

**Statement by Greece to the Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel mines and on their Destruction (Geneva, 20 June 2011)**

Mr. President,

Greece signed the Anti-Personnel Mine-Ban Treaty on 3 December 1997 and ratified it on 25 September 2003, thus coming into force for Greece on 1 March 2004. As a State- Party to the Ottawa Convention Greece has spared no efforts to implement its contractual obligations. In this regard, at the Cartagena Summit we announced the completion of the clearing of all our mined areas, four years ahead of schedule.

With regard to Greece's obligations emanating from Article 4 of the Convention, in mid 2008 the Greek state signed a contract with the Greek company "EAS" (Hellenic Defence Systems), which appointed the Bulgarian company "VIDEX" as subcontractor. In this context, from 15 December 2008 to 14 May 2010, 614,882 mines were shipped to and destroyed in Bulgaria, as confirmed by the Bulgarian Mission in Geneva by note verbale on 28.10.2010. The issue of the initial difference (of 480 mines) between the Bulgarian and Greek data was subsequently investigated by the competent Greek authorities, following an order by the Minister of Defence.

During this investigation, it was acknowledged that the 480 mines were stored in an <sup>Ammunition</sup> ~~Artillery~~ warehouse of the Greek Army. Furthermore, the initial assumption on the loss of a number of mines proved to be erroneous and was due to the fact that they were unevenly distributed by EAS during their packaging. In addition, during the investigation of the aforementioned issue of the 480 mines, the Greek Armed Forces undertook a detailed *in situ* counting of all the stockpiles and proceeded to a collation with the data they had in their files. As a result of this detailed examination, it was acknowledged that our initial stockpile, ie. before the commencement of the destruction process, amounted to 1,568,167 mines instead of 1,566,532 mines, which had been stated in our previous Article 7 reports. Although these discrepancies are a testimony to the considerable challenges involved in the accurate accounting of such a vast number of mines, it is nevertheless pertinent to underline that the State Parties of the Convention have the obligation to submit accurate data, in accordance with the principle of transparency.

With regard to the remaining stockpile (953,285 mines) it must be noted that in April 2011, following one year of a judicial process in the Greek courts, EAS won the case and was re-awarded the project of destruction of our remaining stockpiles. As a result, on 21 April 2011 EAS submitted a revised proposal with a new timeline and financial conditions for destruction. This proposal (ie.



timeline and financial conditions) is at present the subject of ongoing negotiations between the Ministry of Defence and EAS, in order to ensure the best conditions for the swift completion of the process. The plan which is still under consideration entails the re-initiation of the contract within the next six months and the subsequent completion of destruction within twenty- two months. It also involves a closer involvement of the Greek Armed Forces in the monitoring of the whole process.

Following this short overview of the latest developments in our implementation of Article 4, we are ready to answer questions which partners may have and provide additional information and clarifications if necessary.

Finally, we would like to express our gratitude to the Co-chairs of Article 4 Implementation, the Permanent Missions of Lithuania and the Philippines, for their constructive and collegial approach on this issue.

Thank you Mr. President.