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2009

**Meetings of the Standing Committees of the  
Convention on the Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines  
(Geneva, 25 – 29 May 2009)**

**The Czech Presidency of the European Union**

**"The European Union's Council Joint Action  
in support of the universalisation and implementation of  
the Ottawa Convention, in the framework of the  
European Security Strategy"**

**Geneva, 29 May 2009**

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1. As a preliminary remark, it should be recalled that a "Joint Action" is a legal instrument which can be used by the EU in its Common Foreign and Security Policy. A Joint Action sets out precise goals that the EU and its Member States collectively want to pursue in a certain area or with a specific objective. Joint Actions are implemented, on the political side, by the EU Presidency, assisted by the Council Secretariat and, on the financial side, by the European Commission. Technical implementation can be outsourced to an agency.
2. In June 2008, the EU Council adopted a Joint Action in support of the universalisation and implementation of the Ottawa Convention<sup>1</sup>. This initiative has to be seen in the wider framework of the European Security Strategy, which calls for an international order based on effective multilateralism.
3. The technical implementation of the Joint Action is being ensured by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), more specifically its Implementation Support Unit (ISU). Following the adoption of the Joint Action by the Council, the European Commission has therefore concluded a financing agreement with the GICHD. The total budget of the Joint Action is € 1,070,000. The lifespan of the Joint Action will be 21 months after the date of conclusion of the financing agreement between the EC and the GICHD.
4. Broad objectives of the Joint Action are
  - (i) Promotion of the universality of the Ottawa Convention and support for the preparation of the Second Review Conference of the Convention which will take place in Cartagena, Colombia, from 30 November to 4 December 2009.
  - (ii) Support for the full implementation of the Convention by States Parties.
5. In order to achieve these objectives, the GICHD has been mandated to organise up to six regional or sub-regional seminars, aiming at promoting the universalisation of the Convention and at supporting the preparation of the Second Review Conference in 2009. The GICHD will also carry out up to 25 technical assistance visits to provide advice for the Convention's full implementation in advance of the Second Review Conference.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Joint Action 2008/487/CFSP of 23 June 2008, published in Official Journal of the EU L 165 of 26.06.2008

6. How does it work in practice? Regarding the workshops, six workshops were held and will be held in various regions. But there is sufficient flexibility to change the venue/time, if so required by the circumstances. Two workshops have already taken place, namely:

- A first very successful workshop took place in Nicaragua, 24-26 February 2009, for the Latin American region, entitled "Managua Regional Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free Americas". This workshop was conducted in cooperation with the Government of Nicaragua and the Organisation of American States. A separate workshop on Victim Assistance was hosted in parallel to the main meeting. Overall 137 delegates participated in both meetings combined, including the Foreign Minister of Nicaragua and representatives from almost all members of the Organization of American States.
- A second, again very successful workshop was organised for the South East Asian region. The "Bangkok Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South East Asia" was opened by the Thai Minister of Foreign Affairs and took place in Bangkok, Thailand, from 1-3 April 2009. Over 130 participants including representatives from seven ASEAN States and representatives from some States not yet Parties were present. Additionally, a parallel workshop on Victim Assistance was held in Chiang Mai and Bangkok.

Four more workshops will take place during 2009 and 2010:

- Central Asia (Tajikistan). In cooperation with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Tajikistan Mine Action Center the "The Dushanbe Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free Central Asia" will be held from 7-8 July 2009. The invitees include Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. Each would be offered sponsorship for two delegates.
- Africa (South Africa) – pending the agreement of the African Union, "The Third Continental Meeting on Landmines" will take place in Pretoria in September 2009. It will include the 54 members of the African Union, in follow-up to the 1997 and 2004 meetings. Each State will be offered sponsorship for one delegate. In addition, it is projected that the 18 African States Parties reporting significant numbers of victims and/or in the process of fulfilling mine clearance obligations will be encouraged to send a second expert delegate.
- South East Europe (Albania). "The Tirana Workshop on Achieving a Mine-Free South East Europe" will take place in October this year. The target list of countries would include Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. Each one would be offered sponsorship for two delegates.
- A decision on the date and location of the workshop in the Middle East (Kuwait) is still pending.

7. The Joint Action includes also the provision of technical advice to States Parties. In this regard, GICHD is organising technical assistance visits to States Parties with a view to assessing the national response to the obligations resulting from the Convention and to providing support in line with other relevant on-going programmes and/or activities, the findings of the Nairobi Summit and the findings of the annual progress reports. In cases where there already exists technical support, the GICHD complements these activities and assists in areas where it has a leading knowledge. In particular, these niche areas may include advisory services in the following fields:

- Ensuring full understanding of Convention obligations;
- Preparing requests for extensions on the fulfilment of mine clearance obligations;
- Preparing a plan for completion including the technical methods and means to accelerate the release of suspected hazardous areas;
- Reporting on the completion of the mine clearance obligations;
- Preparing an initial transparency report;
- Inter-ministerial process of establishing objectives and developing plans of action for meeting expectations in the care, rehabilitation and reintegration of landmine survivors.

Technical visits already took place to Uganda, Afghanistan, Zambia and Haiti and further visits are scheduled for Chad and Mongolia in the coming weeks.

8. The European Union is confident that its efforts in support of the universalisation and implementation of the Convention will contribute to the success of the Second Review Conference which will take place in Cartagena, Colombia, from 30 November to 4 December 2009.