 (Official Gazette No. 2/2010);
- 13) Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and Under Water, Moscow, 5 August 1963 (Official Gazette SFRJ/International Agreements No. 11/1963; Official Gazette No. 4/1994 - note of succession);
- 14) Treaty on the Prohibition of the Emplacement of Nuclear Weapons and Other Weapons of Mass Destruction on the Sea-Bed and the Ocean Floor and in the Subsoil Thereof, Washington, London, Moscow, 11 February, 1971 (Official Gazette SFRJ/International Agreements No. 33/1973; Official Gazette No. 4/1994 - note on succession);
- 15) Convention on Nuclear Safety, Vienna, 17 June 1994, the Republic of Croatia signed it on 10 April 1995 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 13/1995);
- 16) Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, New York 24 September 1996, the Republic of Croatia signed it in September 1996 and is state party as of 2001 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 1/2001).

The Republic of Croatia is state party to the following export control regimes: The Nuclear Suppliers Group; The Zangger Committee; The Australia Group; The Wassenaar Arrangement.

The Republic of Croatia is the Subscribing State to the Hague Code of Conduct Against Ballistic Missiles Proliferation (HCOC) and has applied to the export control regime The Missile Technology Control Regime.

Additional efforts include the Application of Safeguards in connection with the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons; Croatian and US Government Agreement on Cooperation on the Prohibition of Weapons of Mass Destruction and Promotion of Defence and Military Relations, Zagreb, 04 February 2003., ratified by the Croatian Parliament on 13 June, 2003 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 12/2003), Initiative Ship boarding Agreement between Croatian Government and US Government, Washington, 1 June 2005, ratified by Croatian Parliament on 2 February 2007 (Official Gazette – International Treaties No. 2/2007).

3.2. Provide information on how your State pursues arms control, disarmament and confidence-and security-building measures with a view to enhancing security and stability in the OSCE area.

Croatia actively participates in all arms control, disarmament, confidence and security building measures activities with a view to enhancing security and stability globally and in the OSCE area, in particular given its focus on the countries in the SEE region and close neighbourhood. Croatia regularly provides its national expertise in the complex Euro-Atlantic integration processes to the countries of the SEE region.

The tasks related to the verification activities and implementation of binding international conventional arms control, are carried out by the MoD Arms Control Division.

As part of OSCE, the Republic of Croatia is party to the Vienna Document 2011, the Agreement on Sub-regional Arms Control and Open Skies Treaty, the Republic of Croatia consistently performs its obligations assumed in the said documents, including the exchange of military information and exchange of appropriate notification formats, the conduct of inspections and provision of escort teams. In this regard, in the 2024, the Republic of Croatia continued the regime of verification activities for all treaties and agreements on arms control to which it acceded.

Representatives of the Republic of Croatia took a part in courses on arms control, disarmament and confidence and security building measures, especially those held in RACVIAC.

SECTION II: INTRA-STATE ELEMENTS

1. National planning and decision-making process

1.1 What is the national planning and decision-making process in determining/approving military posture and defence expenditures in your State?

The provisions in Title II of the Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019, and 155/2023) regulate the responsibilities of state government bodies and administration for decision making in the field of defence, as well as planning with regard to the organization of the Armed Forces. Those responsibilities are distributed among the Croatian Parliament, the President of the Republic of Croatia, the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Ministry of Defence.

Article 5 paragraph 2 of the Defence Act defines the responsibilities of the Croatian Parliament, which, *inter alia*, include:

- 1) Adoption of the Defence Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and with the consent of the President of the Republic of Croatia;
- 2) Deciding on the amount and structure of funds for financing defence, proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia;
- 3) Adoption of the Long-term Plan of Development of the Armed Forces, proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia;
- 4) Adoption of the Annual Report on Defence;
- 5) Decision on not to call conscripts for mandatory military service.

The Annual Report on Defence is submitted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and it is the representation of Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces' activities in the previous year, the state and development of defence capabilities, implementation of defence preparations also the structure of defence resources and realisation of the key development projects and priorities.

The Croatian Parliament, through its respective bodies, monitors the implementation of the Defence Plan of the Republic of Croatia, as well as the implementation of defence preparations.

Article 6 of the Defence Act defines the responsibilities of the Defence Committee of the Croatian Parliament, as follows:

“(1) The Defence Committee of the Croatian Parliament discusses and adopts positions on:

1. The amount and structure of funds for financing defence proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia;
2. Reports in the field of defence adopted by the Croatian Parliament;
3. Laws and other acts in the field of defence adopted by the Croatian Parliament.

(2) The Committee referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall provide opinion to the Ministry of Defence concerning defence procurement for values exceeding EUR 5.000.000.00 prior to the initiation of the public procurement procedure.“

Article 7 paragraph 1 of the Defence Act defines the responsibilities of the President of the Republic of Croatia (who is the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces), which, inter alia, include:

- 1) Adoption of the Military Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, proposed by a Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces and with the consent of the Minister of Defence;
- 2) Adoption of the Plan of use of the Armed Forces, proposed by a Chief of General Staff of the Armed Forces and with the consent of the Minister of Defence;
- 3) Approval of the proposed Defence Plan of the Republic of Croatia;
- 4) Adoption of the Decision on the Size, Structure and Mobilization Development of the Armed Forces proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia;
- 5) Providing a preliminary opinion on the drafts of the acts in the field of defence adopted by the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

Article 8 of the Defence Act defines the responsibilities of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, which, inter alia, include:

- 1) Adoption of the Strategic Defence Review, proposed by the Minister of Defence;
- 2) Submitting of the Annual Report on Defence to the Croatian Parliament;
- 3) Adoption of the Defence Plan of the Republic of Croatia;
- 4) Proposing a decision not to call conscripts for mandatory military service.

Article 14 of the Defence Act defines the tasks of the Ministry of Defence, which, inter alia, include:

- 1) Drafting of the Defence Strategy of the Republic of Croatia;
- 2) Drafting of the Strategic Defence Review;
- 3) Drafting of the Long-term Plan of Development of the Armed Forces;
- 4) Drafting the proposal of the Defence Plan of the Republic of Croatia;
- 5) Drafting of the Annual Report on Defence;
- 6) Planning, coordination and implementation of international defence cooperation and activities resulting from the accepted international obligations of the Republic of Croatia;
- 7) Coordination of the projects aimed at contributing to the development of allied defence capabilities and defence capabilities of the European Union;
- 8) Directing and coordination of the preparations and activities concerning the engagement of the Armed Forces in peace support operations, crisis response operations, humanitarian operations and other activities abroad;
- 9) Inclusion and work within the framework of international initiatives, organizations and alliances to which the Republic of Croatia has acceded or is in the process of acceding pursuant to international treaties.

Article 16 paragraph 1 of the Defence Act defines the tasks of the General Staff of the Armed Forces within the Ministry of Defence, which, inter alia, include:

- 1) Drafting of the Military Strategy of the Republic of Croatia;
- 2) Drafting of the Plan of use of the Armed Forces;
- 3) Participation in drafting of the Defence Strategy of the Republic of Croatia;
- 4) Participation in drafting of the Long-term Plan of Development of the Armed Forces;
- 5) Participation in drafting of the Annual Report on Defence
- 6) Drafting of the Military Priorities of the Armed Forces

The above stated plainly shows that no state government body has the exclusive responsibility for developing defence regulations, documents and plans. The responsibility concerning all issues, including determining/approving military position rests with several

state government bodies, whose powers may include proposing, approving, discussing, providing opinions, adopting a particular document and making decision on a particular issue.

The comprehensive defence planning system, as a key component of the overall defence management, is focused on the development of strategic and conceptual documents as well as on the documents of operational and implementation planning. It consists of strategic development, operational and implementation planning.

The National planning and decision-making process in determining/approving defence expenditures is part of the state budget developing process. It is a result of interaction among the President of the Republic of Croatia, Croatian Parliament, Croatian Government, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Defence, and other ministries. The state budget for one year and projections for next two years (and the Budget of the Ministry of Defence, accordingly) is approved by the Croatian Parliament.

The abovementioned process is regulated by:

1. The Budget Act (Official Gazette No. 144/21),
2. The Act on State Budget Execution for the current year,
3. The Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019 and 155/2023).

The State Budget is prepared based on the assessment of economic development and macroeconomic indicators.

Ministry of Finance prepares a Convergence program that the Government adopts by conclusion. The Convergence program determines the macroeconomic and fiscal framework of the Republic of Croatia in the current budget year and the following three budget years. The Government enacts a decision on the budget framework for the next three-year period, on the proposal of the Ministry of Finance and based on the convergence program. The decision on the budget framework forms the basis for the preparation of the state budget.

Relying on the Government's decision on the budget framework, the Ministry of Finance issues Instructions for the preparation of the draft State Budget. It contains key economic indicators, the methodology and schedule for the preparation of the State Budget.

Based on the instructions for the preparation of the draft State Budget, budget users of the State Budget prepare their draft financial plans (draft budgets).

