EU Statement
15th Annual Conference of High Contracting Parties on Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War
Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
Geneva, 9 December 2021

Mr. President,

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

The Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro* 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 the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

At the outset, I would like to congratulate South Africa on assuming the Presidency over Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War in 2021 and commend your efforts to advance the implementation of the goals of this instrument. We assure you of our full support and cooperation.

The European Union recalls that the CCW and its Protocols are an essential and integral part of IHL and reiterates the commitment of the European Union and its Member States 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 European Union and its Member States remain fully committed to Protocol V, its objectives and its goal of addressing the problem of unexploded and abandoned explosive ordnance and minimising the serious post-conflict impact of Explosive Remnants of War

* The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
(ERW) on civilian populations. The EU would like to express strong support for all efforts to strengthen this important instrument, to promote its universalisation, and to enhance its implementation. In this vein, we strongly encourage all countries that have not yet done so to join Protocol V as soon as possible.

The EU attaches high importance to transparency and confidence building in the implementation of Protocol V and encourages High Contracting Parties to complete detailed reports to promote the work of Protocol V on key issues such as survey, clearance, recording, retention and transmission of information.

As the world’s leading donor in Humanitarian Aid, the EU provides significant assistance for mine action, in particular for clearance, destruction of mines, booby-traps and ERW, for victim assistance and mine risk education. 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 Security Council of the United Nations, including through promoting women's participation and providing integrated support where appropriate.

The European Union reaffirms its commitments to continue providing assistance to save lives and to bring tangible benefits for communities in affected areas, creating new opportunities for growth and stability. The EU funding is often the only source of financing and support. Currently, a series of mine-action projects are on-going in 21 countries, including in Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Burkina Faso, Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Iraq, Laos, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Senegal, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Syria, Turkey, Yemen, Ukraine, and are delivering positive results for people in the area.

Thank you, Mr. President