



European Union

Statement by

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Head of the Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United
Nations and to other international organizations in Geneva**

APLC - 12th Meeting of the States Parties

(3-7 December)

Geneva, 3 December 2012

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -

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EU statement

Mr. President,

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

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

The European Union wishes to congratulate you on your election as President of our meeting and pledge our full support in your work. We also take this opportunity to thank the outgoing President H.E. Minister PRAK Sokhonn for his leadership of our work during the past year.

Mr. President

This year we are commemorating the 20th anniversary of the International Campaign to ban landmines. We are very honoured that both of the recipients of the 1997 Nobel Peace Prize, Ms. Jody Williams and the ICBL are here with us to mark this significant anniversary. The ICBL played a vital role in the process leading to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and continue to play a significant role today. The ICBL's goal of a world free of anti-personnel mines is one which the EU shares and they will continue to be a crucial partner. The activities of ICBL clearly demonstrate the important contribution civil society and NGOs can make to the work of the UN in general and the improvement of International Humanitarian Law. They bring their expertise and knowledge from the field and enhance effectiveness and transparency in our work.

Mr. President,

The European Union is pleased to recall that Finland acceded to the Convention in July and that Poland will soon be a State Party. Thus all 27 EU Member States will soon be States Parties to the Convention, while all EU Member States have already been observing all provisions of the Ottawa Convention. The European Union wishes also to welcome Somalia's accession to the Convention. With this accession every state in Sub-Saharan Africa is now bound by the Convention.

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

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

Regarding the universalization and full implementation of the Convention, we welcome the significant progress that has been achieved but we are aware that much remains to be done. We are seriously concerned at all allegations of recent use of anti-personnel mines, in particular by Syrian forces on the borders of Turkey and Lebanon. The EU strongly condemns any use of these weapons and calls on all States and other actors to take all necessary measures to ensure that they are never used again.

The Review Conference in Cartagena gave renewed impetus to our common efforts to reach all the objectives of the Convention. As a practical way to demonstrate the EU's ongoing commitment to the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan 2010-2014, the European Union adopted a new Council Decision on 13 November to provide more than 1 million EUR in support of the efforts of States Parties to the Convention. This funding will be used for projects to implement commitments made in the Action Plan on victim assistance and mine clearance, and to support our universalization efforts in particular by the organization of three workshops and the work of a high level task force for the universalization of the Convention.

The EU remains determined to cooperate with and extend assistance to those States that need support in meeting their commitments under the Convention. The technical implementation of the projects shall be carried out by the Implementation Support Unit. Copies of the European Union Council Decision and its Annex with a detailed description of the projects are available at the back of the Room.

The European Union and its Member States have a long standing commitment to mine action. The financial support provided by the European Union and its Member States to support mine action has surpassed two billion Euros over the past ten years. This is around half of the world's financial assistance to mine action in the last decade. For the European Union, the programming phase for the next budgetary cycle has commenced and we are open to receiving concrete proposals by affected countries.

Mr President,

For the European Union, Victim Assistance is a core component of our Mine Action Strategy and there is a strong commitment to strengthening care, rehabilitation and socio-economic reintegration of victims. The presence of the High Commissioner for Human Rights Ms Pillay here today highlighted once again the strong linkage between our Convention and the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which provides a wider framework to address the needs of survivors, the realization of their human rights and to ensure respect for their inherent dignity. The Convention on the Rights of Persons With Disabilities has been signed by the European Union and all its Member States and it has been ratified by the European Union and 24 Member States; the other 3 being in the process of doing so.

Mr. President,

In our work going forward we believe we should collectively work in a focused and efficient manner and make the best possible use of existing resources in a transparent and accountable way as well as develop synergies, where possible and appropriate, between different instruments. At the same time, we believe that through regular dialogue between donors, affected countries, researchers, and mine action organisations constructive ideas and solutions can be developed and effective mine action can be carried out in support of all those affected by mines.

Thank you Mr. President.