Each draft financial plan contains a general and special part and an explanation. The general part is composed of revenue and expenditure account, a financing account and the summary. The special part contains expenditures structured by organization, funding sources, programs, activities and projects and by economic classification. The explanation of financial plan contains an explanation of revenues and receipts; expenditures and outlays, a summary of the budget user's scope of work; explained programmes; activities and projects; legal and other grounds; goals, and performance indicators aligned with strategic planning documents.

Ministries deliver draft financial plans to the Ministry of Finance. Ministry of Finance reviews draft financial plans with estimated revenues and receipts; prepares a draft budget for the budget year and projections for the next two years, and submits these to the Government. Government submits a proposal for the budget and projections for the next two years to Parliament for adoption. Before the budget is adopted, a debate is held in Parliament. During the debate on the proposed State Budget and projections, submitted amendments proposing any increase in budgetary expenditure and outlays beyond the amounts established in the proposed State Budget may be accepted, provided that a proposal is also made to decrease other expenditure and outlays. Parliament adopts the budget for the budget year and the projections for the following two budget years before the end of the current year and, in any

case, no later than such time that allows the application of the budget as from 1 January of the year for which it is being passed.

The State Budget is composed of a general and special part and an explanation. The general part is consisted of Revenue and Expenditure Account, Financing Account and the Summary. The special part of the State Budget is formed of special parts of financial plans (budgets) of each budget user. Accordingly, the Ministry of Defence financial plan (budget) is visible in the State Budget.

1.2. How does your State ensure that its military capabilities take into account the legitimate security concerns of other States as well as the need to contribute to international security and stability?

Drawing and adoption of policy and planning documents that define military capabilities of the Croatian Armed Forces, is being conducted in a transparent and open manner and all adopted documents are available to domestic and international public. In that way, all interested states have insight in the current situation and reasons for development of military capabilities. Also, through intensive bilateral and multilateral defence cooperation with all democratic states, especially with those from the region and close neighbourhood, security and defence talks are being held, through which all security questions, concepts and solutions are being discussed among participants. Croatian foreign and security policy identifies contribution to international security, and sustainment of favourable regional and wider international environment, as one of the missions of Croatian Armed Forces.

In order to fulfil its security and defence objectives, Croatia identifies the capability requirements, develops and delivers its defence forces and capabilities within the national defence planning processes. Existing processes are conducted in accordance to political guidance for defence planning and in a structured and transparent manner. These are also reviewed on a regular basis in view of the changing security environment. In addition, Croatia harmonizes its national defence plans with those of NATO Allies and EU Member States, aimed to identify, develop and deliver a fair share of the overall forces and capabilities needed for the alliances to be able to undertake full range of missions and operations, which represents part of national contribution to international security and stability.

2. Existing structures and processes

2.1. What are the constitutionally established procedures for ensuring democratic political control of military, paramilitary and internal security forces, intelligence services and the police?

The Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Article 7 paragraph 12) states:
“The defence structure, chain of command, administration and democratic oversight of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia shall be regulated by the Constitution and law.”

The Defence responsibilities of the Parliament, as defined by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia include:

- Adoption of the National Security Strategy and the Defence Strategy of the Republic of Croatia;
- Exercising civilian oversight of the Armed Forces and security services of the Republic of Croatia.

- The National Security Strategy of the Republic of Croatia is the initial strategic document which determines the policies and instruments for the realization of the vision national interests and the achievement of security conditions that will enable balanced and continuous development of the state and society. This strategy introduces a new security paradigm based on the model of the security of the individual - every citizen of the Republic of Croatia.

- The Defence Strategy is a long-term document that regulates the engagement of available defence resources in response to security challenges and projects their future development.

Procedures for ensuring democratic and political control over activities of security and intelligence agencies are stipulated in The Security and Intelligence System Act of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 79/2006 and 105/2006).

In accordance with legal provisions, democratic and political control is established and exercised by the Croatian Parliament directly and through its Domestic Policy and National Security Committee; the Office of the National Security Council (ONSC) and the Council for Civilian Oversight of Security and Intelligence Agencies.

The Croatian Parliament, through its Domestic Policy and National Security Committee, may request the ONSC to submit reports and notifications and/or to carry out expert oversight of security and intelligence agencies.

The Domestic Policy and National Security Committee consists of members of the Croatian Parliament and chairperson always comes from the most represented opposition party in the Parliament. The functions of the Committee are, inter alia, control and oversight of the work of the police and matters of internal policy and national security to ensure the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms established by the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia.

The Council for Civilian Oversight of Security and Intelligence Agencies, in accordance with the provisions of the Article 111 paragraph 1 of The Security and Intelligence System Act of the Republic of Croatia, monitors the legality of security agencies work, oversees the application of confidential data gathering measures restricting constitutionally guaranteed human rights and fundamental freedoms and provides information about methods on how citizens, governmental bodies and legal entities may file complaints on any illegal or irregular procedures in the work of security and intelligence agencies. The information gathered are submitted to The National Security Council, the Speaker of the Croatian Parliament, the chairperson of The Domestic Policy and National Security Committee and the directors of security and intelligence agencies.

2.2 How is the fulfilment of these procedures ensured, and which constitutionally established authorities/institutions are responsible for exercising these procedures?

Procedure of democratic oversight of the Armed Forces is regulated by the provisions of the Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019 and 155/2023).

Article 5 of the Defence Act defines the responsibilities of the Croatian Parliament, as follows:

“(1) The Croatian Parliament shall decide on war and peace and exercise civilian oversight of the Armed Forces.

(2) The Croatian Parliament:

- 1) Shall adopt the Defence Strategy of the Republic of Croatia, proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and with the consent of the President of the Republic of Croatia;
- 2) Shall decide on the amount and structure of funds for financing defence, proposed by the

Government of the Republic of Croatia;

3) Shall adopt the Long-term Plan of Development of the Armed Forces, proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia;

4) Shall adopt the Annual Report on Defence;

5) Shall determine the state of immediate threat, on the proposal of the Government of the Republic of Croatia;

6) Shall adopt a decision not to call conscripts for mandatory military service;

7) Shall adopt other acts in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and law.“

Article 6 of the Defence Act defines the responsibilities of the Defence Committee of the Croatian Parliament, as follows:

“(1) The Defence Committee of the Croatian Parliament shall discuss and adopt positions on:

1. The amount and structure of funds for financing defence proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia;

2. Reports in the field of defence adopted by the Croatian Parliament;

3. Laws and other acts in the field of defence adopted by the Croatian Parliament.

(2) The Committee referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article shall provide opinion to the Ministry of Defence concerning defence procurement for values exceeding EUR 5.000.000.00 prior to the initiation of the public procurement procedure. “

The Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament, (Official Gazette No. 81/2013, 113/2016, 69/2017, 29/2018, 53/2020, 119/2020 123/2020 and 86/2023), in Article 71, define the responsibilities of the Defence Committee, as follows:

„The Defence Committee shall establish and monitor the implementation of the policies, and in procedure of enactment of laws and other regulations, it shall have the rights and duties of a main working body, in matters pertaining to:

- the structure and scope of state administration bodies in the field of defence;

- defence;

- cooperation with bodies in the Republic of Croatia that operate in the field of defence;

- other matters of defence.“

The operating procedures of the Defence Committee, as a working body of the Croatian Parliament, are defined in Article 44 paragraphs 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7 of the Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament, as follows:

„Working body of the Parliament shall debate motions and initiatives for the enactment of laws and other acts, as well as other matters within the authority of Parliament.

Working body shall monitor, within the limits of its competence, the work of the Government and other bodies whose work is overseen by the Parliament pursuant to the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and law.

Working body shall deliberate on the reports and rules of procedures of the bodies and legal entities vested with public authority, which they submit to the Parliament pursuant to law and on which the Parliament shall decide without discussion.

Exceptionally, the reports referred to in paragraph 4 of this Article submitted by: the Government of the Republic of Croatia, the State Attorney's Office of the Republic of Croatia, the Conflict of Interest Resolution Committee, the Croatian National Bank, the Information Commissioner, the President of the Supreme Court of the Republic of Croatia, State Audit concerning realization of the state budget and the work of the State Audit Office, the Director General of Croatian Radio and Television, the Ombudsman, the Ombudsman for Children, the

Ombudsman for Persons with Disabilities, the Ombudsperson for Gender Equality, will be discussed also at the session of the Parliament.

Working body of the Parliament may, based on the conclusion, propose that reports and rules of procedure of the bodies referred to in paragraph 4 of this Article be discussed at the session of the Parliament.

