



## **EU Statement**

### **23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties on Amended Protocol II**

#### **Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons**

**Geneva, 10 December 2021**

Mr. President,

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

The Candidate Countries Montenegro\*, Serbia\* and Albania\*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Iceland, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate Japan on assuming the leadership of Amended Protocol II during its 2021 session. Also, I would like to express our appreciation to Ambassador Ichiro Ogasawara on his continued dedication and commitment to advancing the objectives of the framework of Amended Protocol II.

The EU and its Member States recall that the CCW and its Protocols are an essential and integral part of IHL. In this regard, we reiterate our collective commitment to respect and comply fully with IHL, as well as the continuation of implementing fully the EU Guidelines on the promotion of compliance with IHL.

The EU emphasizes the importance of the universalisation of Amended Protocol II, which remains a top priority for the EU. The EU supports all efforts and strongly encourages all countries that have not yet done so to join. The EU underlines the importance of transparency and building confidence in the implementation of the CCW and its Protocols and encourages the High Contracting Parties to complete detailed reports on a regular basis.

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

The EU remains fully committed to reducing the suffering and the harm caused by mines, booby-traps and other devices. The EU is deeply concerned about the continued severe impact globally of Improvised Explosive Devices (IED) attacks and their indiscriminate use and effects, in particular in the perpetration of terrorist acts. The use of improvised explosive devices against civilian populations and infrastructure, including health-care systems, produces alarming humanitarian harm, especially in urban settings, and requires an urgent response. Efforts to enhance prevention, preparedness and response are needed to tackle the global threat. Systematic information exchange on incidents involving IEDs, when feasible, could enhance appropriate defensive measures. Access to precursor material should be restricted through timely disposal of explosive remnants of war, in accordance with the obligation under Protocol V, and through safe management of ammunition stockpiles. Trafficking routes for explosive precursor material should be identified and countered. Decontamination needs to be done in conjunction with the efforts in other disarmament conventions, such as the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, which contains an obligation for States Parties to clear all types of anti-personnel mines, including anti-personnel mines of an improvised nature.

The EU strongly condemns all use of anti-personnel mines, including of an improvised nature, which violate the norm against anti-personnel mines. The use of anti-personnel mines anywhere, anytime, and by any actor is unacceptable to the European Union. We appeal to all actors to refrain from the production, acquisition, stockpiling, trade, retention or transfer of anti-personnel mines and to halt to the use of anti-personnel mines, whether industrially manufactured, or improvised, worldwide. The burden placed by anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war on individuals, families, communities, regions and States remains excessively high.

We would like to reiterate our continued support for previous multilateral actions taken by the UN in an effort to combat the harmful effects of IEDs. In this regard, the EU remains in full support to update the 2016 political declaration on IEDs, which facilitates universal awareness of the extensive consequences of the threat of IEDs and the ever-growing importance of a comprehensive, global approach to combat said threat. In particular, we appreciate the inclusion of a gender perspective as well as the linkage to the Sustainable Development Goals.

The EU will continue to support national capacity building efforts and remains actively involved around the globe. In preventing the illicit proliferation and diversion of materials that can be used in the construction of improvised explosive devices (IEDs), the European Union,

is supporting Conflict Armament Research (CAR) to implement a project, titled, *iTrace Plus 2: Support for the European Agenda on Security to Provide Field-based Data on Access to and the Deployment of Dangerous Substances Such as Explosives by Terrorist Networks*. This is the second phase of this cooperation between the European Union and CAR (2020-2022).

In this regard, the EU is also fully committed to mainstreaming a gender perspective into all non-proliferation, disarmament and arms control work in line with Resolution 1325 of the UN Security Council, including through promoting women's participation and providing integrated support where appropriate.

The EU highlights the humanitarian impact and the heavy consequences on social and economic development caused by the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM). While acknowledging that MOTAPM are legitimate weapons, Parties are obliged to ensure that they are used in accordance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), including by taking all feasible precautions, to protect civilians from the effects of these weapons. The EU believes it would be appropriate for States Parties to further discuss how to ensure compliance with Amended Protocol II, also with respect to MOTAPM. The issue of MOTAPM should therefore remain on the CCW agenda for further discussions in order to ensure that High Contracting Parties can continue to consider the matter in a constructive and transparent manner.

Thank you, Mr. President.