European Union
Statement by

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Permanent Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations

Ninth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V
on Explosive Remnants of War to the Convention
on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)
(Geneva, 9-10 November 2015)

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- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY –
EU Statement at the
Ninth Conference of the High Contracting Parties to Protocol V on ERW to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects (CCW)

Geneva, 09 November 2015

Mr President,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The following countries align themselves with this statement: Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia.

The European Union wishes to congratulate you on your election as President of the Conference and assure you of our full cooperation and support in your work. We would also like to commend the Coordinators for their excellent work over the past year and for their efforts to advance the effective implementation of Protocol V on Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW).

With a view to strengthening International Humanitarian Law the European Union continues to underline the importance of Protocol V. The presence of unexploded and abandoned explosive ordnance has serious post-conflict consequences for civilians, their communities and their environment.

The productive discussions during the Intersessional Meetings and the exchange of practical experiences provided useful information on the implementation of the Protocol and the remaining challenges.

For the European Union the universalisation of Protocol V and its effective implementation are issues of high importance in minimising the humanitarian harm and post-conflict impact caused by Explosive Remnants of War.

Victim assistance is a key component of the EU Mine Action Strategy in the wider sense. In the EU there is a clear commitment to provide concrete and sustainable assistance to victims, their families and communities and assist victims according to their rights and needs. We support the Plan of Action on Victim Assistance established in 2008 and welcome recommendations on how to strengthen the implementation of Article 8. We welcome the recommendation to cooperate and liaise with other relevant frameworks on victim assistance and the need for affected States to include victims in their overall national disabilities and development frameworks. In this regard, we wish to underline the strong linkage with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which provides a wider framework to comprehensively address the needs of survivors, the realisation of their political, social and economic rights, and to ensure respect for their inherent dignity.
Clearance, removal and destruction of ERW remain core issues of Protocol V. We believe it is important to further explore appropriate practical methods to enhance efficiency and effectiveness in ERW clearance programmes, as well as the coordination between different actors working in the field and the development of synergies as applicable. We also wish to underline the importance of the effective implementation of the provisions of Article 4 of the Protocol on recording, retaining and transmission of information on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance, as this is closely linked with an effective clearance of ERW.

The European Union agrees that national reporting is important for creating transparency and building confidence in the implementation of Protocol V. We therefore encourage States Parties to complete reports on time and ensure a higher rate of compliance with the reporting requirements.

With regard to Generic Preventive Measures, the European Union welcomes discussions on the management of munitions sites, including consideration of the questions posed by the Coordinator. We would also encourage the High Contracting Parties to implement Part 3 of the Technical Annex to Protocol V and to report on such work in their Protocol V national annual reports, and to implement, inter alia, the United Nations International Ammunition Technical Guidelines, which are an effective tool to secure and manage safely ammunition stockpiles.

We recognise that full implementation of the provisions of the Protocol can pose a challenge for some High Contracting Parties. The commitment of the European Union to Mine Action is longstanding and continuous. In providing assistance the European Union does not differentiate between the types of explosive devices. We stand ready to provide, where possible, assistance to States in their efforts to comply with the Protocol. The significant financial and political support provided by the European Union and its Member States individually on Mine Action in the wider sense in almost all affected countries and regions of the world, paving the way for reconstruction and economic and social development, make the EU and its Member States the leading donors in this area.

We are looking forward to a productive Conference of High Contracting Parties in support of the effective implementation of Protocol V and we remain committed to working with all partners to achieve this goal.

Thank you