

Ottawa Convention
Seventeenth Meeting of the States Parties
26 - 30 November 2018, Geneva, Switzerland

Destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines (Article 4)

Statement of the Republic of Bulgaria:

Dear Madam President,

Distinguished ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to update you on the latest developments regarding the situation on the anti-personnel land mines (APLMs) transferred from the Hellenic Republic to the Republic of Bulgaria for the purpose of destruction.

As we previously informed, on October 1, 2014 an explosion occurred at the installations of the demilitarization factory "Midzhur" owned by the Bulgarian private company "Videx". The Utilization section of the factory was irreversibly damaged which prevented any further destruction of the Hellenic Armed Forces APLMs.

Since then the Republic of Bulgaria has established a regular communication with the Greek side in order to properly address the situation and find a suitable solution.

Madam President,

As a result of coordinated efforts and in the spirit of excellent cooperation between the Bulgarian and Greek authorities at different levels, we are happy to announce that on 20 November 2018 both sides have managed to conclude successfully the transferring process of the remaining APLMs back to the territory of the Hellenic Republic.

The transferring of all APLMs (total number 190 570¹) took 8 weeks during which both sides showed responsibility and seriousness to the matter by upholding highest possible security standards. All relevant national governmental bodies were involved in the process, which contributed to its successful conclusion.

With the finalization of the transferring, we managed to respond in the best possible manner to the high expectations of resolving this issue and showed once more that Bulgaria is in full compliance with the provisions of the Ottawa Convention.

We believe the entire process could serve as a good example to States Parties as it was a unique case in the history of the Ottawa Convention. Therefore, we are ready to share the lessons learned and best practices with our partners

¹ 190.570 APLMs instead of 190.574 were delivered to the Hellenic Defence Systems. Four of the initially reported quantity of mines were left for destruction on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria due to technical malfunction.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Bulgaria was amongst the first States Parties to implement Article 4 obligations. The actions regarding the transferring of the Greek APLMs further underlined my country's strong commitment to the Ottawa Convention and its work.

In this context, I would like to mention that the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Bulgaria approved a voluntary contribution, which was provided to the Implementation Support Unit in September 2018.

Thank you, Madam President!