Madam President,

Croatia subscribes fully with the EU statement, and would like to make an intervention from the national position.

Croatia shares a strong support for the importance of the Protocol V as a crucial instrument for minimization of the danger and humanitarian post-conflict impact on civilians caused by explosive remnants of war (ERW). We believe that common efforts in order to ensure the ban or limitations on the use of different types of inhumane weapons and efforts by States to ratify and subsequently universalize this Protocol must be continued.

Madam President,

Aware of the importance of a comprehensive approach to the ERW problems, Croatia is making significant efforts to provide support for mine action and integrated support to mine victims through various projects both on local and national level. Activities regarding the findings and clearance of unexploded ordnance (UXO), disabling and destruction of all types of UXO and mine risk education (MRE) events for a wide range of audiences (mainly school children), are all being continuously conducted. In order to make the protection of Croatian citizens as effective as possible, at the beginning of this year we have unified all field services related to explosive remnants of war under the Civil Protection Directorate of the Ministry of Interior.

Through 92 mine and UXO clearance projects in 2018, ERW threat has been removed from an area that amounts to 56 km². The largest percentage of cleared area included extremely challenging terrain such as forest areas, swamp and rocky soils.

Furthermore, Croatia has highly developed legal framework relating to the persons with disabilities in realizing their legitimate rights and status. There are four basic forms of mine victim assistance in which ministries, institutions, non-governmental sector, a number of organizations and individual initiatives take part in, such as medical care, physical rehabilitation, psychological help and social reintegration and professional and economic rehabilitation.

For example, psychosocial interdisciplinary centers are available in all 21 counties with four being regional centers for psychological services that provide psychotherapeutic services, with the main center in the capital Zagreb.

Within the framework of the Swiss Croatian Cooperation Programme, the project “Demining and socio-economic integration” is being implemented. The project includes demining of the protected forest area and mine victim assistance in terms of their successful integration.
Also, we are continuing with the activities of mine risk education for different interested groups (e.g. hunters, foresters, mountaineers etc.) and at the same time Croatian mine action experts are raising the awareness of civilian population on potential ERW risks through the continuous presence in the public media.

During 2018, CROMAC (Croatian Mine Action Center) has further developed a Web Application named MINE.info which can be downloaded onto smartphones and accessed for free.

All these efforts have indeed yielded results, because Croatia has succeeded in reducing the number of casualties caused by ERW and in the last two years, we have not had a single mine/UXO/ERW/-related incident. We therefore strongly recommend that all High Contracting Parties affected by similar problems make additional efforts in conducting MRE projects for civilians and civilian institutions, as well as retaining the valuable expertise of institutions involved in preventing and responding to ERW incidents.

In conclusion, we strongly believe that it is the duty of all High Contracting Parties to continue with efforts to ensure the implementation of the Protocol’s obligations and promote its universalization. Croatia intends to do its part in strengthening the Protocol’s role and promoting its universality.

Thank you Madame President,