After deliberation, working body of the Parliament shall adopt positions or establish drafts of the acts, and report to the Parliament thereon.“

Operating procedures at meetings of working bodies are laid down in Article 56 paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament:

„The meetings of the working bodies of the Parliament shall be attended by a member of the Government, state secretary or assistant minister when such meetings are held to consider Government proposals or positions, or by directors of state administration bodies when such meetings are held to consider matters within their competence.“

In accordance with Article 127 paragraph 1 of the Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament:

„The Parliament or its working bodies may seek a report and data from ministers or officials who administer the operations of other state administration bodies, and upon receiving such request they shall be obliged:

- to report on issues and affairs within the scope of the ministries or other state administration bodies;
- to submit a report on the execution and implementation of the laws and other regulations, and the tasks entrusted to them;
- to submit data at their disposal, or data they are obliged to collect and record within the scope of their duties, as well as records and other things necessary for the work of the Parliament or its working body;
- to respond to posed questions.“

➤ Based on its competences in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of the Croatian Parliament, **the Defence Committee of the Croatian Parliament** conducted a discussion in 2024 in relation to the OSCE Code of Conduct on politico-military aspects of security, and established proposals for the adoption of the following acts:

- At the 39th session of the Defence Committee in the 10th term of the Croatian Parliament, held on 17 January 2024, the Committee adopted a conclusion supporting the adoption of Amendments to the Act on Service in the Croatian Armed Forces.
- At the 42nd session of the Defence Committee in the 10th term of the Croatian Parliament, held on February 23, 2024, the Committee adopted an opinion supporting the Position Paper of the Republic of Croatia on the Proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on enhancing police cooperation in relation to the prevention, detection and investigation of migrant smuggling and trafficking in human beings, and on enhancing Europol's support to preventing and combating such crimes and amending Regulation (EU) 2016/794 COM (2023) 754.
- **During the 11th term of the Croatian Parliament**, the Defence Committee, at its 3rd session, held on October 16 and 21, 2024, considered and proposed to the Croatian Parliament the adoption of the following decisions:
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in NATO's Forward Land Forces mission**

- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in the KFOR peacekeeping operation in Kosovo**
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in the peacekeeping NATO Mission Iraq**
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in the peacekeeping NATO Mission Iraq**
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in the Sea Guardian peace support operation in the Mediterranean**
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in the Standing NATO Mine Countermeasures Group 2**
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in the coalition forces' Operation Inherent Resolve**
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in the European Union Operation EUNAVFOR- ATALANTA**
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in the European Union Operation EUNAVFOR MED IRINI**
- **Decision on the participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in peace support operations under the United Nations**
- **Decision on the crossing of Croatian borders by NATO member states' armed forces and the Croatian Armed Forces engaged under the NATO force model for 2025 and 2026**
- **Decision on the crossing of Croatian borders by EU member states' armed forces and the Croatian Armed Forces participating in the EU's Rapid Deployment Capacity for 2025 and 2026**
- **Decision on assigning to duties within NATO's command structure, NATO force structure, and other national (multinational) commands for NATO-led operations and activities abroad**

The Croatian Parliament debated and voted on the above decisions on 6 December 2024. at its 4th session

- **Decision on participation of the Croatian Armed Forces in NATO Security Assistance and Training for Ukraine (NSATU)** – Croatian Parliament did not vote on the decision.

At the 6th session of the Defence Committee the Committee discussed and proposed adoption of:

- 2025 Republic of Croatia State Budget and 2026-2027 budget projections as well the 2025 State Budget Execution Act.
- Ministry of Interior Affairs reports the following. The war on the territory of the Republic of Croatia left behind large quantities of weapons in the areas of military activity, as well as in the illegal possession of citizens. Such easy and uncontrolled availability of weapons at that time increased the risk of minor misdemeanours developing into more serious forms of offences with serious consequences. Accordingly, on 1 September 2007, the Ministry of the Interior launched a prevention campaign called “Less Weapons, Less Tragedies”. While the main objective of the campaign is to encourage citizens to voluntarily surrender illegal weapons without sanctions, it also aims to reduce the availability of weapons, prevent their misuse and

the misuse of explosive substances and other explosive means, and to raise public awareness of the dangers of firearms in the hands of non-professionals.

A prerequisite for the launch of the campaign was the adoption of the provision of Article 79(5) of the Acquisition and Possession of Weapons Act (OG 94/18, 42/20, 114/22), which stipulates that owners of illegal weapons will not be punished if they voluntarily hand them over to the police before the police take any action. The same article also stipulates that citizens illegally in possession of category A, B and C weapons are obliged to report the possession of such weapons to the police with a view to their surrender or deactivation.

As part of the campaign, the citizens had from 1st September 2007 to 31st December 2024 to hand over to the police the following:

- 355,317 pieces of prohibited firearms of category A,
- 11,244 pieces of permitted types of weapons of category B in illegal possession,
- 6,477,709 pieces of various kinds of ammunition, and
- 6399,48 kilograms of explosives.

The Acquisition and Possession of Weapons Act defines categories of weapons, procedures for the acquisition, registration and collection of weapons by citizens, extension of the validity of weapons documents, mode of handling weapons and ammunition, replenishment of ammunition for personal needs, procedure in case of death of weapons owners, procedure for confiscation of weapons, ammunition and weapons documents, and procedure for bringing weapons into and out of the Republic of Croatia.

Article 7(1) of the Acquisition and Possession of Weapons Act, lists the following as weapons of category A – prohibited weapons:

1. explosive military missiles and launchers;
2. automatic firearms;
3. disguised or hidden weapons;
4. ammunition with penetrating, explosive or incendiary projectiles, and the projectiles for such ammunition;
5. pistol and revolver ammunition with expanding projectiles and the projectiles for such ammunition, except in the case of weapons for hunting or for target shooting, for persons entitled to use them;
6. automatic firearms which have been converted into semi-automatic firearms,
7. any of the following centre-fire semi-automatic firearms:
 - a) short firearms which allow the firing of more than 21 rounds without reloading, if a loading device with a capacity exceeding 20 rounds is part of that firearm, or a detachable loading device with a capacity exceeding 20 rounds is inserted into it;
 - b) long firearms which allow the firing of more than 11 rounds without reloading, if a loading device with a capacity exceeding 10 rounds is part of that firearm or a detachable loading device with a capacity exceeding 10 rounds is inserted into it;
8. semi-automatic long firearms, that is to say firearms that are originally intended to be fired from the shoulder, that can be reduced to a length of less than 60 cm without losing functionality by means of a folding or telescoping stock or by a stock that can be removed without using tools;
9. military and police weapons;
10. explosive weapons and parts thereof;
11. weapons made or converted without authorization;

12. all types of weapons with integrated silencers, weapon silencers and parts for silencers;
13. any firearm in this category that has been converted to firing blanks, irritants, other active substances or pyrotechnic rounds, or into a salute or acoustic weapon.

Article 7(2) of the Acquisition and Possession of Weapons Act, lists the following as the category B – firearms subject to authorisation:

1. repeating short firearms;
2. single-shot short firearms with centre-fire percussion;
3. single-shot short firearms with rimfire percussion whose overall length is less than 28 cm;
4. semi-automatic long firearms whose loading device and chamber can together hold more than three rounds for firearms with rimfire percussion and more than three but fewer than 12 rounds for firearms with centre-fire percussion;
5. semi-automatic short firearms other than those listed in paragraph 1(7)(a) of this Article;
6. semi-automatic long firearms listed in paragraph 1(7)(b) of this Article whose loading device and chamber cannot together hold more than three rounds, where the loading device is detachable or where it is not certain that the weapon cannot be converted, with ordinary tools, into a weapon whose loading device and chamber can together hold more than three rounds;
7. repeating and semi-automatic long firearms with smooth-bore barrels not exceeding 60 cm in length;
8. semi-automatic firearms for civilian use which resemble weapons with automatic mechanisms other than those listed in paragraph 1 points 6, 7 or 8 of this Article;
9. repeating long firearms;
10. long Firearms with single-shot rifled barrels;
11. semi-automatic long firearms other than those listed in category A;
12. single-shot short firearms with rimfire percussion whose overall length is not less than 28 cm;
13. single-shot long firearms with smooth-bore barrels placed on the market on or after 14 September 2018;
14. single-shot long firearms with a combination of smoothbore and rifled barrels;
15. semi-automatic gas firearms that can be easily converted;
16. any firearm in this category that has been converted to firing blanks, irritants, other active substances or pyrotechnic rounds or into a salute or acoustic weapon.

Methods of disposing of confiscated and surrendered weapons and ammunition are regulated by the Ordinance on the methods of disposing of weapons and ammunition confiscated in the course of administrative, infringement and criminal proceedings and weapons surrendered to the Ministry of the Interior, as well as on the way of functioning of the commission deciding on such weapons (OG 149/14).

After examining the weapons, the commission decides that the weapon may be:

- taken over in the armoury of the Ministry of the Interior if it meets the prescribed tactical and technical requirements for integration into the official Ministry of the Interior armoury system,
- handed over to the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Justice or other national authority,

- sold through an authorised arms dealer in a procedure conducted by the organisational unit of the Ministry of the Interior responsible for procurement,
- an improvised or unusable weapon or its parts can be completely destroyed,
- handed over to the collection of the Ministry of the Interior if it is of criminal, structural or technical interest,
- donated to one of the Croatian museums authorised to collect antique weapons if it has historical, artistic or structural value,
- handed over to the Ministry of the Interior for rental to film, television or theatre companies.

The commission keeps a record of the examination of weapons. It is mandatory that the records contain, in addition to the information on the weapon, the decision of the commission on the possible manner of disposal of the weapon.

2.3. What are the roles and missions of military, paramilitary and security forces, and how does your State control that such forces act solely within the constitutional framework?

Article 7 paragraphs 1 and 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 85/2010 – consolidated text and 5/2014) state that:

“The Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia shall protect its sovereignty and independence and defend its territorial integrity.

