

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY



Second Meeting of States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

(Beirut, Lebanon, 12 – 16 September 2011)

Statement by

H.E. Ms. Angelina Eichhorst, Ambassador

on behalf of the European Union

13 September 2011

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to the Convention on Cluster Munitions
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EU Statement**

Mr./Ms. President,

I am speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia*, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*¹ and Iceland², the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia/Herzegovina, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Armenia align themselves with this declaration.

Mr. President,

Let me begin by congratulating you on your appointment as President of this Second Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions and by thanking the Government of Lebanon for its generous hosting of what we hope will prove yet another landmark event for our concerns in the area of cluster munitions.

Mr. President,

Over the past years, the EU has been a committed supporter of international efforts to address the security and humanitarian concerns posed by conventional weapons and their indiscriminate use. The premise of EU involvement is serious concern at the indiscriminate damage these weapons cause to civilians.

We stress that EU action related to the implementation of the Ottawa Convention on Anti Personnel Landmines has extended in practice to all explosive remnants of war, not least cluster munitions. During operations on the ground, as regards assistance to cluster bomb victims or victims of mines, the EU makes no distinction.

The financial support provided by the European Union to mine action – by which we mean the combined efforts of the EU institutions and EU Member States – clearly illustrates our commitment to a world free of these weapons and other explosive remnants of war. The total EU funding in the last ten years of over 1,8 billion Euros for mine action represents almost half the world's financial assistance to mine action in that period. And the EU continues to provide support in heavily affected countries, in Lebanon, for example, or in Afghanistan, Angola, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Ethiopia, Laos or the Palestinian Territories/Gaza.

¹ * Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Montenegro continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

² + Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

In addition, the EU has recently published a call for proposals under its Seventh Research Framework Programme for the funding of a comprehensive 'toolbox on humanitarian demining', focusing on new technologies for mapping, detection and destruction of both landmines and cluster munitions.

Mr. President

Our activities do not stop there: the European Union just completed work on a project implemented by the Ottawa Convention's Implementation Support Unit (ISU), hosted by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD). This was aimed at promoting awareness, universalisation, and implementation of the Ottawa Convention. We have also finalised a new Council Decision, this time in support of the Cartagena Action Plan and focusing on victim assistance, compliance with mine clearance commitments and universalisation efforts.

Mr. President,

Today, 59 States have already ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions, while 108 States have signed it. This is tremendous progress in a very short period of time. Nonetheless, much remains to be done to include the world's largest possessors and manufacturers of cluster munitions in the overall divestment effort, which is one major purpose of the CCM, and to improve the situation on the ground.

Mr. President

The EU is exercised by the quest for more efficient and effective delivery of aid. So, we are concerned to help implement the goals of the CCM, particularly where our endeavours to contribute to those countries' development may be hindered by lack of action in the field of cluster munitions. Yet, we must be aware that full compliance with the obligations of the Convention on Cluster Munitions will be a huge challenge for many State Parties worldwide. The EU is aware of the complexity of the tasks involved, and we stand ready to provide assistance to these States in their efforts to implement their national plans effectively, to comply with the Convention and to ensure synergies with other equally pertinent international instruments. At the same time, we must remind states present at this meeting that requests for assistance must be of course find their place within the funding arrangements decided in cooperation with the countries concerned.

Mr. President,

The adoption of the Vientiane Action Plan in November was a commendable first step. The Action Plan must now be implemented by States Parties. But implementation of the CCM and delivering on the Vientiane action plan require financial resources and political commitment on the part of signatory states. Some may appreciate our help through the sound guidance we can facilitate, at international and national level, so the EU stands ready to assist these states in the application of the Vientiane Action Plan. Our long experience and extensive relations with reliable international organisations and experts match our relations with affected States, donor states and with survivors. The EU and its delegations around the world are committed to helping turn the legal obligations of the CCM into concrete action.

Thank you Mr. President.