

**Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties to the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Santiago de Chile, December 2016**

EU General Statement

Mr. President,

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, let me thank Chile, a valuable partner of the European Union in Latin America, for assuming the Chairmanship of the 15th Meeting of States Parties (15MSP) to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and for its leadership to renew and strengthen our collective commitments. As the Chair of this important meeting you can count on the EU's strong support. We also wish to express our gratitude to Chile for its determination and dedication to overcome the financial challenges to the holding of our Meeting this year. Let me also thank the Committees, the Implementation Support Unit and civil society for their preparatory work.

The mentioned financial challenges stress the importance of a timely contribution by all States Parties. Financial contributions ensure the functioning of the Convention and are an important part of States Parties' commitments. Transparency and continual monitoring of the financial status is essential to identify potential financial challenges in a timely manner.

For the European Union, a strong proponent of multilateralism, the universalisation and implementation of the Ottawa Convention is one of its main priorities in the area of human security and disarmament. The EU is fully committed to support the implementation of the

*The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

Convention through support to the implementation of the Actions of the Maputo Action Plan. All 28 European Union Member States are Party to the Convention. We urge those States that continue to remain outside the Convention to accede to the Convention as soon as possible. Let me take the opportunity to congratulate Poland that has fulfilled its article 4 commitments and destroyed all its stockpiled anti-personnel mines well ahead of its 2017 deadline.

The Convention has had a significant impact on the worldwide use, transfer and production of anti-personnel mines. Vast areas of land have been cleared and returned for use; 157 States Parties have disposed their stockpiles; 48 million mines have been destroyed; technology and methods for mine detection and clearance continue to be improved. Since the entry into force of the Convention, the number of new mine victims per year has fallen by approximately two-thirds and the use of anti-personnel mines has decreased dramatically. However, important challenges still remain and must be addressed. In 2015 the Land Mine Monitor recorded a rise in the number of new mine casualties, especially due to casualties recorded in armed conflicts in Libya, Syria, Ukraine, and Yemen.. We're also witnessing an increased use of improvised anti-personnel mines by armed non-state actors. It is a responsibility of the States Parties of the Convention to prevent these negative evolutions from becoming trends. The EU underlines the importance of the inalienable obligation of all States Parties to refrain from any use of anti-personnel mines and appeals to all States and non-state actors to refrain from such actions. Our aspiration to meet with the goals of the Convention by 2025 will require sustained efforts.

Mr. President,

The EU has a long history of support to mine action. For more than two decades, EU institutions and its Member States have been supporting mine clearance, stockpile destruction, assistance to victims, awareness raising, advocacy and research & development for detection and clearance of mines for humanitarian and development purposes.

Between 2010 and 2014, the EU and its Member States have contributed more than 500 Million Euro to mine action. In 2015 alone EU institutions committed more than 37 million EURO to mine action in 14 mine affected countries. We can be proud that our support in almost all heavily mine-affected countries and regions of the world has contributed to some of the Convention's successes towards a more universal adherence, in reaching humanitarian

objectives on the ground and in contributing to post-conflict reconstruction, development and stability.

The EU and its Member States will continue to provide mine-action assistance to affected populations in States Parties as well as States Non-Parties to the Convention. We are currently preparing a project in cooperation with the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention to support efforts of States Parties to implement the mine clearance, victim assistance and stockpile management objectives of the Maputo Action Plan, and to promote further universalisation of the Convention. All actions will incorporate gender perspectives at the design, management and implementation levels. The EU considers the gender based approach as a condition for effective mine action.

I thank you.