Under the circumstances specified in Articles 17 and 101 of the Constitution, the Armed Forces may, if so necessitated by the nature of a threat, be deployed to assist the police and other state bodies.”

Article 39, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017-Decision of the Constitutional Court, 30/2018, 70/2019 and 155/2023) further define the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia:

“(1) The Armed Forces protect the sovereignty and independence of the Republic of Croatia and protect its territorial integrity.

(2) The Armed Forces may, subject to the conditions stipulated in the Constitution, international treaties and law:

- participate in peace support operations, crisis response operations, humanitarian operations and other activities abroad;
- render assistance in the defence of allied states in the case of armed attack against one or more of them in accordance with concluded international treaties;
- participate in joint efforts of the European Union, in the spirit of solidarity, should any member state be exposed to a terrorist attack or had been the victim of a natural or by human activity provoked disaster;
- be used as an assistance to the institutions of civil authorities, organizations and services designated for protection and rescue, and to the population in the case of disasters and major accidents, search and rescue, transport of injured or sick persons, including emergency medical flights;

- secure real estate, owned by the Republic of Croatia handled by the Office of the President of the Republic of Croatia and used in the function of the President of the Republic.

Article 46 Paragraph 1 of the Defence Act regulates the use of the Armed Forces, as follows:

“The Croatian Parliament, the President of the Republic, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Defence decide on the use of the Armed Forces in accordance with the Constitution and this Act.”

In addition to regulating the use of Armed Forces in a state of war and state of imminent threat, an entire Section of the Defence Act is dedicated to crossing the state border and operations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia outside the territory of the Republic of Croatia.

Article 49 of the Defence Act regulates the decision making process concerning deployment and operations of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia outside the territory of the Republic of Croatia, as follows:

“(1) The Armed Forces may cross the borders of the Republic of Croatia and operate across its borders pursuant to a decision of the Croatian Parliament proposed by the Government with the prior consent of the President of the Republic.

(2) Based on a decision of the Croatian Parliament referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article, the President of the Republic of Croatia shall order the use of the Armed Forces.”

The provisions of the Defence Act regulate the use of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia for the following purposes:

- in providing assistance in defence of allies (Article 51);
- in providing assistance in defence of the Member States of the European Union (Article 52);
- in accordance with the European Union solidarity clause (Article 53);
- in building international security (Article 54);
- in providing international humanitarian assistance (Article 56).

In addition to the above, in accordance with Article 61, paragraph (1), and Article 62, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Defence Act, the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia may be used as follows:

“The Armed Forces may be used as assistance in fire-fighting protection and search and rescue, if the bodies responsible for fire-fighting protection and the bodies responsible for search and rescue do not have adequate forces and capacity, as well as for the transport of injured or sick persons, including emergency medical flights.

The Armed Forces may be used as assistance in the supervision and protection of the rights and interests of the Republic of Croatia at sea.

The use of the Armed Forces referred to in paragraph (1) of this Article is regulated by the Act on the Coastal Guard of the Republic of Croatia.”

3. Procedures related to different forces personnel

3.1. What kind of procedures for recruitment and call-up of personnel for service in your military, paramilitary and internal security forces does your State have?

The obligation to serve in the military is the duty to undergo training, preparations and to take part in defence in an organized manner, by joining the Armed Forces, of all able-bodied citizens of the Republic of Croatia. The military obligation occurs in the calendar year in which a citizen of the Republic of Croatia turns 18 years of age. The military obligation of a citizen of the Republic of Croatia terminates: at the end of the calendar year in which a male citizen turns 55 years of age, or in the case of female citizens 50 years of age; if he or she is declared unable to do military service; and further in the event a citizen is released from Croatian citizenship. Exceptionally, the military obligation terminates for senior officers, including generals/admirals, at the end of the calendar year in which they turn 60 years of age, while for those holding a Doctor of Medicine degree their obligation terminates at 65 years of age, and 62 years of age for military specialists (in accordance with amended Article 205 of the Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, No. 125/2019).

The military obligation consists of the recruitment obligation, the obligation to serve in the military or take part in civilian service and to serve in the reserves of the Armed Forces. Women who fall under military obligation are not subject to the recruitment obligation and the obligation to serve in the military. Men under military obligation are subject to the recruitment obligation and the obligation to serve in the military or civilian service whenever an obligation is in force to serve in the military.

When there is no such obligation in force, men under military obligation are still subject to inclusion in military records and have obligation to serve in the reserves of the Armed forces. During their recruitment, conscripts are subject to inclusion in military records, medical and other examinations and psychological examination, recruitment, military service or civilian service, and response to a general or individual call-up. Inclusion in military records is performed for citizens of the Republic of Croatia in the calendar year in which they turn 18 years of age. Medical and other examinations and psychological examinations of those under military obligation are carried out in medical institutions or in the competent organizational unit of the Ministry of Defence.

At the recruitment, the person under military obligation receives a grade of his capacity for military service and is assigned a branch or profession for serving in the military. Recruitment is carried out by recruitment commissions established by the Minister of Defence. Serving the military service or civilian service is compulsory by force of law in the case of an immediate threat or war.

The Croatian Parliament may issue a decision stipulating the obligation to serve in the military or to perform civilian service. If the state authorities are prevented from regularly performing their duties prescribed by law, the President of the Republic may issue a regulation with legal force concerning the obligation to serve in the military or civilian service at the proposal of the Prime Minister and with his co-signature. The upper age limit of those under military obligation subject to military service or to take part in civilian service is 27 years of age. Serving in the military lasts six months. The time and the manner of assigning conscripts to serve in the military and their release from the Armed Forces are set out by the Minister of Defence in a decision, at the proposal of the head of the General Staff. As of 2008, in the Republic of Croatia conscripts have not been assigned to serve in the military.

3.2. What kind of exemptions or alternatives to military service does your State have?

The Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019 and 155/2023), in its Article 23, paragraphs 1 and 2 regulates the following:

“Military service or civil service is compulsory by force of law in the cases of imminent threat or state of war.

The Croatian Parliament may adopt a decision on the obligation of military service or civil service.”

In accordance with Article 5, paragraph 2, subparagraph 6 of the Defence Act: “Croatian Parliament shall adopt a decision not to call conscripts for mandatory military service.” In accordance with Article 8 paragraph (1), subparagraph 5 of the Defence Act, this decision is proposed by the Government of the Republic of Croatia.

In the Republic of Croatia conscientious objection is allowed and regulated by Article 24 of the Defence Act, as follows:

“(1) Conscientious objection is allowed to those persons who for their religious or moral beliefs are not willing to participate in the performance of military duties in the Armed Forces.

(2) A request for civil service for reasons of conscientious objection may be submitted by a conscript upon registration in military records until the end of the military obligation.

(3) A conscript who invoke conscientious objection may be granted civil service.

(4) The obligation to participate in the civil service shall be regulated by a separate act.”

The citizens of the Republic of Croatia who desire so may enlist for voluntary military service, in accordance with the Article 26 of the Defence Act, which, inter alia, regulates:

(1) Voluntary military training is carried out whenever the mandatory military service is not in force in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

(2) The citizens of the Republic of Croatia who report to the competent organisational unit of the Ministry of Defence may be assigned to voluntary military training until the last day of the calendar year in which they turn 30 years of age.

(3) As an exception to paragraph 2 of this Article, the citizens of the Republic of Croatia over the age of 30 may also be referred to voluntary military training if they are candidates for contract reservists, for military specialists or for late admission to active military service.

(4) Women may also be assigned to voluntary military training in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

Article 122 of the Defence Act regulates the following:

“During the time while, in accordance with the provisions of this Act, the conscripts are not called for mandatory military service, there is no their obligation either to participate in civil service in accordance with the provisions of a separate act.”

3.3 What are the legal and administrative procedures to protect the rights of all forces personnel as well as conscripts?

The rights of the Armed Forces personnel are regulated by Article 113 paragraphs 1, 4 and 5 of the Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019 and 155/2023) as follows:

“(1) To service in the Ministry of Defence shall be assigned civil servants and employees and active duty military personnel to positions and posts as established by the Ordinance on Internal Order of the Ministry of Defence.

(4) To service in the Armed Forces shall be assigned active duty military personnel and civil servants and employees, to organizational posts as established by the documents on organization of the headquarters, commands, units and institutions of the Armed Forces.

(5) The rights, obligations and responsibilities of members of the Armed Forces shall be regulated by a separate Act.”

This separate Act is the Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 50/2016, 30/2018, 125/2019, 155/2023, 158/2023 and 14/2024).

In accordance with Article 214, paragraph 1 of the Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia:

“Decision-making on admission to service, termination of service, status in service and the rights and obligations for which the provisions of this Act stipulate adoption of a decision, are administrative matters”.

Pursuant to this provision, the Act on General Administrative Procedure (Official Gazette, No. 47/2009 and 110/2021) and the Act on Administrative Disputes (Official Gazette, No. 36/2024) apply on the above mentioned decisions, including on appeal procedures and administrative disputes before the administrative courts of the Republic of Croatia which are initiated by the injured party.

4. Implementation of other political norms, principles, decisions and international humanitarian law

4.1 How does your State ensure that international humanitarian law and law of war are made widely available, e.g., through military training programmes and regulations?

