

Stockpile destruction (Art. 4)

Statement of Bulgaria

The Republic of Bulgaria would like to provide brief information on the recent developments on the anti-personal mines transferred from the Hellenic Republic to the Republic of Bulgaria for the purpose of destruction, to follow on the information just provided by the Greek delegation.

After the incident in October 2014 at the demilitarization factory "Midzhur" owned by the Bulgarian private company "Videx", which prevented further destruction of the remaining Greek APLMs on Bulgarian territory, a regular channel of communication with the Greek side has been established to solve the issue. As it has been confirmed that there is no further possibility to destroy the Greek APLMs on Bulgarian territory, the efforts were focused on the only feasible option - repatriation of the mines to the Greek territory.

We are pleased to inform that, according to the information provided by our Greek partners on 1 June 2018, the Hellenic Defence Systems has obtained the necessary International Import Certificate to transfer the mines back to the Greek territory. This will allow the start of the repatriation process. A bilateral meeting between Bulgaria and Greece will take place soon to discuss the details of the process and the needed technical and administrative support on our side.

We hope for a rapid progress on the issue and expect that the transportation could be carried out during the summer seasons (due to the mountainous terrain of the region where the mines are stored, this is strongly preferable). Our respective authorities stand ready to provide the necessary facilitation in organizing the repatriation of the mines.

We are confident that the cooperation with the Greek side will continue in the same constructive way and we will be able to solve the problem as soon as possible.

In conclusion, let me reiterate my country's strong commitment to the Ottawa Convention. Bulgaria was amongst the first States Parties to implement Article 4 obligations. Our implementation efforts were further strengthened in the relevant national legislation through adoption in 2015 of a special Law on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Ottawa Convention. We are committed to work towards the promotion of its universalization and norms.