



European Union

**EU Statement on Mine Clearance (Article 5)
16th Meeting of States Parties to the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Vienna, 18-21 December 2017**

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

The European Union would like to thank the Committee on Article 5 implementation for its conclusions with regard to the implementation of Article 5 and the mine clearance related actions of the Maputo Action Plan.

We congratulate Algeria for completing its clearance obligations and becoming a mine free country. This is a remarkable achievement that should inspire other mine-affected countries and bring us a step further towards the fulfilment of our aspiration for a mine free world.

The European Union remains committed to supporting mine clearance activities to help mine affected States Parties to meet their Article 5 obligations under the Convention. More than two thirds of the €300 million EU funding for mine action in the past five years was earmarked for mine clearance. The EU will continue to cooperate, and where possible, extend assistance to States Parties that need and request support.

An important part of the recently adopted EU Council Decision, in support of the implementation of the Ottawa Convention, is dedicated to assisting mine affected States Parties to meet their mine clearance obligations. This EU support will enable the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to provide assistance to up to five States Parties that have upcoming mine clearance deadlines. The Committee on Article 5 Implementation will be involved in the selection of the beneficiary countries. The project will support affected States Parties to strengthen their national planning and improve coordination among donors. It will provide funding to the organisation of national stakeholder dialogues, facilitated by the ISU, in close collaboration with the relevant governments and other actors, including representatives from mine affected populations, mine action donors, mine clearance organisations, the International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL), UN agencies and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Gender and diversity

* Candidate Countries Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

aspects of mine clearance will be incorporated at the design, management and implementation levels.

The EU believes that it is important for mine affected countries, which are not able to fulfil their mine clearance obligations under Article 5, to indicate and submit in a timely manner a request for extension of their mine clearance deadlines, in accordance with the established process. We would like to thank Angola, Ecuador, Iraq, Thailand and Zimbabwe, for submitting their reports on time and their active engagement with the Article 5 Implementation Committee of the Convention in preparing for their extension requests.

We fully recognise the difficult challenges Ukraine faces in the implementation of its Article 5 obligations, due to the fact that some parts of its national territory have been out of effective control of the Ukrainian authorities since the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity in 2014. Notwithstanding these circumstances, we expect Ukraine to urgently submit an extension request of its mine clearance obligations, given the expiry of its deadline on 1 June 2016. We regret the situation and we recall that the 15th Meeting of States Parties expressed serious concern about this issue. We look forward to further cooperation of Ukraine with the Article 5 Committee in this regard.

Finally, the EU recalls that the definition of an anti-personnel mine makes no reference to how it has been manufactured, and that improvised anti-personnel mines also fall under the scope of the Convention. The EU looks forward to the update currently being done on the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) to better deal with the evolving challenges of humanitarian demining. The EU takes note of the ongoing elaboration of United Nations Improvised Explosive Device Disposal Standards (IEDDS), which are coordinated by the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in cooperation with national technical experts, including consideration of their place within the IMAS and the broader mine action framework, mindful of the need to avoid duplication. The EU welcomes their submission for consultation to all relevant stakeholders.

Thank you, Madam Chair