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) and Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) are widely available due to the fact that first sentence in Article 141 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 85/2010 – consolidated text and 5/2014) stipulates the following:

“International treaties which have been concluded and ratified in accordance with the Constitution, which have been published and which have entered into force, shall be a component of the domestic legal order of the Republic of Croatia and shall have primacy over domestic law.”

Accordingly, this procedure also applies to international conventions in the field of IHL/LOAC. These international conventions are published in the “Official Gazette – International Treaties”, and so made available in a printed version (in the English and Croatian language), as well as on its web site.

Each member of the Armed Forces, in addition to familiarization with national laws and regulations, acquires a basic knowledge of IHL/LOAC during regular education and training activities provided at the various stages of Croatian military service. Trainees are: soldiers, NCOs, officers, participants in international activities (NATO/PfP, UN, and EU) and legal advisers. Methods of education are: education in military educational institutions, seminars, practical training and exercises, and written documentation (manuals, handouts etc.).

The education curricula for officers of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia include topics relating to the treatment of civilians in armed conflicts. Within this education the following content is covered:

- General principles and starting points of the Geneva and The Hague conventions;
- Basic prohibitions concerning the objectives, weapons and tactics of the Armed Forces;
- Appropriate treatment of prisoners of war and other persons of protected categories.

The Croatian peacekeeping forces undergo predeployment training, which reflects Croatia’s commitment to deploy qualified personnel to peacekeeping/peace support operations, missions and activities abroad. The civil rights and special needs of persons as individuals or representatives of groups in armed conflicts are an integral part of the training programme conducted by the International Military Operations Centre of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (IMOC). The tasks of the IMOC include:

- Training of military and civilian personnel to be deployed as participants in international activities;
- Preparation, training, exercises, evaluations, etc., of individuals/troops to be deployed as participants in international activities;
- Peacekeeping/peace support operations, missions and activities joint exercises in NATO/PfP, humanitarian aid operations, natural disasters, etc.;
- Cooperation with similar training centres in other countries.

The Croatian state bodies and administration, as well as professional groups working with and for peacekeeping/peace support operations, joint exercises of NATO/PfP and humanitarian aid operations (including NGOs) undergo specific training according to their role in the national implementation of International Humanitarian Law.

4.2. What has been done to ensure that armed forces personnel are aware of being individually accountable under national and international law for their actions?

During their regular national military training, as well as training prior to their deployment to participate in an international activity, each member of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia becomes better familiarised with the relevant national laws and regulations and acquire a basic education in International Humanitarian Law (IHL)/Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC), Code of Conduct and Rules of Engagement.

The aforementioned includes the relevant provisions of the Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019, and 155/2023) and Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 50/2016, 39/2018, 125/2019, 155/2023, 158/2023 and 14/2024) that regulate individual accountability under national and international law for their actions.

The Defence Act in Article 40 paragraphs 1 and 2 stipulates:

"(1) Members of the Armed Forces are obliged to, always and in all circumstances, in combat and non-combat actions comply with the rules of the Law of Armed Conflict and International Humanitarian Law.

(2) A member of the Armed Forces is obliged to refuse an order by which is required to act contrary to the provisions of the Constitution and the rules of the Law of Armed Conflict and International Humanitarian Law."

The Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia in Article 167 stipulatesthat

"While participating in a peace support operation, crisis response operation, humanitarian operation and other activity abroad, persons sent to such activities are, *inter alia*, obliged to: worthily represent the Republic of Croatia, act in accordance with the Constitution and the laws of the Republic of Croatia, respect the decisions, orders and tasks as well as the principles and rules of the Law of Armed Conflict and International Humanitarian Law, and specific rules of the concrete operation or other activity in which they are participating, respect military discipline and respect the cultural and religious practices and other values of the host country."

Criminal Code (Official Gazette No. 125/2011, 144/2012, 56/2015, 61/2015, 101/2017, 118/2018, 126/2019, 84/2021, 114/2022,114/2023 and 36/2023) in its Chapter IX specifically regulates criminal offenses against humanity and human dignity to include offenses against the values protected under international law.

The Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia in Article 170, paragraphs 1 and 2 and Article 172, paragraphs 1 and 2 stipulates:

"(1) Members of the Armed Forces are responsible for criminal offenses under the provisions of the Criminal Code and other laws.

(2) Criminal liability does not exclude disciplinary liability if the act that is the subject of a criminal procedure represents a breach of military discipline.

(1) Members of the Armed Forces are responsible for misdemeanours pursuant to the general regulations on misdemeanours.

(2) Misdemeanour liability does not exclude the disciplinary liability if act which is the subject of a misdemeanour procedure represents a breach of military discipline."

4.3. How does your State ensure that armed forces are not used to limit the peaceful and lawful exercise of human and civil rights by persons as individuals or as representatives of groups nor to deprive them of national, religious, cultural, linguistic or ethnic identity?

Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, during their deployment to all international activities, are obliged to act in accordance with the above mentioned Article 167 of the Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 50/2016, 30/2018, 125/2019, 155/2023, 158/2023 and 14/2024).

On the national territory of the Republic of Croatia the Armed Forces may be used, in accordance with Article 39 paragraph 2 of the Defence Act (Official Gazette No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 27/2016, 110/2017, 30/2018, 70/2019 and 155/2023), and subject to the conditions stipulated by the Constitution and law, for assistance to the institutions of civil authorities, organizations and services designated for protection and rescue, and to the population in cases of disasters and major accidents, search and rescue, and transport of injured or sick persons, including medical flights.

Pursuant to Article 60 of the Defence Act, while providing assistance in situations of disasters and major accidents, Armed Forces coordinate their actions in accordance with the

plans, rules and procedures established by the central state administration body responsible for the protection and rescue, as Armed Forces do not act independently in those activities.

4.4 What has been done to provide for the individual service member's exercise of his or her civil rights and how does your State ensure that the country's armed forces are politically neutral?

Article 81 indent 7 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 85/2010 – consolidated text and 5/2014) provides, as follows:

“The Croatian Parliament shall exercise civilian oversight of the Armed Forces and security services of the Republic of Croatia. “

Article 93 paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia regulate the issue of protection of civil rights including those of the individual service members, as follows:

“(1) The Ombudsman shall be a commissioner of the Croatian Parliament responsible for the promotion and protection of human rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution, laws and international legal instruments on human rights and freedoms ratified by the Republic of Croatia.

(2) Everyone may lodge a complaint to the Ombudsman if he/she deems that his/her constitutional or legal rights have been threatened or violated as a result of any illegal or irregular act by state bodies, local and regional self-government bodies and bodies vested with public authority.”

Article 1 paragraph 1 of the Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette, No. 73/2013, 75/2015, 50/2016, 30/2018, 125/2019, 155/2023, 158/2023 and 14/2024) defines the legal framework for service in the Armed Forces, as follows:

“This Act primarily regulates service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, admission, appointment to organisational posts, ranks and promotions in ranks, obligations, rights and responsibilities, separation and termination of service, as well as other matters related to members of the Armed Forces.”

The Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia in Article 2 titled “Gender Equality” regulates, as follows:

“Terms in this Act that have gender meaning, and regardless of whether they are used in the masculine or feminine gender, apply equally to male and female gender.”

Political neutrality of the Armed Forces is ensured by the provisions of Article 15 paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia:

“(3) Military personnel, civil servants and employees are not permitted to be politically active in the Armed Forces.

(4) Active duty military personnel are not permitted to have membership in political parties and to stand as candidates for representative bodies of citizens, representative bodies of local and regional self-government and the Croatian Parliament.”

Article 16 paragraphs 1 and 3 of the Act on Service in the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia regulate the issue of making public statements, as follows:

“(1) To members of the Armed Forces public statements in connection with the state of the Armed Forces and relations in the Armed Forces are prohibited without the approval of the minister of defence or a person authorized by him.

(3) The members of the Armed Forces are allowed to make statements referred to in paragraph 1 of this Article in peace support operations, crisis response operations, humanitarian operations and other activities abroad, if that is allowed by the rules in the international organisation within which these activities take place.”

4.5. How does your State ensure that its defence policy and doctrine are consistent with international law?

Croatian legislation, including defence policy and doctrine documents, is consistent with international law, as a result of their regular and thorough review with regard to domestic constitutional and legal provisions, as well as with regard to compliance with international legal obligations of the Republic of Croatia.

As a liable member of the international community, the Republic of Croatia highly appreciates the role of the international legal norms in regulating relations among states and other subjects of the international law. This is reflected in the first sentence of Article 141 of the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia (Official Gazette No. 85/2010 – consolidated text and 5/2014) that stipulates the following:

“International treaties which have been concluded and ratified in accordance with the Constitution, which have been published and which have entered into force, shall be a component of the domestic legal order of the Republic of Croatia and shall have primacy over domestic law.”

During the drafting and adoption of defence policy documents (and all other policy and legal documents), transparent and multi-step procedures of adoption and discussions are applied, through which harmonization with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia is assured, as well as harmonization with domestic legal framework and provisions of the international law.

