



EUROPEAN UNION

FSC.DEL/129/18

5 July 2018

ENGLISH only

**OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation N°888
Vienna, 4 July 2018**

**EU Statement on the Role of Mine Action in all Phases of
the Conflict Cycle**

The European Union and its Member States warmly welcome the guest speakers to the Forum for Security Co-operation and thank them for their presentations. We commend the Slovenian FSC Chairmanship for bringing the topic of mine action to the attention of this Forum.

Mr. Chairman, landmines continue to kill people and tear societies apart years after a conflict has ended. They continue to instil terror, to stop people returning to their normal lives and refugees to their own homes. They strip entire regions of a fair chance of economic development, and hinder the prospects of reconciliation and stabilisation.

The EU and its Member States are proud to be a leading force in addressing the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war. All 28 EU Member States are party to the 'Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction'. Since its inception in 1997 the Ottawa Convention has helped to save many thousands of lives, destroy more than 50 million stockpiled mines and pave the way to reconciliation through mine action in many post-conflict situations.

The European Union has a long history of support to international mine action, which remains among the high priorities of EU foreign policy. The EU provides financial support to numerous projects covering the whole scope of mine action: mine clearance, stockpile destruction, victim assistance, risk education, advocacy and capacity building. The EU also supports affected countries to set up or update national mine action strategies and operational clearance plans. Between 2012 and 2016 the EU contracted mine action in 33 affected countries across the world worth almost EUR 300 mil. This assistance was implemented in cooperation with several partners, including the OSCE. A detailed overview of the EU-funded activities can be found in a brochure 'The European Union's support

for the mine action across the world', available on the EEAS website (https://eeas.europa.eu/sites/eeas/files/brochure_1.pdf).

The EU is using various financial instruments to retain its commitment to the fighting of this global threat. About a third of the EU's support for mine action is provided through the European Commission's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), an instrument specifically designed to respond quickly and flexibly to conflicts and crisis around the world. When addressing mines and ERW is part of the national development plan or other longer-term strategy or programme of a mine-affected country, EU mine action can be funded through relevant geographic instruments, depending on the country in question. In humanitarian and crisis situations the EU also funds mine action as part of its overall support to the protection of civilians. Through the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation the Commission provides funds for research and development with regard to methods and technologies for mine detection and clearance. Many EU Member States also support mine action on a bilateral basis. In the period 2012-2016, EU MS supported mine action with additional funding in excess of EUR 300 million.

Mr. Chairman, we would like to commend you for bringing the gender aspects of mine action to our attention. Mainstreaming gender within mine action policies and projects is key to making sure that the needs of affected communities are equally addressed.

We are grateful that representatives of OSCE field missions were invited to our meeting today to share with us first-hand experience and information about their activities in the area of mine action. Several OSCE pS benefitted from the EU-funded mine-related activities. Let us in this context mention the EU support for stockpile destruction efforts in Belarus, as well as the EU's support for the 'Explosive ordnance and remnants of war destruction' (Explode) project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Furthermore, the EU's Council Decision of 13 November 2012, aimed to enhance the pursuit of the aims of the Ottawa Convention by supporting

the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan, provided resources to support Tajikistan in its national efforts.

The EU also provides extensive support to Ukraine, including through cooperation with the OSCE Project Co-ordinator. It is estimated that over 1750 people have been killed or injured by landmines and ERW in Ukraine since the violation of Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity by the Russian Federation in 2014. The EU works with several implementing partners in the country, including HALO Trust, which is present in Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts in eastern Ukraine. The EU provided vital financial support to HALO Trust's mine clearance operations from February to October 2016. 2 628 people benefited directly from these activities. Another important project implemented by the NATO Trust Fund aims at destroying 55% of the Ukrainian stockpiled anti-personnel landmines. Furthermore, through partnership with the Danish Demining Group a project aimed at reducing the immediate risk from mines and ERW on the civilian population in Luhansk and Donetsk oblasts was implemented. In 2016 the EU signed an agreement with the OSCE for the implementation of the Action 'Supporting Demining of Transport Infrastructure in Ukraine'. Since the beginning of the project in November 2016, Ukrainian demining experts have found and destroyed over 10 000 mines and ERW.

Mr. Chairman, despite all the efforts, much still needs to be done. We are confronted with new challenges every day. Vast areas across the world remain inaccessible due to mine contamination and the number of mine casualties is rising. We will keep engaging so that all state and non-state actors refrain from the manufacture, trade and use of anti-personnel mines, and join the Ottawa Convention. Implementing the Convention is fundamental for peace, stabilisation and economic recovery. It is our responsibility to preserve and strengthen it.

The Candidate Countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA*, MONTENEGRO* and ALBANIA*, the Country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and Potential Candidate BOSNIA and HERZEGOVINA, and the EFTA countries ICELAND and LIECHTENSTEIN, members of the European Economic Area, as well as UKRAINE and the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA align themselves with this statement.

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