



European Union

Twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva, 20-24 November 2023

Statement on International Cooperation and Assistance

Mr. Chair,

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

The candidate countries Türkiye, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine and Bosnia and Herzegovina¹ align themselves with this statement.

Mr. Chair,

The EU 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 assistance, both financial and technical, and States Parties requiring assistance and to promote dialogue among all stakeholders.

Mine action is critical to the peace and security agenda, humanitarian emergency response and sustainable development, and positively contributes to stabilization and sustaining peace. Mine action is also fundamental for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We emphasize the importance of connecting the Sustainable Development Goals and development strategies with mine action.

EU assistance covers the whole scope of mine action: clearance, stockpile destruction, victim assistance, risk education, advocacy and capacity building and is provided in the light of the new Oslo Action Plan. The EU is also 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. In this regard, we acknowledge a

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

gender work plan 2023 developed by the Committee together with the Gender Focal Point (ref. [APLC/MSP.21/2023/9](#)).

The actions regarding reporting, whether legal obligations, as foreseen in the Convention, politically binding, as decided by the States Parties during Review Conferences, or on a voluntary basis, as encouraged during Meetings of States parties should call for more attention. The EU calls for increased reporting 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. The EU wishes to recall that some improvised explosive devices fit the definition of an anti-personnel mine as they are “a mine designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person and that will incapacitate, injure or kill one or more persons” and therefore should be considered and reported as anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature.

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 dialogue with national and international stakeholders on progress, challenges, and support for the implementation of the Convention.

Moreover, the EU fully supports 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.

Mr. Chair,

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 be key factors that facilitate 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 exchange of expertise and best practice. In this regard, we wish to highlight the establishment of the Cooperation and Assistance Fund (CAF) during the 19th Meeting of States Parties by the Presidency of the Netherlands.

The EU remains committed to mine action and will continue to be dedicated to assist in achieving our common goals from Colombia to Cambodia and elsewhere to achieve a mine free world. Let's step up our efforts to ensure the rigorous implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

Thank you, Mr. Chair