



European Union

**Twentieth meeting of the States Parties
of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Statement on Victim Assistance**

22 November 2022

Mr. President,

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

The Candidate Countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Ukraine and the potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina¹ align themselves with this declaration.

Anti-Personnel Mines, including those of an improvised nature and explosive remnants of war continue to affect the lives of millions of civilians across the world. They threaten development, peacebuilding and sustainable national capacity of affected States. We reaffirm our deep concern about the tremendous humanitarian and developmental impact, which has serious and longstanding social and economic consequences for the civilian populations of affected countries, hinders the achievement of sustainable development and inhibits peacebuilding and stabilization efforts.

The EU remains committed towards achieving a mine-free and victim-free world while also emphasising that there is a need for enhanced support to implement mine clearance, victim assistance, international cooperation and assistance and universalization efforts amongst others. We support full, equal, effective, and non-discriminatory participation of mine victims in society as a key component of victim assistance, based on respect for human rights, gender equality, inclusion and non-discrimination. Furthermore, reinforcement of cooperation and increase of synergies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other relevant human rights and disability actors and instruments remain key objectives.

¹ North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

The EU remains fully committed to fund mine action and has been over past few years supporting national stakeholder dialogues in places like Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Senegal, South Sudan and Uganda so that all parties responsible for the wellbeing of mine-affected communities and survivors can better address the challenges they face through strengthened dialogue and partnerships. We work with assistance organizations and national authorities in affected countries to use available resources effectively and to contribute to integrating victim assistance into broader disability and development policies at the national level. This, for the EU, means not only focusing on purely physical assistance, but also ensuring that psychological effects of mine accidents are properly addressed through providing adequate mental health support.

In the framework of the implementation of the ongoing Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/257 and with the input of the Committee on Victim Assistance, the new Council Decision extends its support to States via national and/or regional stakeholder dialogues in the Americas, Europe, Central and Southeast Asia, the Middle East-North Africa, Horn of Africa and sub-Sahara regions. Those dialogues will seek to support States Parties in strengthening their multi-sectoral efforts in ensuring that the victim assistance implementation is in line with relevant CRPD provisions. In that framework, the EU welcomes the national stakeholder`s dialogue on assistance to mine victims and disability rights that took place in January 2022 in Guinea Bissau with the participation of the EU delegation.

The EU also believes that, in terms of capacity building, national authorities should strive to be equipped to take ownership of their national mine action programmes in order to safeguard their people from the threat of mines, including mines of improvised nature and to assist mine survivors in an inclusive and gender-sensitive manner. In this regard, mainstreaming a gender perspective into its mine action work and supporting the work of stakeholders in mine action to integrate a gender perspective by taking diverse needs and experiences of people in affected communities into their humanitarian mine action policies remains a top priority for the EU.

5. With reference to the adoption of the Oslo Action Plan, the EU would support a third global conference, with experienced victim assistance practitioners, the UN Special Envoy on Disability and Accessibility and a Member of the Committee of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), to review the Oslo Action Plan implementation and contribute towards a new Action Plan to be adopted by the international community in 2024. In

conclusion, the EU is more than ready to strengthen cooperation, assistance, and the mobilization of resources in order to achieve the goal of an anti-personnel mine-free world.

Thank you Mr. President