

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
Intersessional Meetings of the States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty
Geneva, 20-22 June 2022
Statement on Stockpile Destruction

Mr President,

As it is the first time we take the floor under your presidency, allow me to congratulate you on the assumption of your duties and to assure you of our delegation's full support in your endeavors.

Mr President, Dear Colleagues,

At the outset, we would like to stress that Greece has taken every possible step to complete its contractual obligations under the Mine Ban Treaty and for this purpose has ensured the destruction of the APLMs stockpile through a contractual agreement, which is still in force, with the Hellenic Defence Systems (HDS) .

In this context, Greece has destroyed more than 1,2 million APLMs, completed its mine clearance obligations 4 ½ years ahead of the deadline set by Article 5 of the convention and fulfils its financial obligations in a timely manner to ensure the sustainability of the meetings of the Convention. Furthermore, Greece has demilitarized 1.677 APLMs from the initial quantity of 7.224 that was declared in accordance with Article 3 in 2008.

Greece has not yet entirely fulfilled its obligation under Article 4 due to unforeseen circumstances beyond its control. These circumstances include the legal dispute with the HDS, the deadly explosion at the Videx facilities (Bulgaria) and the subsequent legal obstacles that were raised , as well as the environmental issues during the demilitarization process of the APLMs at Lavrio Plant. Another impediment were the restrictive measures due to Covid-19 pandemic leading to a pause of the destruction process which in total lasted for more than 8 years.

Mr President, Dear Colleagues

In a continuing effort to fulfill our obligations emanating from Article 4, the HDS concluded the international tender for the appointment of a new subcontractor for the demilitarization of the remaining APLMs stockpile. However, the State Legal Council expressed legal concerns on some of the aspects that should be modified in the contract that has been signed between the said company and the competent department of the Ministry of Defence (MoD).

The HDS recently informed the MoD that they managed to overcome these legal concerns and the tender dossier, including the draft contract between HDS and their new subcontractor, has already been submitted to the Court of Auditors for a pre-contractual review and assessment.

Following the approval of the draft contract by the Court of Auditors, the HDS will submit their proposal to the competent department of the MoD for the amendment of their contract in order to reflect the aspects related to the new subcontractor, the timetable, and other relevant provisions for the destruction of the remaining APLMs stockpile.

It goes without saying that the relevant department of the MoD will examine the proposal of the HDS with the highest priority in order to conclude the necessary internal procedures for its evaluation and set the destruction process back on track as soon as possible.

Last but not least, we would like to reiterate that since accession to the Ottawa Convention, the Hellenic Republic has spared no efforts in order to comply with all its obligations. With regard to our obligation emanating from Article 4 of the Convention, we have always addressed the complications which have arisen, with the utmost transparency and sincerity. These complications should not in any way be construed as a deliberate failure or lack of willingness to comply with the Convention's obligations but rather as a hurdle due to circumstances beyond our control.

Thank you.