

**MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON MINE CLEARANCE  
OF THE  
CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND  
TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

**GENEVA, 27MAY 2013**

**STATEMENT OF THE GERMAN DELEGATION  
ON ARTICLE 5: UPDATE ON "WITTSTOCK"**

[Chair,]

Germany has on several occasions informed its partners about suspicions that the former Soviet / Russian military training area of Wittstock, located in the German federal state of Brandenburg, is likely contaminated with an undefined amount of unexploded ordnance, including APM, dating from the period when it was used by Soviet and Russian armed forces.

In early October 2011, ownership of the area, which had hitherto been under military supervision, was transferred to the governmental authority in charge of real estate (Bundesanstalt für Immobilien-Aufgaben, BImA).

Given that and with an unclear picture about the entire ammunition contamination of this area (approx. 125 km<sup>2</sup>) at this time, Germany had calculated the time for clearance based on a worst-case scenario.

Since the 3MSP in Geneva (December 2012), the following progress has been made:

Plan of action on APM

a) Preparatory infrastructure development

- The time-consuming non-technical survey (NTS) in preparation of the tendering procedure for the preparatory technical survey (TS) of paths, firebreaks (areas accessible to vehicles and earmarked for tilling) and the environs of nearby villages is still on-going due to new findings in the history of available documents and archives.
- Completion of the non-technical survey is expected in autumn 2013.

















- The next stage after that will be to establish the technical survey to define how much clearance is finally required for the infrastructure and to order it to be undertaken.

b) Area of suspected contamination with APM

- It has been possible to reduce the area suspected to be contaminated with APM to approx. one hectare in the north-east of the property as a first result of non-technical survey. The site in question is an exercise ground (network of positions) used by the former Soviet armed forces infantry. Further areas are under investigation, however these areas are becoming most likely cancelled and declared as mine free due to the available information yet.
- The last decade has resulted in a dense growth of ground vegetation, shrubs and trees.
- Based on the NTS results the TS and clearance will be started immediately once the requisite infrastructure has been established in the immediate vicinity of the suspected hazardous area (SHA).

Request for an extended deadline:

Because of the complexity of the situation and, above all, the late identification of the extent of the contamination, it has not yet been possible to conclude the clearance. Moreover, Germany is committed to carrying out survey activities regarding the extensive UXO contamination in a thorough and systematic manner in order to ensure the safety of those involved. Therefore Germany submitted, in April 2013, a draft request for an extended deadline as per 31 December 2015.

It is still possible and moreover Germany is very confident that we may be able to produce results faster than presently expected. However, this is dependent on the actual findings of the surveys currently running and is therefore very difficult to predict at this stage. Still Germany will be prepared for the worst case scenario, if the actual findings gained during the on-going comprehensive non-technical survey are not confirmed.

The utmost is being done in order to obtain timely results from the survey. Germany will keep the States Parties and signatories informed about further developments.

Thank you, Mr Chair.