

### EC Partners

- **HALO Trust**, a UK-based humanitarian demining NGO

### Facts and Figures

- The HALO Trust receives **€1.5 million from the EC** to complete its demining activities in Abkhazia in **2008**
- Abkhazia, a breakaway region in Georgia, has suffered from a civil war in **1992-1993**
- The HALO Trust started a comprehensive mine action programme in Abkhazia in **1997**
- Since the conflict Abkhazia has been a heavily mined area
- Under the EC project **375 000m<sup>2</sup> of mine contaminated land** in Abkhazia during 2006 and 2007 will be demined



**EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION**

## Mine Action

### Humanitarian mine clearance and explosive ordnance disposal in Abkhazia, Georgia

*"Now that the threat of landmines has been removed from their villages local communities are concentrating on their farming and rebuilding their lives."*

David McMahon,  
Project Manager, HALO Trust



Maria Van Ruiten

### Context

In any post-conflict zone where the use of mines was prevalent, the clearance of mines, as well as that of other unexploded remnants of war, is vital to the area's rehabilitation and reconstruction.

In post conflict situations, such as in Abkhazia, mine clearance is the precursor to development.

The European Commission's mine clearance work in Abkhazia has allowed the beginning of recovery throughout most parts of this region.

### Objective

The main goal of this EC supported project and key objectives are:

- To save lives and prevent injury from explosive remnants of war;
- To return demined land to local communities and authorities;
- To create conditions for a safe return of internally displaced persons;
- Upon completion of the demining programme Abkhazia is expected to be declared 'mine impact free'.

### Impact

Thanks to the demining programme of the HALO Trust in Abkhazia:

- Local inhabitants, who had to flee their mined villages after the conflict, could safely return to their houses after village grounds were demined;
- De-mined farmland became safe for use of cattle farming and cultivation of vineyards, chestnuts plantations, etc. and is providing local communities again with a regular income.

## Mine Action

### Clearance of Anti-personnel Mines and Unexploded Ordnance in Abkhazia, Georgia

In the village of Lindava most Georgian inhabitants had to flee their village and they are awaiting return once the conflict is resolved. One impediment to return is that the areas around the village were mined during the fighting in 1992-1993.

Mine clearance in the now mostly deserted village of Lindava is testament to that fact, for when a resolution of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict arrives, a return of many residents to Lindava and the surrounding areas is inevitable. HALO is working at present to ensure that all returnees to Lindava will discover the area as safe as it was prior to the conflict.

Viktor and his younger co-worker Artur work on one of the few farms in Lindava today. They raise approximately fifty cows and a handful of goats. Similar to many other villagers in Abkhazia, they were constantly uneasy and apprehensive about walking with their livestock in the area surrounding their homes and farms after the conflict.

While they heard occasional explosions on the mountainside, both were fortunate not to experience accidents of their own for a decade.

However in 2003, Viktor was grazing his cattle on a large and frequently used path close to the farm where he works when a cow initiated an anti-tank mine. Viktor was unharmed, but he lost four cattle.

After the HALO Trust has surveyed and de-mined the areas around their village locals, Viktor and Artur, can safely graze their cattle again.



*David McMachon*

After the threat of land mines was removed cattle farmers Viktor and Artur (pictured right) can again safely move around and graze their cows around the village of Lindava in Abkhazia, Georgia.