

DRAFT TEXT OTTAWA CONVENTION

Statement by Greece to the Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel mines and on their Destruction (Cambodia, 1 December 2011)

Mr. President,

Since our last statement to the Standing Committee in Geneva, on June 20th 2011 and given the dire economic situation, which continues to have an impact on all socioeconomic aspects of Greece, progress in terms of continuing the destruction of the APLM stockpiles has been slow. The Hellenic Defence Systems "EAS" have not been exempted from the cutbacks, subsequently impacting their capacity to meet the anticipated deadlines suggested during our last meeting.

More specifically, following a year long judicial process in the Greek courts, we are currently awaiting the decision of the Appellate court, following the plea of the EAS to review the decision of the courts of First Instance in April 2011, the verdict of which supported the position of the State. In the meantime, and with reference to the destruction of the remaining stockpiles (953,285), EAS submitted for consideration a revised proposal with a new timeline and financial conditions for destruction. This timeline, which initially had become an issue for negotiation, has been further hampered by the economic crisis which has limited the state's budget, and subsequently curtailed operations in state owned industries, or stopped them completely. Thus, the plan which initially entailed the re-initiation of the contract within six months, remains unexecuted pending the completion of the aforementioned judicial process as well as budgetary appropriations which we anticipate will be forthcoming, following the passage of the budget for 2012 by Parliament. A future new contract would involve the closer engagement of the Hellenic Armed Forces in the monitoring of the whole process.

Given the above complications, the competent Greek authorities are now also examining alternative options to expedite the process of destruction. More specifically, we are at present assessing other offers from certified companies which specialise in the field of destruction/ demilitarization of ammunitions, in order to fulfil our obligations in compliance with Article 4 of the Convention.

Mr. President,

Since its accession to the Ottawa Convention, Greece has spared no efforts to comply with all its obligations. In this regard, as you are fully aware, we completed mine clearance four and a half years ahead of schedule, a task we considered more important from a humanitarian perspective. With regard to our obligations emanating from Article 4 of the Convention, we have always addressed the complications which have arisen with the utmost transparency and sincerity. These complications should not in any way be construed as a deliberate failure or lack of willingness to comply with the Convention's obligations, but rather as a hurdle, exacerbated by the objective and unprecedented economic difficulties which our country is facing. Finally, Mr. President, we would be ready to answer questions which partners may have and provide clarification if required.