

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Standing Committee on the General Status and Operation
27 May 2013

Exchange of views on Universalization

Contribution by Austria

Austria notes with appreciation the steady increase of States Parties to the Convention and warmly welcomes the ratification of Poland and the fact that all EU Member States are now united under this Treaty. We express our sincere appreciation to all stakeholders that have taken particular leadership in universalization efforts. It is the joint efforts by the Mine Ban community that continues to be a key factor for the success in strengthening the universalization and implementation of this very Treaty. We particularly welcome the proposal by Belgium as Coordinator for a roadmap for universalization. We look forward to discussing these suggestions further and believe they could well serve us to jointly further coordinate and strengthen our universalization efforts.

In this respect, the European Union has already noted with satisfaction that the implementation of the EU Council Decision in support of the application of the Cartagena Action Plan adopted in 2012, which includes a strong universalization component, is well on its way. Austria sees particular merit in examining in more depth the challenges that states not yet party have brought forward when addressing their potential accession to the Convention. In this regard, we look forward to the results of a study on border security without anti-personnel mines that will be carried out with the support by the EU.

Mr. Co-Chair,

We are mindful of our own responsibility as a States Party to the Convention and in accordance with our commitment to the Cartagena Action Plan Action 3 to *„seize every opportunity to promote and encourage adherence to the norms of the Convention”* and in line with Action 5 *“to condemn and continue to discourage in every possible way any production, transfer and use of anti-personnel mines by any actor”*,

The obligation to protect civilians from unnecessary harm applies to all States. In this light, any use or allegation of use of anti-personnel mines of States not yet party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is of great concern to Austria. Anti-personnel mines are internationally shunned because these weapons pose an acute danger to the civilian population even decades after hostilities have ended.

We also recall that a norm has emerged from the shared understanding in the international community that the only response to the indiscriminate and inhuman nature of these weapons is their total ban.

The continued use of antipersonnel mines highlights the need to fully universalize this norm of international humanitarian law. Austria will continue to support the universalization efforts in the framework of the Convention by using every appropriate occasion at bilateral and multilateral level for such efforts.

Thank you.