



European Union

**Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production
and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction
Tenth Meeting of States Parties**

Geneva, 29 November to 3 December 2010

**Opening statement
by the European Union**

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EU statement

Mr President,

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

The Candidate Countries Croatia*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*¹ and Iceland**², the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Serbia, as well the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

Firstly Mr President, I would like to congratulate you warmly on your appointment as President of the 10th Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. I would also like to thank you and all your team for the work done since the last time we met. We are looking forward to a fruitful and constructive meeting and I wish to assure you of the full support of the European Union.

The Review Conference in Cartagena gave renewed impetus to our common efforts to reach all the objectives of the Convention, including a world free from anti-personnel mines. The European Union is fully committed to implementing the Cartagena Action Plan.

It would be remiss for the European Union not to take this opportunity to warmly thank Ambassador Eckey of Norway and her team for her dynamic and constructive Presidency.

Today, 156 states are parties to the Convention. Despite the fact that there is general adherence to its provisions also by non-States Parties, the number of States Parties has not evolved since the Cartagena Summit. The EU welcomes the initiative to appoint a Special Envoy to increase efforts to improve the situation and we stand ready to cooperate. The EU appeals to all States outside the Convention, especially those which still possess large quantities of anti-personnel mines, to accede to the Convention as soon as possible.

Most of the States Parties have successfully destroyed their stockpiles of anti-personnel mines, and those that have not done so must complete their obligations in this regard.

¹ *Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

² **Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Vast mine-affected areas have been cleared, thereby releasing land for farmers to till, children to play and enabling socio-economic growth for local communities. However, thousands of victims, most of them civilians and among them many children are still claimed by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war. A substantial number of States Parties remain with their obligation to clear mined areas. The number of requests for extension of clearance deadlines remains high. Many of these states need help to clear and release suspected areas and some State Parties face substantial challenges in order to destroy their stockpiles.

The European Union and its Member States continue providing technical assistance to a number of States Parties who had requested specific help in addressing implementation challenges. We are committed to continue to assist those States Parties who have not yet met their obligations under articles 4 and 5 of the Convention.

The EU recognizes the necessity of reinforcing the mechanisms of cooperation and assistance between the affected countries and the donors and, against this background, takes note with interest of the proposal to set up a standing committee on resources. We look forward to discussing this proposal this week in the context of reviewing the overall architecture of the inter-sessional process, in particular the number and financing of standing committees and possible synergies between them.

Other serious challenges remain. Armed non-state actors make use of anti-personnel mines. The European Union recognises the importance of engaging armed non-state actors with the objectives of this Convention. We support the work of "Geneva Call" and its efforts to ensure compliance by non-state actors with the norms of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Over the past years, the EU has developed an array of measures to support international efforts aimed at addressing the security and humanitarian concerns posed by certain conventional weapons and their indiscriminate use. In this framework, the EU welcomes the entry into force of the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the holding of the first Meeting of States Parties held in Vientiane, Laos PDR, where the Vientiane Declaration and the Vientiane Action Plan were adopted. We call on all States to build synergies when implementing the various international instruments.

Anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war continue to cause indiscriminate damage. They hinder reconciliation, stabilisation and economic recovery and place a heavy burden on poor countries around the world. The total funding of the European Union - by which we mean the EU institutions and Member States individually - over the last ten years of over 1,8 billion Euros and the many bilateral projects funded by EU Member States for mine action illustrate our commitment. This makes the European Union the largest contributor to mine action worldwide. During operations on the ground, distinctions between landmines, cluster munitions, and other explosive remnants of war are not made; similarly, as regards assistance to the victims, the EU makes no distinction.

However, mine action is more than a purely humanitarian concern. Today, mine action is to a lesser extent carried out in the immediate aftermath of armed conflict. It has rather become part of states' development efforts, for example to enable the development of agriculture and infrastructure.

In the view of the European Union, mine action needs to be fully integrated into the development dialogue. Only in this way will we be able to tackle the remaining challenges, such as uncleared land and assistance to victims. This is also the way for mine action to ensure that necessary resources are mobilized.

A more long-term development focus on mine action calls for enhanced coordination of efforts. The need for more effective delivery and use of international aid has been manifested in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, and the subsequent Accra Agenda for Action, endorsed by developing and donor countries. Donors and recipient states need to have an increased focus on the linkage between mine action, development and aid effectiveness. The European Union calls on all parties to increase their efforts in this regard.

National ownership is key to handling the remaining challenges to reaching the goal of a mine free world. To achieve effective victim assistance and mine risk education countries' own health and social systems need to be strengthened, and education and labour markets should integrate opportunities for persons affected by mines. In this context, the European Union wishes to emphasize in particular the importance of a human rights perspective in line with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

These tasks must be given priority in national and international development plans. Donor countries, the United Nations and other international organisations should support and strengthen these government development plans. Through inclusive partnerships between donors and affected countries, constructive ideas can be developed and concrete action carried out in support of all those girls, boys, women and men affected by mines.

The European Union commends Mr. Tim Caughley for the excellent work on the evaluation of the ISU. It welcomes and endorses the Task Force's recommendations regarding the Implementation Support Unit. The EU and its Member States look forward to their participation in the working group on ISU financing.

Thank you, Mr President.
