



European Union

**Statement on Victim Assistance
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Intersessional Meeting
20 June 2022**

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, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova, align themselves with this statement.

We would like to thank the Committee on Victim Assistance for their work, in particular for actively seeking to reinforce cooperation and increase synergies with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and other relevant human rights and disability actors and instruments. We are grateful for including rehabilitation as a key component of victim assistance in the programme of this year`s intersessional meeting. We realize that there are States Parties to the Convention that continue to face challenges in delivering rehabilitation services to the victims of landmines.

While mine clearance programmes have a definitive conclusion, victim assistance is an ongoing process that requires sustained long-term engagement as well as national ownership. EU mine action is, therefore, a long-term commitment. 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. From this perspective, the EU is actively supporting the efforts of States Parties to implement their victim assistance programmes.

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

The EU especially welcomes the work conducted by the Victim Assistance Committee on Action 40 of the Oslo Action Plan, devoted to safety and protection of mine survivors in situations of risk and emergencies, including situations of armed conflict, humanitarian emergencies and natural disasters.

30 States Parties, of which some are the least developed countries on earth, have indicated that they have significant numbers of anti-personnel mine victims in need of assistance. These countries are facing significant challenges in fulfilling their responsibilities. Priority needs must be defined, and assistance must be provided for the sake of humanity and dignity. In line with Action 38 of the Oslo Action Plan, we must take steps to ensure that all mine victims, including in rural and remote areas, have access to comprehensive rehabilitation services and psychological support services.

In terms of capacity building, the EU believes that 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 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-Saharan 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.

By adopting the Oslo Action Plan, States Parties re-affirmed their commitment to *‘ensuring the full, equal and effective participation of mine victims in society, based on respect for human rights, gender equality, inclusion and non-discrimination’*. 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.

Thank you, Mr. Chair