The key role in above mentioned is given to the Legislation Office of the Government of the Republic of Croatia, a national expert body which gives opinion on the harmonization of the proposed laws and other acts by the Government with the Constitution of the Republic of Croatia and legal order of the Republic of Croatia. The Legislation Office also prepares and draws drafts of the documents that are issued by the Government of the Republic of Croatia and the Croatian Parliament.

SECTION III: PUBLIC ACCESS AND CONTACT INFORMATION

1. Public access

1.1 How is the public informed about the provisions of the Code of Conduct?

Relevant links to the OSCE are available on the website of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, www.mvep.gov.hr. The representatives of the relevant state authorities participate and support all activities related to the promotion and analysis of the Code of Conduct within the academic and other circles, in particular through the activities of the Centre on Security Cooperation, RACVIAC.

Ministry of Defence uses a proactive approach working with the media, taking advantage of all modern communication tools. If necessary, the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces report on the provisions of the Code of Conduct through its website, and the Code itself is available to the public through a link at www.morh.hr.

Publicly available information about the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia can be accessed through the website at www.morh.hr and www.osrh.hr (in Croatian and English), and in the magazine "Hrvatski Vojnik" in Croatian (bi-weekly).

It is necessary to point out that in accordance with the Act on the Right of Access to Information, citizens are entitled to request access to information and, provided that the criteria set out in law are met, such information should be provided.

The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces regularly organize exhibitions of armament and technology in various parts of the Republic of Croatia, and "Open Days", when citizens can visit the barracks. In the course of promoting the military profession, members of the AFRC visit schools and inform secondary school students about the AFRC. In cooperation with other organizations, the scientific, academic, professional public and non-governmental organizations, they organize seminars, workshops and presentations on various topics in the field of defence.

The Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia regularly report to the media about their activities.

1.2 What additional information related to the Code of Conduct, e.g., replies to the Questionnaire on the Code of Conduct, is made publicly available in your State?

This information is publicly available through the OSCE link. If necessary, the Ministry of Defence and the Armed Forces report on the provisions of the Code of Conduct through its website.

1.3 How does your State ensure public access to information related to your State's armed forces?

-The Act on the Right of Access to Information regulates the citizens right of access to information.

- The Data Secrecy Act defines classified and unclassified data and classification and declassification procedures, as well as protection and supervision over the implementation of this Act.

- The Personal Data Protection Act regulates the citizens' right to personal data protection.

The Ministry of Defence reports to the Parliament about its work regularly and in accordance with the regulations. The Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia publishes its annual plan of work. The budget of the Republic of Croatia defines the amount of funds intended for the field of defence. As a part of the State Budget, the Ministry of Defence budget is publicly available in the Official Gazette and at the Ministry of Defence website. The Ministry of Defence annual financial statements and the Plan of procurement are publicly available at the website www.morh.hr.

The Ministry of Defence regularly organizes Open Days, so that citizens might visit barracks.

During 2023 Ministry of Defence published more than 842 communications, news, announcements and notifications. The Ministry of Defence ensures the functioning of the following websites: www.morh.hr, www.osrh.hr, www.hrvatski-vojn timer.hr, www.vojnipilot.hr and postanivojnik.hr.

A proactive approach to the media is manifested in everyday work.

The Public Relations and Publishing Department of the Ministry of Defence organises media events and activities and issues a magazine "Croatian Soldier". Along with written materials, the Ministry of Defence also provides the public with photographs, as well as audio and video materials. The Ministry of Defence participates in various workshops and seminars organized by the academic community and non-governmental organizations. The Public Relations Strategy of the Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Croatia is in line with NATO's policy (MC 0457/ 3 NATO Military Policy on Public Affairs).

2. Contact information

2.1 Provide information on the national point of contact for the implementation of the Code of Conduct.

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OF THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA

DG FOR MULTILATERAL AND GLOBAL AFFAIRS

Trg N.Š. Zrinskog 7-8, 10000 Zagreb

Phone: 385 1 4569 952, 385 1 4569 839

Fax: 385 1 4597 416

e-mail: multilaterala@mvep.hr

ATTACHMENT - LIST OF INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS AND ARRANGEMENTS

Please indicate if your State is party to the following universal and regional legal instruments relevant to preventing and combating terrorism and related co-operation in criminal matters. If your State is not a party to a treaty, but considers becoming a party, kindly indicate at which stage is such consideration (e.g., undergoing inter-ministerial co-ordination, approved by government and sent to parliament, approved by parliament and awaiting enactment by president, etc.) Name of the treaty	Party by: ratification P(R) , accession P(a) , succession P(s) , acceptance P(A) , approval P(AA) , or Not party	Law and date of ratification, accession, succession, acceptance, or approval
Universal legal instruments		
1.	Convention on Offences and Certain Other Acts Committed on Board Aircraft (1963)	
2.	Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft (1970)	
3.	Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation (1971)	
4.	Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes Against Internationally Protected Persons (1973)	
5.	International Convention against the Taking of Hostages (1979)	
6.	Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (1979)	

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE OSCE CODE OF CONDUCT WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY

I. Prevention

1. Measures to increase armed forces personnel understanding of the special needs and contributions of women in conflict

- Inclusion of specific matters related to the protection of women's and girl's rights in the basic education of armed forces:

In terms of the CAF education and training system, gender perspective related topics with special emphasis on UNSCR 1325 (2000) and related Resolutions on Women, Peace and Security (WPS) have been integrated into programmes at Various levels of military education conducted at the Croatian Defence Academy for officers and NCOs.

NO.	TRAINING/ EDUCATION PROVIDED	SHORT DESCRIPTION/ MAIN TOPICS	TARGET AUDIENCE
1.	Basic Officer Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Application of a system of equal opportunities - Gender perspective in the armed forces - Implementation of UNSCR 2325 on Women, Peace and Security and related resolutions 	First level military officers education – students of the Basic Officer School
2.	Advanced Officer Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender equality in the armed forces 	Second level military officers education – students of the Advanced Officer School
3.	Command and Staff Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender equality and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions - Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions in CAF - Contribution and role of women (officers and NCO's) in contemporary peacekeeping/peace support operations 	Third level military officers education – students of the Command and Staff College

4.	Functional Area Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions in CAF - Active participation of women in armed forces and peacekeeping/peace support operations - Case studies and debate concerning the national implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions 	Third level military officers education – students of Functional Area Education
5.	1 st NCO Duty Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equal opportunities programme - Core NCO values - Role of NCO's in support of equal opportunities and preventing/combating discrimination and harassment - Human trafficking - UN Convention 55/25 - Human security - Gender equality - UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions 	First level of NCO's military education - student soldiers and NCOs
6.	Basic NCO Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender equality - UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions 	Second level of NCO military education – students of the Basic NCO School
7.	Advanced NCO Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions - Activities and actions at a national level in relation to UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions, goals and measures - Gender equality - Concept of gender equality, stereotypes and prejudices - Fundamental and national documents promoting gender equality - Activities promoting gender equality 	Third level of NCO military education – students of the Advanced NCO School
8.	Higher NCO Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Gender quality and the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions - Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions in CAF- Contribution and role of women – officers and NCO's in peacekeeping/peace support operations - The contemporary soldier and ethics - The soldier as a moral subject/object - Freedom of action and decision-making - Attitudes, prejudices and discrimination 	Fourth level of NCO military education – Senior NCO students of the NCO Academy

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formation and components of attitudes - Correlations between attitudes and behaviours - Prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination - Gender-based discrimination 	
9.	NCO Military Specialists Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Equal opportunities programme - Fundamental values of an NCO - Role of NCO's in support of equal opportunities, preventing/combating discrimination and harassment 	NCO's and civil servants and employees of CAF and persons from the labour market
10.	International Command Senior Enlisted Leaders Course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNSCR 1325 (2000) on WPS and related Resolutions - NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 - Contributing to operational effectiveness by integrating gender perspectives at strategic, operational and tactical levels - Impact of women, men, boys and girls on military tasks and functions - Application of gender perspectives in different military missions/operations related scenarios - Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 	Senior NCOs

- Inclusion of specific matters related to the protection of women's and girl's rights in the pre-deployment training for international peacekeeping missions:

Training for international military operations includes fields such as international human rights law (HR); international humanitarian law (IHL)/law of armed conflict (LOAC), ethical and cultural diversity, code of conduct, human trafficking, gender perspective, gender equality, child protection, sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA), etc.

Gender-related topics are included in the pre-deployment training of units and individuals for NATO, EU and UN peacekeeping/peace support operations and activities conducted by the International Military Operations Centre of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia, and thus are incorporated in the programmes of courses, such as: "UN Protection of Civilians in PSO Course"; "UN Military Observers Course"; "UN Staff Officers Course"; "NATO Staff Officer's Course"; and other (tailored) on demand courses. Noting that NATO's Joint Advanced Distance Learning course "ADL 169 - Gender Perspective in Military Operations" is a prerequisite for all participants deploying to peace support operations and missions.

The related topics are also included in the Gender Training of Trainers Course (GTOT) with the main focus on the implementation of UNSCR 1325 and related Resolutions on WPS in a military context and NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1, conducted once a year in concerted efforts by RACVIAC-Centre for Security Cooperation, Nordic Centre for Gender in Military Operations (NCGM - NATO Head) and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia (CAF).

