
**Fourth Review Conference 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**

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Second Preparatory Meeting

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Item 4 of the provisional agenda

Exchange of views on documents to be adopted at the Fourth Review Conference

**Council Conclusions¹ on a European Union (EU) position on
strengthening the ban against anti-personnel mines in light of
the Fourth Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine
Ban Convention from 25 to 29 November 2019 in Oslo**

Submitted by the European Union

1. The European Union stands united in its support for the universal ban on anti-personnel mines. The EU appeals to all actors to refrain from the production, stockpiling, trade and transfer of anti-personnel mines and strongly condemns their use anywhere, anytime, and by any actor, whether States or non-State actors. The Council of the European Union considers the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction (hereinafter the Convention) to be a key disarmament instrument, the integrity, full implementation and strict application of which must be guaranteed and universal adherence thereto must be pursued. The EU urges States that have not yet done so to join the Convention without delay, or, as an interim step, to comply with the norms of the Convention.

2. Twenty years after its entry into force, the Council considers that the Convention has become a success story of disarmament diplomacy and an example of what the EU stands for: a rules-based international order, rooted in the respect for human rights and international humanitarian law. The Convention combines a strong global norm with impressive results regarding the destruction of stockpiled anti-personnel mines, the clearance of mine contaminated land and its provision that each State Party, in a position to do so, shall provide relevant assistance to mine victims that should be integrated into broader national policies, plans and legal frameworks. The Convention has generated a measurable and considerable positive impact on humanitarian protection, stabilisation, development and disarmament worldwide, contributing to international peace and security and to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

¹ Adopted by the Council at its 3703rd meeting held on 25 June 2019

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3. The Council acknowledges that the objectives of the Convention have not yet been achieved in full. Anti-personnel mine contamination continues to cause harm, instill fear, deny access, impede socio-economic development and stop refugees and internally displaced people from returning home. The burden placed by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war on individuals, families, communities, regions and States remains high and unacceptable. The Council is concerned about the ongoing impact of existing contamination and the new large-scale contamination by improvised anti-personnel mines in countries such as Iraq, Libya and Syria.

4. The Council recalls that the EU and its Member States are major donors for mine action assistance worldwide, supporting mine clearance, mine risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction, capacity building and research and development in technology for mine detection and clearance. Since the last Review Conference of the Convention in 2014 the EU and its Member States have committed more than €500 million for mine action assistance in over 30 mine affected countries.

5. The Council recalls the contribution provided to the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention under EU Council Decision 2017/1428/CFSP in support of the universalization and implementation of the Convention and the Maputo Action Plan and EU Council Decision 2012/700/CFSP in support of the implementation of the Cartagena Action Plan. This Decision has enabled the Implementation Support Unit to assist mine affected countries to set up or update national mine action strategies, in close cooperation with the United Nations, and other donors and stakeholders.

6. The Council expresses its appreciation towards many partners and stakeholders that have contributed to the development of the Convention and its successes of the past twenty years, including all States Parties, International Organisations, Civil Society, researchers, and all mine action donors and operators. In this light the Council recognises, among others, the efforts undertaken by the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the International Campaign to Ban Landmines. The Council would in particular like to honour the courage and determination of deminers worldwide who are working to make land accessible and safe again, and would like to commemorate those who lost their lives while doing this noble work. The Council congratulates the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention for their steadfast and invaluable work. Finally, the Council underscores the strong partnership and excellent cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union in the field of mine action.

7. The Council welcomes the upcoming Fourth Review Conference of the Convention, taking place in Oslo from 25 to 29 November 2019, as an opportunity to review progress, reaffirm commitments and generate a push for further universalisation and strengthened implementation of the Convention. The Council considers that the Review Conference should encourage an open and constructive dialogue between States Parties and involve all relevant stakeholders to discuss current and future challenges and accelerate progress towards achieving the shared goal of an anti-personnel mine free world by 2025. The Council welcomes the proposal by the Norwegian Presidency to work towards three consensus outcome documents: a Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention, an Action Plan on future implementation and universalization (Oslo Action Plan), and a Political Declaration (Oslo Declaration).

8. An elaboration of the EU's objectives for the outcome of the Review Conference can be found in the position paper in the Annex

Annex

EU Position Paper for the Fourth Review Conference of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction from 25 to 29 November 2019 in Oslo

1. The European Union will contribute constructively to a successful consensus outcome of the Review Conference of the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, thereby pursuing the inclusion of the following elements in the three foreseen outcome documents: (1) the Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention, (2) the Political Declaration and (3) the Action Plan.

