

**Fifteenth Meeting of States Parties to the
Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
Santiago de Chile, December 2016**

EU Statement on Victim Assistance

I have the honour to take the floor on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this statement.

Let me thank the Chair of the Committee on Victim Assistance for the presentation of the conclusions and recommendations related to the mandate of the Committee on Victim Assistance.

Casualties from mine incidents have decreased significantly since the entry into force of the Convention. This is one of the successes of our Convention. At the same time and despite this progress, anti-personnel mines, including improvised mines, continue to be used and harm civilians. There are even indications that 2015 might have showed a trend reversal with a higher number of casualties in comparison with the years before. Survivors and their families continue to need support. More efforts are required in order to ensure that adequate assistance is provided to them in accordance to their needs and that available funds are used in a more effective way.

For the European Union assistance to victims of anti-personnel mines remains a main priority in its mine action policies and projects. We are committed to providing concrete and sustainable assistance to victims, their families and communities. The EU and its Member States have committed significant funds to this respect in many countries and regions of the

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

world. The EU will soon adopt soon new projects in support of the Maputo Action Plan and victim assistance figures among the priority areas.

As was also emphasized in the Maputo Action Plan, we believe that in order for victim assistance efforts to be sustainable in the longer term, they need to be integrated into broader disability policies. Our goal is to ensure full participation of survivors in decision- and policy-making on issues affecting them, as well as their participation in all spheres of society, on an equal basis and in a sustainable way, taking also into account the gendered impact of the use of anti-personnel mines.

This goal can be better achieved when we coordinate our efforts with other related international instruments and norms and in particular with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This UN Convention has set the golden standard for the full and equal participation of people with disabilities in society and provides us with important guidance. Its implementation on the ground requires a joint effort of all stakeholders with the involvement of people with disabilities.

The EU, which is a full Party to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, will continue to pay attention to persons with disabilities in its development cooperation policies and programmes, while ensuring that the rights and needs of victims of mines and other explosive remnants of war are taken into account. The European Union is proud to have contributed to the inclusion of persons with disabilities in the Sustainable Development Goals related to education, growth and employment, inequality, accessibility of human settlements, as well as data collection and monitoring of the SDGs.

I thank you.