



European Union

**Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
17th Meeting of States Parties
Geneva, 26-30 November 2018**

EU Statement on Mine Clearance (Article 5)

Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and Albania*, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

Firstly, allow me to echo the words of the President and warmly congratulate Mauritania for the completion of its clearance obligations.

The European Union would like to thank the Committee on Article 5 implementation for their work and welcome their conclusions.

We congratulate all States who have already completed their clearance obligations and become mine free.

We also welcome the intention that was expressed to clear the demilitarised zone between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. This should serve as an encouragement and inspiration for other States who still use anti-personnel mines and bring us closer towards the fulfilment of our shared aspiration for a mine free world by 2025.

The EU remains committed to supporting land release and mine clearance activities to help mine affected States Parties to meet their clearance obligations under the Convention. In general, more than two thirds of EU funding for mine action is dedicated to land release, survey and clearance operations.

Besides support for the actual clearance, the EU is also supporting mine affected States Parties' in their efforts to strengthen national planning and improving coordination among

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

donors. The EU Council Decision that was adopted in 2017 in support of this Convention enables the Implementation Support Unit (ISU) to provide assistance to up to five States Parties that have upcoming mine clearance deadlines. The project provides funding to the organisation of national stakeholder dialogues, facilitated by the ISU, involving national authorities and representatives from mine affected populations, as well as international mine action donors, mine clearance operators and other relevant actors. The Committee on Article 5 Implementation is involved in the selection of the beneficiary States Parties. Two stakeholder dialogues on clearance have already taken place in Sarajevo and Dakar in October. We would like to congratulate the Bosnian Mine Action Center (BHMIC) and the Centre National Anti Mines au Sénégal (CNAMS) on the very successful meetings and for making the maximum use of this format, based on national realities and needs. The EU would also like to congratulate the ISU for the excellent implementation of this project. The outcome of these and other national stakeholder dialogues was presented at a side-event on Monday, 26 November.

The EU believes that it is important for mine affected States Parties, 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. In that sense, the EU welcomes the submission of extension requests or additional information to the earlier extension request by several States Parties.

The EU is pleased that Ukraine recently submitted its overdue extension request, especially given the difficult challenges Ukraine faces, 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 by the Russian Federation in 2014.

The EU would like to thank the Article 5 Implementation Committee for preparing a paper on 'Reflections and understandings on the implementation and completion of Article 5 mine clearance obligations'.

The EU notes that the Convention's definition of an anti-personnel mine makes no reference to how it has been manufactured, and welcomes the efforts by UNMAS, the GICHD and the IMAS Review Board in further developing the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) to address the clearance of all types of mines, including those of an improvised nature bearing in mind their specific characteristics.

The EU also shares the observation that the just attention and increased spending on mine action in conflict zones in response to dire humanitarian needs should not happen at the expense of efforts to clear legacy mine fields. Legacy contamination often continues to pose a threat to human health and safety as well as a detrimental impact on accessibility, tourism and agriculture in affected areas and on socio-economic development in general.

Madam President,

The norm enshrined in the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention is strong and respected by nearly all States in the world, including non-States Parties. But there are challenges and challengers at the horizon and we cannot take the present circumstances for granted. The EU will continue to strongly support multilateral cooperation and the global rules-based system including this Convention. Maintained and increased efforts in the field of mine clearance are an important part of this effort.

Thank you, Madam President