

Statement by Greece to the Meetings of the Standing Committees 27-30 May 2013
Article 4

Thank you Mr. Co-chair,

As it is the first time we take the floor, allow me to thank the two Co-Chairs of Article 4, namely Nigeria and Norway, for their very constructive and 'hands-on' approach in encouraging states to implement Article 4.

Since our last statement to the 12MSP last December, we are pleased to announce that Greece has made progress in its obligations stemming from Article 4. First of all, on 29 April 2013, following extensive negotiations between the Greek Ministry of Defence and the Company Hellenic Defence Systems (EAS) the modified contract for the destruction of the remaining 60% of our stockpiles in Anti-personnel mines was signed. The destruction will take place in the facilities of the Bulgarian subcontractor, namely the company "VIDEX" with funds from the Greek MoD. According to the new terms of the contract, the involvement of the Greek Armed Forces will be proactive. For example, the transport of the mines to the Greek-Bulgarian border will take place with the escort of police and military forces, while Greek officers will be present- on a random sampling basis- during both the delivery and the destruction of the mines.

We are currently on the verge of initiating the destruction process of the remaining mines. More specifically, the Greek Ministry of Defence expects to receive in the next few days the end-user certificates from "VIDEX", in order to immediately proceed to the receipt of the approval of the export licenses from the Greek competent authorities. Following this, the next steps will entail the immediate issuance of the licenses and the beginning of the transport of the first mines to Bulgaria- which is envisaged for the end of next month- with the ultimate aim to start and complete the destruction process as soon as possible.

Mr. Co-Chair,

Since its accession to the Ottawa Convention, Greece has spared no efforts to comply with all its obligations. With regard to our obligations emanating from Article 4 of the Convention, we have always addressed the complications we have faced with the utmost transparency and sincerity and will continue to do so. We will repeat what we have said in the past in this forum. The complications which have arisen in the implementation of Article 4 should not in any way be construed as a deliberate failure or lack of willingness to comply with the Convention's deadlines but rather as a hurdle, due to unforeseen circumstances further exacerbated by the objective and unprecedented economic difficulties which our country continues to face.

Finally, Mr. Chairman, we would be ready to answer questions which partners may have and provide clarification if required.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.