



European Union
Statement by

**Mr Andras Kos, Minister Counsellor,
Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations**

APMBC - 13th Meeting of the States Parties

(Geneva, 2-5 December 2013)

Clearing mined areas

Geneva, 4 December 2013

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU statement on Clearing mined areas

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this declaration: Turkey^{*}, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia[†], Montenegro[†], Iceland[‡], Serbia[†], Albania[†], Bosnia and Herzegovina[†], Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

Mr. President,

The European Union remains committed to supporting all kinds of demining activities and determined to cooperate with States that need and request support in meeting their commitments under the Convention.

The EU Council Decision of 13 November 2012 seeks to support States Parties in implementing their mine clearance commitments in such a way that they can ensure the expeditious identification of all mined areas under their jurisdiction or control, and provide for the clearance and release of these areas as soon as possible to enable individuals, communities and nations to benefit from land once considered dangerous.

On mine clearance, the Council Decision provides resources to support up to five States Parties in carrying out a comprehensive mid-term appraisal of the implementation of the mine clearance aspects of the Cartagena Action Plan, including through the organisation of national workshops. The Council Decision also provides resources for follow-up technical missions in response to recommendations contained in the mid-term appraisals.

We have considered that this support may be most valuable for States Parties which have been granted extensions on their mine clearance deadlines. In this spirit, the European Union has supported comprehensive national mid-term appraisal workshops in Peru, Tajikistan, Colombia and the Democratic Republic of Congo which all took place this year. The workshops gathered national stakeholders to discuss their mine clearance plans and sought to contribute to the creation of a common vision on how they could implement their Article 5 obligations, particularly taking into account commitments made under the Cartagena Action Plan.

^{*} Candidate country

[†] The Candidate countries former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia as well as potential candidate countries Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

[‡] Candidate Country Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

In the case of Peru and due to the unique nature of demining activities in close cooperation with Ecuador along their shared border, the two countries agreed to co-host the workshop. As a result, the workshop was especially useful in facilitating cooperation between the two states. Ecuador and Peru developed concrete areas for increased cooperation, committed themselves to exploring increased joint demining operations and identified areas in which further work was needed.

The workshop organized in September 2013 in Dushanbe, reviewed activities that had taken place since Tajikistan was granted an extended deadline, took note of several challenges which the country currently faces in implementing its Article 5 obligations, explored avenues for technical and financial cooperation, identified priorities and made recommendations for enhancing Tajikistan's capacity to address remaining tasks. The workshop identified several areas in which Tajikistan's strategy could be revised and made more efficient, particularly with regards to improving survey and land release methodologies, capacity building, quality control and assurance.

In granting an extended deadline to Colombia in 2010, States Parties requested Colombia to present to the 13th Meeting of States Parties (13MSP) a revised implementation plan on the location and nature of the contamination which includes revised annual projections of which areas would be addressed, when and how. The national workshop held in November 2013 brought together all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The purpose of the EU support provided to Colombia was to assist it in developing a new plan for the period 2014-2016 and to contribute to the fulfillment of their commitment to present an updated work plan to the 13MSP.

The comprehensive appraisal workshop in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) took place some days ago (20-21 November, 2013) with the intent to take stock of mine clearance progress and determine activities that need to be undertaken to meet its obligation under the Convention. This workshop aimed to help the DRC to develop plans to provide more accurately the time frame needed to complete mine clearance operations and to submit an action plan detailing the activities to be conducted to fulfill their obligation under the Convention.

Mr. President,

Beyond the above mentioned Council Decision projects, the EU, through its other instruments, in addition to individual Member States' contributions, has also committed significant funds in 2012 to mine clearance projects in Afghanistan, Chad, Colombia, DRC, Laos, Libya, Myanmar, Niger, Philippines, Somalia, South Sudan and Sri Lanka.

Thank you.