



European Union

EU Statement on Cooperation and Assistance 19th Meeting of States Parties Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention The Hague, 17 November 2021

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland align themselves with this statement.

The European Union wishes to thank the Committee on the Enhancement of Cooperation and Assistance for its continuous efforts to strengthen the partnerships between States in a position to provide financial and technical assistance and States Parties requiring assistance as well as its efforts in promoting dialogue among all stakeholders.

The EU and its Member States have a long history of support for mine action that benefits nearly all heavily mine-affected countries and regions of the world. The assistance provided by the EU in 2021 amounts to more than 87 million EURO,

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

contributing to various programmes in 20 mine affected countries, such as the recent projects in Armenia and Azerbaijan (risk education, victim assistance and mine clearance), Colombia (mine clearance and rehabilitation of former combatants), Libya, Somalia, Ukraine and Yemen.

Mine action is critical to the peace and security agenda, humanitarian emergency response and sustainable development, and positively contributes to stabilization and sustaining peace. EU assistance covers the whole scope of mine action: clearance, stockpile destruction, victim assistance, risk education, advocacy and capacity building, and is provided in accordance with the new Oslo Action Plan.

The Meetings of State Parties should pay greater attention to reporting under the Convention, as agreed during the Review Conference. The EU calls for increased reporting rates as well as for an innovative, coordinated approach and a comprehensive program aiming at advocating, assisting and promoting this reporting under the mandate of the President. The EU considers that this reporting should include contamination by anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature, as this type of contamination must be also addressed within the framework of the Convention. In this regard, we would like to commend all States who included this information into the annual report.

The EU directly supports the Implementation Support Unit by means of EU Council Decision 2021/257/CFSP to assist mine affected States parties to set up national dialogues on mine clearance and victim assistance. In line with the Oslo Action Plan, these dialogues create a platform to strengthen coordination and information exchange with national and international stakeholders on progress, challenges, and support for the implementation of the Convention. The EU Council Decision carries out a variety of universalization efforts. These would include high-level visits,

technical meetings and/or workshops, sponsorship of relevant officials from target States to attend Convention meetings, and ambassadorial-level meetings at the United Nations headquarters or any of its subsidiary regional headquarters. In the same vein, it will extend its support to States via national and/or regional stakeholder's dialogues.

The EU welcomes the individualised approach format that the Committee implements in order to give a platform for interested affected States Parties to present their specific challenges and needs to relevant stakeholders, including donors and mine action operators. We encourage all relevant stakeholders to engage with such models of international cooperation and enhance national ownership. Cooperation and assistance helps States in need to implement and meet their national obligations.

Mine action is fundamental for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We emphasize the importance of connecting the Sustainable Developments Goals and development strategies with mine action. The EU is committed to mainstreaming a gender perspective into its mine action work and we continue to support the work of stakeholders in mine action to integrate gender perspective and take diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into their humanitarian mine action policies.

Assistance and cooperation requires commitments, evidence based national plans and ownership to ensure efficient and effective use of scarce resources. National ownership and evidence based national plans continue to play a key role in facilitating progress in mine action, as well as cooperation and assistance from other states. Likewise, robust and continuous in-country conversations amongst stakeholders are an important component in facilitating progress in implementation.

Mine-affected countries themselves have gained significant expertise in the implementation of the different provisions of the Convention. This experience is relevant for other States Parties facing similar circumstances (e.g. addressing mines in forested areas, improving efficiency in mine clearance, providing support to victims). This emphasizes the point that cooperation and assistance encompasses not only financial support, but also exchanges of expertise and best practice. In this light, the EU welcomes the initiative to establish a Cooperation and Assistance Fund that aims to assist mine affected countries in exchanging knowledge and experience.

Thank you, Mr. Chair