



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
EXTERNAL RELATIONS DIRECTORATE GENERAL  
DIRECTORATE CFSP  
Security Policy

**Geneva, 9 February, 2004 –  
Standing Committee on the General Status & Operation of the Convention  
- Agenda Item: Resource Mobilisation**

**Statement made by the European Commission**

## **The EC mine action policies and instruments**

### **- Mine Action and Development Strategies**

The European Community has acquired a degree of know-how and capacity in ensuring the **mainstreaming of thematic aid into geographic assistance**.

The mechanism consists of elaborating, in collaboration with the beneficiary countries, consecutively: multiannual **Country Strategy Papers (CSP), National Indicative Programmes (NIP) and Action Programmes which give rise to the implementation of concrete projects**.

The endorsement by both the Commission the Member States and the beneficiary countries is required before implementation.

The EC assistance is thus provided with a **comprehensive approach integrating all needs and requirements into a wider longer term humanitarian and socio-economic developmental strategy**.

The EC funds earmarked for the above purpose come out of **"geographic budget lines"**.

When specific needs demand some **particular efforts, "thematic budget lines" come on top of the "geographic budget lines"**, in order to cater for specific actions.

This is the case of the Landmines budget line, which aims -inter alia- to enable mine affected countries to achieve the MBT goals as rapidly

as possible. In the EC there are therefore a number of instruments by which mine action can be funded; one thematic/horizontal line and a number of geographic lines, for a total yearly amount of approximately €40 million.

Identification of the needs and of the means to tackle them takes place at country level, in a comprehensive, viable and sustainable way and all instruments are used in a mutually reinforcing way.

**Therefore no action takes place in a vacuum;** when geographic assistance needs boosting/reinforcing the thematic budget is triggered in a planned and integrated way.

This trend will be even more pronounced and perceivable from this year on as the **project identification will be delegated** to the EC Delegations in the third countries.

Specific ad-hoc interventions in reaction to sudden humanitarian or security crises are also possible thanks to ECHO (Humanitarian Assistance) and the Rapid Reaction Mechanism.

The EU Regulations on APL have been designed in order to respond to **humanitarian but also developmental and SECURITY concerns.**

Mine action aims also at stabilising post or frozen conflict regions, recreating an environment in which people can live safely and in which economic, health and social development can occur free from constraints imposed by the hidden threat of mines, and ensuring victims needs are addressed.

Therefore, the issue of sustainable Mine Action does not only relate to mines and Unexploded Ordnance (UXO) but first and foremost to people and their interaction with a mine-infested environment including root causes of conflict. Reconciliation between populations, which lived through armed conflicts, the satisfaction of their basic needs, the reconstruction of their social and economic fabric will all contribute to removing sources of conflict and reasons for planting mines. Such action requires a broad range of humanitarian, economic, developmental, legal, social and political instruments.

In recent years significant progress has been made by the international community in reducing the threat posed to civilian populations by anti-personnel land mines. Fewer governments and non-state actors

are using antipersonnel landmines, millions of stockpiled mines have been destroyed and mine action programmes are being implemented in many mine-affected countries. The EU has played an important role in these developments. However, much still remains to be done.

Several governments continue to use antipersonnel mines and some countries are still believed to continue production. Around 65 countries remain affected to some degree by mines and unexploded ordnance. Global estimates of new landmine casualties each year are between 15,000 and 20,000. Those surviving join the numbers continuing to require assistance. It is therefore clear that the international community must continue to support, both politically and financially, mine action programmes; lowering the priority of mine action before the problem is comprehensively resolved will have enormous human costs.

The recent history of the EU contribution to the fight against Landmines shows an exponential increase in political, legal and financial commitments.

In March 2000, first anniversary date of the entering into force of the Mine Ban Treaty (Ottawa Convention), the European Commission issued a Communication and transmitted to the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers a draft Regulation on the reinforcement of the EU contribution to the fight against Landmines. In that year, the overall EU (Member States and European Community) contributions to the APL issues reached the record amount of **€125 million**.

In July 2001 the Council and the European Parliament adopted a set of two Regulations on the reinforcement of the EU response against Antipersonnel Landmines. These lay the foundations of the European integrated and focused policy.

The same year, the EU Member States and the European Community together, contributed a new record figure of **€145 million**.

In 2002, the new legal instrument was put to task, through a **multi-annual Strategy for the years 2002-2004**. This was the first document of its kind since the APL Regulation entered into force.

The same year overall contributions to mine action from the EU Member States and the European Community reached a total of €410 million for the three years 2000-2002.

The Strategy for 2002-2004, unanimously endorsed by Member States, contains an overall approach and detailed programming, covering **33 countries**.

This mid-term strategy underpins the longer term vision of the UN.

As such it targets capacity building in mine-affected countries in order for them to properly and efficiently manage the problem, without neglecting the urgency of reducing the magnitude of the threat to their populations, meeting their most pressing needs and helping their socio-economic development and political stability.

The Commission is currently starting the process of launching the Multi-annual Strategy for 2005 until 2007. Strategic discussions and co-ordination within the Union, first, and then with our major partners, both governmental and non-governmental, will help identify strategic options and will lead to informed and coherent setting of priorities. This will facilitate not only longer term planning but also increased donor co-ordination and will strengthen the impact of EU policies.

The most evident priority is the essential need to fully integrate mine action into development programmes in the field. For this we need mine affected countries to prioritise post conflict rehabilitation needs within their national development programme, thus integrating mine action into a wider framework of related activities. Achieving this integration will ensure that the significant funds being committed to mine action globally are used more efficiently and that the effectiveness of these activities is greatly increased.

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