2. With regard to the Review of the Operation and Status of the Convention:

(a) Strive for a detailed review of the implementation status of the Convention's obligations since the Third Review Conference in 2014, building on the preparatory work of the Convention's Committees, thereby congratulating States Parties that have completed their obligations since the last review Conference and calling on States Parties to comply with their obligations and to continue to work towards a mine free world;

(b) Identify implementation challenges that were met by States Parties;

(c) Review the Convention's implementation machinery and support efforts and proposals to improve it where necessary, efficient and in line with the convention;

(d) Welcome new States Parties;

(e) Commend the work of the Convention's Committees and of the Implementation Support Unit;

(f) Call for efforts to sustain and deliver new funding for mine action, including through innovative financing;

(g) Call on States Parties in arrears for assessed contributions to the Convention to resolve this, underlining that a political commitment to the Convention should be supported by a financial commitment and encourage States Parties in a position to do so to provide voluntary contributions to the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention;

(h) Call on States Parties to comply with their reporting obligations under Article 7.

3. With regard to the Oslo Political Declaration:

(a) Commit to a rules-based international order, rooted in the respect for International Law, including Human Rights Law and International Humanitarian Law, and support for a continued multilateral dialogue on disarmament;

(b) Reaffirm the ambition and aspiration of the Declaration of the Third Review Conference in Maputo to meet the goal of a world free of mines and new mine victims to the fullest extent possible by 2025;

(c) Commit to implement the Convention and the Oslo Action Plan and underline the importance of full compliance;

(d) Underline the importance of partnerships with all mine clearance actors, including with civil society;

- (e) Commit to the norm against anti-personnel mines (“never under any circumstances to use anti-personnel mines”);
 - (f) Confirm that improvised explosive devices (IEDs) that meet the Convention's definition of an anti-personnel mine, fall under the obligations of the Convention.
 - (g) Underline that mine action can enable socio-economic development, peace building and stabilization;
 - (h) Commit to considering gender in delivering all aspects of mine action.
4. With regard to the Oslo Action Plan:
- (a) Address all aspects of the Convention implementation, including universalisation, stockpile destruction, mine clearance, victim assistance, cooperation and assistance, national implementation measures, transparency and reporting;
 - (b) Underline that mine action supports security and humanitarian efforts, stabilisation, and socio-economic development, as well as return of refugees and integrated support to mine victims;
 - (c) Welcome the new UN Mine Action Strategy and take note of the UN Secretary General's Agenda for Disarmament in this context;
 - (d) States Parties should recommit to make use of synergies with other relevant instruments of international humanitarian and human rights law, including potentially the Convention on the Rights of persons with Disabilities, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.
 - (e) Confirm that anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature have to be cleared through mine action in accordance with existing obligations;
 - (f) Achievable options for addressing the following challenges:
 - (i) the increasing use of anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature and how they are addressed through humanitarian mine action: i.a. mine clearance, fulfilling existing reporting obligations on the location, type and quantity of contamination, on relevant support to victims in line with the Convention, as well as on Mine Risk Reduction and Mine Risk Education activities;
 - (ii) the specific challenges to mine action methods and technologies in urban environments, in line with existing standards;
 - (iii) the risk of losing sight of legacy/historical mine contamination;
 - (iv) engagement in other domains for the integration of victim assistance in to wider national social and health policies and programs.
 - (g) Apply the following principles:
 - (i) Promote a commitment by all States Parties to fully implement and complete their obligations under the Convention;
 - (ii) Transparency;
 - (iii) Accountability, effectiveness and efficiency;
 - (iv) Inclusiveness: involving all stakeholders;
 - (v) National and local ownership;
 - (vi) Taking account of Gender and empowerment of youth and women through appropriate actions;

- (vii) Non-discrimination, including an inclusive and integrated approach to victim assistance.
 - (h) Promote best practices such as:
 - (i) Affected countries planning their completion by means of detailed and up-to-date national mine action strategies;
 - (ii) Conformity of humanitarian mine action terminology and procedures with the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS);
 - (iii) Conformity of mine clearance terminology and procedures in a non-humanitarian context with international standards, such as the UN IED Disposal Standards;
 - (iv) Enhanced cooperation and dialogue between donors and affected countries and donor coordination supported by the format of the Individualised Approach and Partnerships for Completion.
 - (v) Improved donor coordination supported by dialogue formats such as the Mine Action Support Group, the UN Mine Action Directors Meetings, and ad-hoc formats involving the donor states, the EU, NATO, UN and other regional and multilateral organisations.
 - (i) Highlight the multiplier and catalyst effects of mine action and Convention compliance:
 - (i) in supporting efforts outside of the convention, aimed at reconciliation and confidence building between former enemies;
 - (ii) for supporting wider efforts aimed at the return of internally displaced persons;
 - (iii) for supporting the integrated approach by marginalised groups and the issue of disability being addressed in wider national supports efforts.
 - (j) Support innovative approaches such as new funding and financing mechanisms for mine action assistance.
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