NO.	TRAINING/ EDUCATION PROVIDED	SHORT DESCRIPTION/ MAIN TOPICS	TARGET AUDIENCE
1.	Women, Peace and Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNSCR 1325 - Legal aspects - UN SOPs (CPTMs) - Protection of children 	Participants of: <i>-UN Military Observers Course</i> <i>- UN Staff Officers Course</i> <i>- UN Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Course</i> <i>-Predeployment Training UN PKO's (UNMOGIP, MINURSO, UNIFIL)</i>
2.	Prevention and Response to Conflict Related Sexual Violence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Violence against women and children in conflict affected areast or other areas of crisis - UNSCR 1325 - Legal aspects - Scenario-based EX - UN SOPs (Core Pre-deployment Training Materials - CPTMs) 	Participants of: <i>- UN Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Course</i> <i>- UN Military Observers Course</i> <i>- UN Staff Officers Course</i>
3.	Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal aspects - UN SOPs (CPTMs) - Sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children in conflict affected areas perpetrated by military personnel in peacekeeping missions 	Participants of: <i>- UN Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Course</i> <i>- UN Military Observers Course</i> <i>- UN Staff Officers Course</i>
4.	Conduct and Discipline/Sexual Exploitation and Abuse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal aspects - Code of Conduct - UN SOPs (CPTMs) - Sexual exploitation and abuse of women and children in conflict-affected 	Participants of: <i>-Predeployment Training UN PKO's</i>

		areas	
5.	Child Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNSCR 1325 - Legal aspects - UN SOP (CPTM) - Protection of children 	<p>Participants of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>UN Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Course</i> -<i>UN Military Observers Course</i> -<i>UN Staff Officers Course</i>
6.	Gender perspectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - NATO gender perspectives - UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions - NATO Bi-SC Directive 40-1 	<p>Participants of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -<i>NATO Staff Officers Orientation Course</i> -<i>Tactical Civil Military Cooperation Course</i> -<i>NATO Mission in Kosovo (KFOR) Predeployment Training</i> -<i>NATO Mission Iraq and Operation Inherent Resolve (Kuwait) (NMI/OIR) Predeployment Training</i> -<i>NATO activity eVABG-HUN Predeployment training</i> -<i>NATO activity eVABG-BGR Predeployment Training</i> -<i>NATO activity eFPBG-POL Predeployment training</i> -<i>EUBG Predeployment training</i> - <i>Military Specialist Training (for active military personnel)</i>

7.	Protection of Civilians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UNSCR 1325 - Legal aspects - UN SOP (CPTM) - Protection of women and children against all forms of violence namely sexual and physical violence 	<p>Participants of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>UN Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Course</i> - <i>UN Military Observers Course</i> - <i>UN Staff Officers Course</i> - <i>NATO Staff Officers Orientation Course</i> - <i>Tactical Civil Military Cooperation Course</i>
8.	Human Rights	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Legal aspects - Applicability of human rights - Protection of human rights in areas of conflict 	<p>Participants of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>UN Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Course</i> - <i>UN Military Observers Course</i> - <i>UN Staff Officers Course</i>
9.	International Legal Framework – International Human Rights Law, International Humanitarian Law, Refugee Law, Rights of the Child	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General Declaration of Human Rights - International legal framework on human rights – foundational international instruments - International Humanitarian Law/Law on Armed Conflict - Rights of Refugees - International Criminal Court 	<p>Participants of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>UN Comprehensive Protection of Civilians Course</i> - <i>UN Military Observers Course</i> - <i>UN Staff Officers Course</i>
10.	International Humanitarian Law and Rules of Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Geneva and Hague Conventions - Principles of humanitarian law - Rules of engagement and the use of force 	<p>Participants of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>NATO Mission in Kosovo (KFOR) Predeployment Training</i> - <i>NATO Mission Iraq and Operation Inherent</i>

			<i>Resolve (Kuwait)</i> <i>(NMI/OIR) Predeployment Training</i> <i>-NATO activity eVABG-HUN Predeployment training</i> <i>-NATO activity eVABG-BGR Predeployment Training</i> <i>-NATO activity eFPBG-POL Predeployment training</i> <i>-EUBG Predeployment training</i>
11.	Cultural Differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Definition of differences - Importance of respect, acceptance and validation of foreign cultures 	Participants of: <i>-NATO Mission in Kosovo (KFOR) Predeployment Training</i> <i>-NATO Mission Iraq and Operation Inherent Resolve (Kuwait) (NMI/OIR) Predeployment Training</i> <i>-NATO activity eVABG-HUN Predeployment training</i> <i>-NATO activity eVABG-BGR Predeployment Training</i> <i>-NATO activity eFPBG-POL Predeployment training</i> <i>-EUBG Predeployment training</i> <i>-Predeployment Training UN PKO's</i>

12.	International Humanitarian Law in conflict affected areas	- Ensure compliance with humanitarian law, Geneva and Hague conventions	<i>- Leadership Development Training</i>
	Geneva Convention and Additional Protocols	- Supervise the treatment of prisoners at the place of arrest	

- Availability of plans to address and gather information from local women populations in areas at risk of conflicts:

Military members of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Croatia participate in international operations, missions and activities predominantly within larger (international) contingents and follow the standard operating procedures of the particular operation/mission to which they are deployed, since the Republic of Croatia does not conduct any operations/missions on its own.

- Inclusion of systematic gender analysis of areas at risk of conflicts, including gender disaggregated socio-economic indicators and power over resources and decision making:

See aforementioned data.

2. Measures to address the violation of the rights of women and girls, in line with international standards

- Number and percentage of military manuals, guidelines, national security policy frameworks, codes of conduct and standard operating procedures/protocols of national security forces that include measures to protect women's and girls' human rights:

In September 2013 the Ministry of Defence introduced a "Gender Mainstreaming Policy in the MOD and CAF". The Chief of the General Staff signed an order for the implementation of this document together with the "Action Plan for Promoting and Establishing Gender Equality in the MOD and CAF" (primarily based on the national policy for gender equality and NAP for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions), thereby assigning responsibilities in the CAF with a special focus on: increasing the number of lectures on international humanitarian law and human rights at all levels of military education and training, including pre-deployment for PSOs, with particular attention to gender-related topics on preventing violence and discrimination against women, lectures on UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions on WPS, investigation of reports on possible violations of gender equality, conflict-related gender-based violence against women and children.

II. Participation

1. Measures to increase the number of women in general and in decision-making positions in the Armed Forces and the Ministry of Defence

- Number and percentage of women applying to be part of the Armed Forces:

In 2024, 197 women (14%) applied for voluntary military training which was successfully completed by 78 women or 13,50%.

- Establishment of policies to attract female candidates (targeted campaigns, review of accession tests, etc.):

The requirements for admission into the Armed Forces are the same for men and women. The only evident difference in terms of the evaluation of results during the selection process is in the evaluation of functional-physical abilities; whereby there is a lower criterion for women.

The attraction of candidates is conducted through promotion in the media and direct presentation of the military vocation to target groups regardless of gender, i.e. campaigns are targeted to attract both males and females. Additionally, the current cadets of both sexes are engaged equally in campaigns that are conducted to promote the military vocation.

- Number and percentage of women in the Armed Forces disaggregated by rank:

Branch	Total %	Total No.	% of OF-6 and higher	No. of OF-6 and higher	% of OF-3 to OF-5	No. of OF-3 to OF-5	% of OF-1 to OF-2	No. of OF-1 to OF-2	% of OR-5 to OR-9	No. of OR-5 to OR-9	% of OR-1 to OR-4	No. of OR-1 to OR-4
Army	13.56	834	0	0	9.23	30	22.97	133	9.01	138	14.35	533
Air Force	11.27	148	0	0	13,81	33	18.02	40	9.78	53	7.12	22
Navy	11.93	159	0	0	18.04	35	28.07	48	6.79	34	9.03	42
Other	16.83	791	4.76	1	22.42	211	28.20	196	13.13	255	11.62	128
TOTAL	14.31	1992	3.85	1	18.19	309	25.01	412	10.63	480	12.97	725

- Number and percentage of discrimination and sexual harassment complaints that are referred, investigated and acted upon:

Complaints would be referred to the relevant bodies to address matters of discrimination, sexual harassment or the like, such as the Committee for Gender Equality or Committee for the Protection of the Dignity of Military Personnel. During 2024 no such complaints were received.

- Development of regular analysis of retention and promotion practices for men and women in the forces.

Retention and promotions are regulated by the law and apply equally to men and women.

The CAF apply retention policies in order to retain the services of personnel, both women and men alike, who possess scarce/key skills, such as: doctors, pilots, IT experts, university professors, etc. The retention policies include incentives such as: special bonuses

for personnel with scarce/key skills, accelerated career development, the provision of financial support for further technical training among other competitive benefits.

