European Union
Statement
By Delegation of the European Union to the UNOG

18th Annual Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Amended Protocol II
To the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

Geneva, 30 August 2016

- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY-
EU Statement at the
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Mr President,

I am speaking 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 and the Republic of Moldova align themselves with this Statement.

Allow me to begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of the 18th Conference of States Parties to Amended Protocol II of the CCW. It is a great pleasure to see you again chairing our work. We wish to assure you of our continued support. We also wish to thank the Coordinators for their excellent work and their important contributions and recommendations.

The Amended Protocol II represents an important instrument of International Humanitarian Law in reducing the harm caused by mines, booby-traps, and other devices to civilians and we support its full implementation. This is the last Conference before the Fifth Review Conference of the CCW this coming December and we believe that it is important to take stock of the progress made on the implementation of the Amended Protocol II and agree on the way forward for the next Review Cycle.

The European Union supports all efforts towards the universalization of the Protocol and we call on States not yet party to it to accede to it as soon as possible. We also encourage the High Contracting Parties to endorse at our meeting today the appeal on achieving the widest possible adherence to Amended Protocol II. We also strongly encourage those remaining states that are Parties to the Original Protocol II to accede to Amended Protocol II.

*The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
The existence of Protocol II amended confirms that mines and booby-traps are connected with indiscriminate effects and unacceptable humanitarian consequences. This conviction leads to the 1997 Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. The EU strongly encourages non States Parties to join this Convention with a view to achieving full universalisation and strengthen the international norm against anti-personnel mines.

We share the deep concerns over the increasing global impact of IED attacks worldwide and their indiscriminate use and effects in particular in the perpetration of terrorist acts.

We value the work done on this issue in the CCW in increasing awareness of the IED impact and creating a useful platform for exchange of information and best practices on countering the impact IEDs.

We wish to express our gratitude to the Coordinators of the IED issue, France and Moldova, for their valuable work on this topic. We remain committed to continue working in the CCW to address the issue of IEDs in accordance with the objectives and the purposes of the Convention.

We support the recommendations by the coordinators to continue exchanging information on the various aspects of the issue and raising awareness of the IED impact. We also encourage the High Contracting Parties to continue contributing to the compilation of existing guidelines, best practices and other recommendations aiming at addressing the diversion or illicit use of materials that can be used for IEDs as a useful tool in the efforts to help mitigate the impact of IEDs.

We welcome the idea of a political declaration on countering the challenges of IEDs and we hope that it could be agreed today by the High Contracting Parties with the view of its final endorsement at the Fifth Review Conference.

An important result of the work in the CCW over these past years is the first ever Resolution on ‘Countering the threat posed by IEDs’, submitted at the 2015 session of the UNGA First Committee by Afghanistan, Australia and France, supported by all EU Member States. We are looking forward to its updated version this year.
Mr President,

In the European Union we have adopted a number of concrete measures to reduce the possibility of misuse of explosives for use in IEDs. These measures are applied in all European Union Member States and are designed to ensure cooperation between all stakeholders, in particular EU Member States, industry and Europol.

In this vein, we have developed harmonised rules concerning the Marketing and Use of Explosives Precursors. Additionally, the restriction of explosives precursors is part of the EU Action Plan on Enhancing the Security of Explosives, which contains a number of measures to prevent, detect and respond to the illicit use of explosives, and foresees the development of information sharing and research mechanisms.

Furthermore, and without prejudice to the scope of application of Amended Protocol II to armed conflicts as an instrument of International Humanitarian Law, the EU legislation on explosives for civil use ensures the harmonisation of the relevant laws of EU Member States and sets up a system for the identification and traceability of explosives for civil use, information exchange networks and harmonisation of safety requirements.

The EU Action Plan against the illicit Trafficking and Use of Firearms and Explosives commits the EU and its Member States to strengthen the implementation of existing measures with regard to the securing of explosives and speeds up the revision of the Regulation on Explosive Precursors in order to increase its effectiveness.

Mr President,

The European Union is looking forward to the outputs of the Conference and we hope that on the basis of productive discussions we will be able to advance or common objectives with a view to the Fifth Review Conference.

Thank you