



Slovensko predsedstvo EU 2008
Slovenian Presidency of the EU 2008
La Présidence slovène de l'UE 2008

EU Statement

Intersessional Meetings of Standing committees of the Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-personnel Mines (Geneva, 2 - 6 June 2008)

General status and operation of the Convention

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

1. The European Union welcomes the significant progress made in the fight against the suffering caused by anti-personnel mines. Nonetheless, we are aware of the tremendous humanitarian and development **challenges** still posed by anti-personnel mines. These devices continue to kill people and constitute an obstacle to the return of refugees and other displaced persons, humanitarian aid operations, reconstruction and economic development, as well as to the restoration of normal social conditions, and have serious and lasting social and economic effects on the populations of mine-affected countries.

2. The European Union's overall goal is a world free of anti-personnel mines without any new anti-personnel mine victims and where sustainable care is provided for the victims of these weapons. Although the number of new **mine victims** is decreasing, the overall need for assistance remains. Victim assistance is a long-term commitment, which for virtually all victims and their families, often means lifetime care. In this regard, we welcome the entry into force of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities on 3 May, marking a new era in efforts to protect the rights of the persons with disabilities.

3. Over the last ten years, the European Union and its Member States have consistently provided major political, financial and scientific **support to mine action** worldwide, totalling nearly EUR 1.5 billion and constituting almost a half of the world's financial assistance to mine action in this period. The European Union has been integrating mine action into long-term socioeconomic development programmes with a view to improving its response to national priorities and enhancing local ownership.



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4. The European Union appeals to countries which have not yet **acceded to the Convention** on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, which embodies both humanitarian and disarmament objectives, to do so as soon as possible. In support of this objective, the European Union will contribute almost one million EUR through a **Joint Action** in support of universalisation and full implementation of the Convention, implemented by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). Up to 6 regional or sub-regional workshops will be organised to present the objectives of the Convention and to assess progress towards its ratification, share experiences and lessons learnt from States Parties, as well as to identify particular needs concerning anti-personnel landmines programmes. Within the framework of this Joint Action visits will be organised to States Parties with a view to assess the state of national demining programmes and the national responses given to the needs of landmine survivors and to existing stockpiles if appropriate. We call upon States Parties to take full advantage of this opportunity and we hope for excellent cooperation with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining.

I thank you Mr. Chairman