



**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use,
Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of
Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction,**

7th Meeting of States Parties

Geneva, 18 - 22 September 2006

**Statement
on behalf of the European Union**

Geneva, 18 September 2006

EU GENERAL STATEMENT

Following the request of the President-designate that Delegations refrain from presenting orally their general statements, this statement by the European Union is distributed in written form. The Acceding Countries Bulgaria and Romania, the Candidate Countries Croatia* and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, and the EFTA country Liechtenstein, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this declaration.

1. The EU is grateful to the Government of Switzerland for hosting this meeting and we thank both Switzerland and Australia for all the effort that has been put in to make this a successful and productive meeting. This is also an appropriate moment to thank the Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining and in particular the Implementation Support Unit, as well as the UNDDA, for their support in the implementation of the Convention and in the preparations of this Meeting.
2. This Seventh Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction is an important opportunity to measure progress achieved in the implementation of the Nairobi Action Plan.
3. We welcome the initiative and preparations by the President-designate to elaborate a Geneva Progress Report which also looks forward to better addressing the challenges ahead.
4. The EU welcomes progress achieved towards universalisation of the Convention, in destroying stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, clearing mined areas and assisting mine survivors. The reported use of anti-personnel mines is decreasing, as is the number of new mine victims per year, mine-clearance projects proceed, and stockpile destruction is completed in most of the States Parties. We realise that in the future particular emphasis will be needed to be placed on assistance to mine survivors, on a longer term and including a socio-economic perspective, and specifically on mine clearance and on the provisions of Article V.
5. Promoting universality of the Convention remains a priority for the EU. The EU has worked actively to this end, making demarches in States not parties to the Convention. Several of those States retain huge stocks of anti-personnel landmines and they should be encouraged to implement provisions of the Convention pending their accession to it.
6. We note the continued value of the appeal of the World Summit 2005 to the Parties to the Convention to implement fully their commitments to provide technical assistance to mine-affected countries. We also welcome the strong support in the UN General Assembly to the Resolution on the Convention. The Resolution gained the co-sponsorship of all EU Member States in 2005.

7. The EU considers the fulfilment of treaty obligations an essential measurement of the success of the Convention. To this end, the EU has been in close dialogue with those States Parties which have as yet not fully implemented key provisions of the Convention such as transparency measures and national implementation measures (Articles VII and IX of the Convention).
8. The EU is appreciative of the work of the Geneva Call organisation and its pursuit to voluntarily engage non-state actors through a Deed of Commitment to apply the provisions of the Convention. More generally, the EU is aware that further consideration must be given to that also non-state actors meet the goals of the Convention. This approach needs to be continued, as with progress towards universalisation of the Convention, the proportion of mine victims resulting from use of anti-personnel landmines by non-state actors is likely to increase.
9. The EU (including both the Member States and the European Community) has been and continues to be a major financial and technical supporter of mine action globally. In the period from 1997 to 2005, the financial support from the EU reached the total figure of € 1.2 billion. In 2005 alone overall EU funding – earmarked by Member States and the European Community – amounted to € 157 million.
10. With the next budget cycle 2007-2013 new instruments for external assistance have been created. With their entry into force next year previous European Community regulations and the specific European Community budget line will be replaced by new instruments, namely the Stability, the Pre-accession, the Neighbourhood and Development instruments. European Community mine actions will thus be funded directly through the channels of the new financial and legal instruments. European Community instruments are undergoing a multilayered and complex process of integrating future mine actions (including explosive remnants of war) within the wide peace, security and development nexus. The European Community Mine Action Strategy for the years 2005-2007 remains valid.
11. In achieving the overall goal of the Convention, the specific thematic focus of the EU is on eliminating the anti-personnel mine threat, alleviating mine victim suffering, aiding socio-economic reintegration and enhancing local and regional mine action capacity. Here we also see explosive remnants of war clearance and anti-personnel landmines clearance as partly related issues, that should be addressed in a coherent and mutually supportive way.
12. We are committed to strengthening care, rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration of the mine survivors. We also emphasize that such assistance should be integrated into broader public health and socio-economic strategies.
13. This Meeting of States Parties will address the issue of Article V obligations and approaching deadlines. The EU appreciates highly the preparatory work the President-designate and her Delegation, as well as the co-chairs and co-rapporteurs of the Standing Committees, have done to set the ground for this meeting.
14. The mine clearance obligation of Article V is one of the central provisions of the Convention. Implementation of Article 5 is, as stipulated by the Nairobi Action Plan, the most significant challenge to be addressed in the coming few years. Recalling the Nairobi Action Plan, we shall strive to ensure that few, if any, States Parties will feel compelled to request an extension. Nevertheless, it can not be ruled out that in exceptional cases States may have justified and acceptable reasons to need more time and/or more resources. Establishing a roadmap is the appropriate way forward. The text of the Convention is the legal foundation for dealing with this issue. In our opinion it is of utmost importance now

to agree on a clear, fair, transparent and effective way to address possible applications for prolongation of deadlines, which raises the question how and with what structure of discussion and decision making we should proceed.

15. We thank the President-designate for the work done in presenting a non-paper on Article V implementation for further discussion. We also support the establishment of a model declaration on the completion of Article V mine clearance obligations. For the EU the extension issue is central to the overall respect and credibility of the Convention.
16. We also support the President-designate's proposed approach of trusting a central role in dealing with possible Article V extension requests to the President of the Meeting of States Parties.
17. The EU reiterates its firm commitment to the objectives and priorities of the process under this important Convention.

Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.