



European Union

EU General Statement
Meeting of the High Contracting Parties to
the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)
Geneva, 21 November 2018

Mr. Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

I would like to congratulate you on your election and assure you of our full cooperation and support.

We are deeply concerned over continued non-compliance by some High Contracting Parties with their financial obligations, and once again, urge them to pay their contributions in full and on time and to settle their arrears without delay. We are grateful for your proposals to put this important Convention on a more solid financial footing. We call for the full implementation of the financial measures that were adopted last year and further addressing problems caused by structural arrears. We hope that this meeting will be in the position to take the necessary decisions to ensure adequate financial liquidity in the meantime.

The EU and its Member States have a long-standing commitment to the CCW and its Protocols. They play a very important role in the implementation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The CCW is a unique international instrument gathering diplomatic, legal and military expertise, with the wide participation of governments, regional and international organisations, civil society, academia and industry. This makes it an

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

appropriate forum for responding to alleged violations and addressing new developments in the field of weapons technology. Information exchange, transparency and building confidence are essential tools to enhance implementation of, and compliance with the Convention and its Protocols, and in this respect, we encourage all High Contracting Parties to fulfil their legal, technical as well as reporting obligations, improve the rate and quality of national reporting, and engage in discussion on national implementation.

We note with some concern the slowing pace of ratifications to the CCW and its Protocols and call on all States to accede to these important IHL instruments without further delay.

We reiterate our concern over the increasing impact of attacks with improvised explosive devices (IEDs) worldwide and their indiscriminate use and effects in particular in the perpetration of terrorist acts which have grown dramatically in recent years. We encourage all States to take stringent national measures to prevent the supply of weapons and explosive precursors to terrorists, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2370. The EU will continue to provide assistance to third countries to strengthen their capacities to counter the impact of IEDs.

We continue to be concerned at the humanitarian impact and the heavy consequences on social and economic development arising from the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM). We acknowledge that MOTAPM are legitimate weapons, provided they are used in a manner that ensures the protection of civilians, in accordance with IHL. We believe that MOTAPM should remain on the CCW agenda for further discussions.

We recognise the challenges associated with the use of explosive weapons in densely populated areas and their impact on civilians. We call on all parties to armed conflict to fully comply with IHL principles and rules. We appreciate the recent efforts to give further attention to the issue, raise awareness and share information with the aim to protect the civilian populations and civilian objects from the effects of hostilities and to enhance compliance with IHL. We support the continuation of discussions on this matter within the CCW.

The EU remains gravely concerned over the situation in Syria which is causing unacceptable suffering for civilian populations. We condemn the alleged use of air-delivered incendiary weapons against civilians or military targets located within a concentration of civilians in

Syria. We call on all States not yet party to join Protocol III of the Convention and all States to fully comply with its provisions.

We recall that international law, in particular International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law, fully applies to all existing and emerging weapons systems and that States remain responsible and accountable for their use in armed conflict. Human control is essential to ensure compliance with fundamental IHL principles. We welcome the agreed Guiding Principles by the 2018 Group of Governmental Experts on Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). We support further work towards substantive recommendations and options within the framework of the CCW.

The EU supports gender mainstreaming, and in this regard, we welcome the increased consideration of gender issues at this year's UN General Assembly First Committee with regard to the conventional weapons cluster.

Thank you, Mr. Chair