Declaration by the High Representative Catherine Ashton on behalf of the European Union on the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice-President of the Commission, made the following statement today:

"On August 1st, the Convention on Cluster Munitions enters into force. 37 States have already ratified this treaty while 107 States have signed it. Continued efforts are needed to increase the number of ratifications. Universalisation and full implementation of the Treaties and Conventions in the multilateral system are at the heart of EU actions in the area of non-proliferation and disarmament.

The EU is deeply concerned with the tremendous humanitarian, socio-economic and development challenges still posed by the use of cluster munitions.

In supporting the overall goal of the Convention, the EU puts specific emphasis on the thematic objectives of reducing the cluster munitions threat, alleviating victim suffering, providing socio-economic reintegration, and enhancing local and regional capacities. The EU already includes Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) activities as a part of European mine clearance action, risk education and victim assistance.

As the Convention on Cluster Munitions emphasizes the victim assistance measures, the EU reaffirms its commitment to strengthening care, rehabilitation and social and economic reintegration of explosion victims. The EU also supports the view that such assistance should be integrated in broader public health and socio-economic strategies."