

Ottawa Convention Intersessional Meeting 25-26 June 2015

Statement of the Republic of Bulgaria

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As a state party to the Convention, Bulgaria would like to share with its partners information about the incident with the APLMs, transferred from Greece for destruction, that took place on its territory in the course of 2014.

On October 1, 2014 an explosion occurred at the installations of the military demilitarization factory "Midzhur" of the Bulgarian private company "Videx". The company facilities are located near the Gorni Lom village, Bulgarian Northwest.

At the time of the incident the company was in a process of demilitarization of APLMs of the MoD of the Hellenic Republic under a contract from July 10, 2008 between "Videx" and the Greek broker company "Akmon S.A."

According to the investigation results, the human life loss due to the incident amounts to 15 persons, which is the whole factory shift of expert personnel that day. The whole processing unit of the factory and its equipment were completely leveled to the ground. This disabled the company "Videx" to continue any further activities of demilitarizing the Greek APLMs as provided by the contract.

According to the company records, at the day of the explosion – on 1 October 2014, the whole warehouse APLMs stock in the factory amounted to 197 600 pieces. Of them 6986 APLMs, type M16A2, were located in the destroyed processing facility; part of this amount has been already demilitarized. 130 units of them have been later recovered during the sanitizing of the internal and the external perimeters of the factory by the specialized units. They all suffered damages and are not eligible for transportation. Part of the remaining 6 856 APLMs are completely destroyed during the explosion and the rest of them are scattered around the destroyed processing facility and are subject to destruction on the spot due to the high risk of further incidents if an extraction is attempted.

After the incident all the warehouses of "Videx" company at their "Midzhur" factory were closed and sealed. All the remaining 190 614 Greek APLMs are still held in the sealed and secured warehouses of the factory. An order is in place prohibiting the relocation from the warehouses.

In the spirit of Article 6 of the Convention, the Republic of Bulgaria and the Hellenic Republic launched bilateral consultations to find the best solution to the situation. A visit to Bulgaria by a team of Greek experts will take place next week. They will visit the demilitarization factory site and will discuss with the Bulgarian counterparts the modalities for the return of the remaining APLMs back to the Hellenic Republic.