2. Measures to increase the number of women in peacekeeping forces.

- Number and percentage of women in peacekeeping forces disaggregated by rank:

Branch	Total %	Total No.	% of OF-6 and higher	No. of OF-6 and higher	% of OF-3 to OF-5	No. of OF-3 to OF-5	% of OF-1 to OF-2	No. of OF-1 to OF-2	% of OR-5 to OR-9	No. of OR-5 to OR-9	% of OR-1 to OR-4	No. of OR-1 to OR-4
Army	6.18	21	0.00	0	15.38	2	12.50	4	3.00	3	6.15	12
Air Force	6.67	4	0.00	0	7.69	1	14.29	2	3.33	1	0.00	0
Navy	10.13	8	0.00	0	7.69	1	46.67	7	0.00	0	0.00	0
Other	14.29	26	0.00	0	24.24	8	20.59	7	10.67	8	7.50	3
TOTAL	8.93	59	0.00	0	16.67	12	21.05	20	5.00	12	5.91	15

- Number and percentage of international missions where gender advisors were appointed:

In 2024, gender advisors were not appointed to international missions. Noting however that in 2014 a Gender Advisor was appointed to the Commander of ISAF/RSM in Afghanistan. Also, 10 female officers were deployed to ISAF/RSM in Afghanistan in the role of female training advisors to female members of the Afghan forces during CAF's contribution to the mission.

III Protection

1. Increased access to justice for women whose rights are violated.

- Number and percentage of reported cases of exploitation and abuse allegedly perpetrated by uniformed peacekeepers that are referred, investigated and acted upon:

There were no reported cases of uniformed peacekeepers perpetrating acts related to exploitation or abuse in 2024.

IV. Other information

1. Information on the development, implementation and evaluation of a National Action Plan (NAP) to implement UNSCR 1325.

A. Development

Regarding Women, Peace and Security Agenda (WPS), Croatia remains strongly committed to the effective implementation of the UNSCR 1325 and subsequent resolutions in the domestic context. Our continued engagement in the area of WPS rests on our firm belief that the full realization of women's rights is an indispensable basis for safeguarding basic human rights and achieving lasting peace and security. Therefore, we pay particular attention to ensure that guiding norms and principles of the WPS agenda are integrated into our national policies and practices.

Croatia has taken steps to integrate the gender perspective into the national foreign and security policy through its National Policy for the Promotion of Gender Equality and its second National Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 on WPS and related Resolutions (NAP) adopted in 2019.

The basic objective of the NAP is to support implementation of the UNSCR on WPS Agenda - at the national level through strengthening the gender awareness and integrating the gender perspective in the national security policy, as well as at the international level through Croatia's active involvement in international efforts on promoting women's role in the field of peace and security.

In the process of developing its NAP, Croatia closely followed the general principles and recommendations contained in the relevant UN documents related to the WPS Agenda. At a regional level, Croatia drew inspiration particularly from the *EU Comprehensive Approach to the EU implementation of the United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1325 and 1820 on Women, Peace and Security*, as well as from the *OSCE's 2004 Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality*.

While Croatia is in the process of developing a new National Policy for Gender Equality measures contained in the policy for the period 2011-2015 continue to be implemented. In 2019 the second NAP was developed. The current NAP II covers both our domestic and international activities by setting out and strengthening specific measures in areas including prevention and protection, as well as the representation of women in decision-making activities and processes concerning security and peace-building. The revision of the current NAP II is under review.

B. Implementation

The 2019 NAP (NAP II) follows the structure of NAP I covering the main relevant principles of UNSCR 1325, taking over its majority of objectives and measures set in the areas of prevention, participation and protection and post-conflict recovery, with the addition of monitoring and reporting. The new security risk management area introduces new goals and measures, while new measures have also been introduced to strengthen the areas of implementation and monitoring.

In the area of prevention, measures will be implemented aimed at strengthening gender perspective through: 1) documents, international activities and communicating with the public and 2) education and training programmes.

In the area of participation, work will continue on: 1) introducing gender balance in the activities of the security and defence sector and 2) increasing the representation of women in decision-making activities and processes concerning security and peace building.

In the area of protection and post-conflict recovery, the first objective is still: 1) implementation of the protection of the rights of women and girls – war victims in the Republic of Croatia with a view to their post-conflict recovery, with the measures themselves modified to a lesser extent. The other two objectives are focused on external action: 2) promotion of the protection of the rights of women and girls – victims of gender-based violence in the areas of armed conflicts and 3) orienting developmental cooperation towards protection and empowerment of women in accordance with the National Developmental Cooperation Strategy 2017-2021.

In consideration of responding to challenges such as climate changes, natural disasters, mass migrations and terrorism that the Republic of Croatia might face, NAP II contains a new chapter entitled Security Risk Management, introducing two new objectives: 1) gender-sensitive approach in managing security risks of natural and technological disasters and terrorism, and 2) promoting protection of women and girl refugees, asylum seekers and migrants, with measures elaborated within each of the two objectives.

In the area of implementation and monitoring, NAP II constitutes a separate chapter with two objectives: 1) improvement of cooperation in implementing UNSCRs on women, peace and security and 2) monitoring the implementation of UNSCRs. Both objectives are strengthened through additional measures, especially in relation to the local level of implementation and more consistent monitoring of measures within the framework of the Working Group, as well as regular reporting to the Government of the Republic of Croatia on the results.

For the implementation of the specific measures envisaged by the NAP, the following ministries and agencies, among other competent bodies, are responsible: Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice, Judicial Academy, Ministry of Science and Education, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Croatian War Veterans, Government's Office for Human Rights and Rights of National Minorities, Government Office for Gender Equality and the Office of the National Security Council. Alongside with the implementation of the measures within its area of responsibility, the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs has also the coordinative role regarding the overall implementation of the NAP. The majority of specific measures envisaged by NAP are suitable for implementation in cooperation with civil society organisations, and their involvement has been particularly encouraged

C. Evaluation

There is a monitoring, reporting and evaluation matrix included within the NAP, with all measures linked to a responsible facilitator, indicator and time-frame. Individual facilitators/responsible ministries tasked with implementing the NAP's measures are required to provide annual and ad hoc implementation reports to the MFA and the Gender Equality

Ombudsperson. Previously, the Working Group for drafting NAP was also meant to act as a supervisory mechanism and submit an annual report on the implementation of the NAP measures to the Governmental Human Rights Commission. However, the group was dismissed at the end of 2012 and the coordination of the NAP's implementation has become the responsibility of MFEA. On the other hand, the monitoring and evaluation become a part of annual report of the Gender Equality Ombudsperson to Parliament. An inter-ministerial working group has been formed, which is in charge to evaluate the 2019-2023 NAP II cycle and to prepare a new NAP (NAP III) for the next four year period.

2. Information on best practices and lessons learned.

The measures which have been implemented so far under the Croatian NAP significantly contributed to gender mainstreaming in general. One of the most important results of our first NAP cycle is more effective integration of gender perspective in our foreign and security policy and actions.

The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs has been implementing since 2013 its own action plan with special measures aimed to promote equal participation of women and men in our Foreign Service. Within the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, female diplomats occupy more than 50% of the decision-making positions. There is also higher representation of women than men in all diplomatic ranks except the two highest: the ministers plenipotentiary and ambassadors. There are currently 15 women among the heads of our diplomatic missions (27.7%) and 5 female ambassadors waiting to be posted abroad. There is also one female ambassador from Croatia among the heads of the EU delegation.

Under the NAP, The Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs has taken steps to integrate gender perspective and the promotion of gender equality in all its foreign policy activities, the policy of international development cooperation and relations with third countries.

We put special focus to countries facing conflicts and going through post-conflict democratic transition, such as Afghanistan, where we have focused on women's reproductive health (construction of the Midwife Training Centre in Mazar-e-Sharif) and women's economic empowerment (supporting the women start-up business in carpet weaving and photography).

As the only EU member state with recent war and post-conflict management experience Croatia knows from its own experience how war can affect women and girls as a civilian victims, but we are also well aware of women's significant role as combatants and peace builders. We are particularly interested in promoting Croatian experiences and lessons learnt about dealing with sexual violence in war and conflict in the region and globally.

One of the lessons Croatia has learned so far is that the enactment of NAP on 1325 should not be an aim in itself, but rather the beginning of a process aimed at effecting real and meaningful change. Women should be considered as active agents in security governance, conflict prevention and resolution and post-conflict recovery. Therefore, meaningful participation should be promoted not only as an objective, but also through the selection of adequate means for promoting participation by women. In this regard, incorporation and further operationalization of NAP objectives in other legislation and strategies, as well as further operationalization in NAP of other strategies and legislation could be recommended.

For example, Croatia harmonised Women, Peace and Security agenda with its National Policy on Gender Equality, as a basic strategic document which binds Croatia to integrate the gender dimension in all policy areas, including the promotion of international cooperation and gender equality outside Croatia.

Collaborative work on preparation and implementation of the NAP has improved coordination among our responsible ministries and helped them develop new capacities and a more comprehensive understanding of gender and security. Among main challenges we are facing are certainly budgetary constraints as well as lack of administrative capacities for better monitoring and evaluation.

– Any other relevant information.

Also related to Women, Peace and Security agenda, Croatia organized in September 2013 - during its Chairmanship of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission, and jointly with UN Women - the High-Level UNGA Event on “Women’s Economic Empowerment for Peacebuilding”. The Declaration adopted at this occasion renews commitment and sharpens global focus on women’s role as agents of positive change and transformation in the countries emerging from a conflict.