



European Union

Twenty-first Meeting of the States Parties

Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

Geneva, 20-24 November 2023

Statement on universalization

Mr. President,

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

The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Albania, Ukraine and Republic of Moldova¹, align themselves with this statement.

Mr. President,

Let me first seize this opportunity to commend the engagement of Germany in support of the universalization of the Convention as well as your able chairmanship, Mr. President, of this Conference.

The European Union is united in its commitment to the goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines. All 27 EU Member States are States Parties to the Ottawa Convention, support the implementation of the Oslo Action Plan, and are strongly united in banning the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines. The EU continues to stand firmly behind the global norm on anti-personnel mines, which has saved countless lives since the entry into force of the Convention almost thirty years ago. 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.

We consistently support the universalization of the Ottawa Convention and strongly encourage the remaining thirty-three States not yet Parties to the Convention to adhere as soon as possible.

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

As an interim step, States are also entitled to announce a self-declared policy of non-use. In the current deteriorated security environment, which also comes with new challenges to the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture, our resolute collective engagement in preserving the Ottawa Convention and promoting its universalization is all the more important.

The EU is the world's second largest donor in mine action, having contributed over 800 million EUR to humanitarian mine action over the past 6 years, with 90 million EUR in 2022 only. In this framework, it allocated 2.6 million EUR to the promotion of the Convention with States non-party in the period 2021-2025 to contribute to the full implementation of the Oslo Action Plan and its concrete actions, including a variety of universalization efforts under the President's mandate. These include supporting high-level missions with the Convention's Special Envoy Prince Mired from Jordan to promote the Convention's universalization and we acknowledge the important role of the Special Envoys of the Convention - Prince Mired of Jordan and Princess Astrid of Belgium in this regard. We also acknowledge individual EU MS support for humanitarian mine action.

The European Union encourages other States Parties to join its outreach efforts, to underline the benefits of joining the Convention and to use all available avenues to promote accession and universal observance of its norms and objectives.

I thank you, Mr. President.