



European Union
General Statement
Intersessional Meeting
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Geneva, 20 June 2022

Mr. President,

I have the honor to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia^{*}, Montenegro^{*} 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.

At the outset, we would like to congratulate Colombia for the successful chairing of the Seventh Pledging Conference of the Convention, which took place on March 1st in Geneva. The pledges declared by the States Parties during the Conference will significantly contribute to mine action, including the work of the Implementation Support Unit, which is critical to the functioning of the Convention.

It is of utmost importance that we continue our collective efforts in order to meet the obligations under the Convention; to achieve the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines, the clearance of mine-contaminated land, provide mine risk education assistance to mine victims and sustainable national capacities. The intersessional meeting represents a key platform to share information on progress made and maintain the momentum towards the full implementation of the Oslo Action Plan.

Mr. President,

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

The European Union stands united in its support for the universal ban on anti-personnel mines and call on all States that have not yet done so to join the Treaty. The EU appeals to all actors to refrain from the production, stockpiling, trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines and strongly condemns their use anywhere, anytime, and by any actor, whether States or non-State actors. The European Union considers the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention to be a key disarmament instrument. Its integrity, full implementation and strict application must be guaranteed, and universal adherence thereto must be pursued.

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.

The EU and its Member States have a long history of support for mine action that benefits heavily mine-affected countries and regions of the world. The assistance provided by the EU in 2021 amounts to more than 87 million EURO, contributing also to various programmes related to victim assistance in places like Afghanistan, Azerbaijan, Colombia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. We will continue to support these States as they revise or develop inclusive national action plans.

Mr. President,

We convene here today amid Russia's unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which has increased global insecurity. Nations from every corner of the world have united at the UN General Assembly in calling for peace, demanding that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw from the territory of Ukraine, within its internationally recognised borders, demanding civilian protection and humanitarian access in Ukraine.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms that Russia is using anti-personnel landmines in its war of aggression against Ukraine. The use of a newly developed type of landmines called POM-3 is particularly deplorable. Anti-personnel landmines pose a long-lasting threat to civilians and hinder humanitarian access. We call on Russia to refrain from using anti-personnel mines immediately.

Russia, bears full responsibility for the loss of life, the human suffering and all the destruction it causes in Ukraine. The EU fully acknowledges Ukraine's right to self-defence and the

Ukrainian armed forces' efforts to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity and population in accordance with Article 51 of the UN Charter. We commend the Ukrainian people's strength, courage and resistance to withstand Russia's aggression and stand with them in firm solidarity. The EU will continue its programmes to support Ukraine in mine clearance as well as in victim assistance and rehabilitation. A corresponding programme for Ukraine needs to be urgently developed due to the Russian aggression and use of landmines by the Russian armed forces.

This war of aggression is not only a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter, but also a humanitarian catastrophe for Ukraine and its people brought about by the Russian Federation in flagrant disrespect for international humanitarian law and human rights law. The EU actively supports the work of the International Criminal Court and measures to ensure accountability for the most serious crimes of international concern. There can be no impunity for these crimes.

In conclusion, the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention can continue to count on the EU's support and commitment to defend and strengthen the global norm against anti-personnel mines and to support the full implementation of the Convention.

Thank you Mr. President