Conventional Weapons

Small arms, light weapons & ammunition – counter illicit manufacture; arms exports, transfer & circulation. Landmines – help countries clear mines from their territory/help landmine victims; advocate against the use of landmines & for the destruction of mine stockpiles.

Illicit flows of conventional weapons cause instability and fuel conflict in all regions of the world. To counter this, EU policy has 3 main strands:

**Trade & export controls** – mainly through the:
- EU Common Position on Arms Exports
- Arms Trade Treaty

**Landmines** – acting mainly through the:
- Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

**Small arms & light weapons (SALW) control** – mainly through:
- support for international instruments
- outreach at political level
- assistance for states, regional and international organisations.

Small arms and light weapons

The main aim of the policy is to prevent the accumulation and trafficking of small arms, light weapons and ammunition.

The **EU Strategy Against Illicit Firearms, Small Arms & Light Weapons & Their Ammunition** pulls together all the tools available to the EU to combat the illicit trade in small arms:

- Member countries' civilian & military capabilities
- action by police, customs and the judiciary within the EU
- CFSP and CSDP tools, including:
  - the Common Position on Arms Exports
  - funding for programmes throughout the world
  - inserting SALW clauses into EU agreements with non-EU countries
Annual Progress Reports

The EU Council assesses the implementation of the SALW Strategy through Annual Progress Reports.

Documents

- Council Decision in support of an Africa-China-Europe dialogue and cooperation on preventing the diversion of arms and ammunition in Africa (Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/1298)
- Council Decision in support of the South-Eastern and Eastern Europe Clearinghouse for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SEESAC) for the implementation of the Regional Roadmap on combating illicit arms trafficking in the Western Balkans (Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1788)
- Council Decision in support of countering illicit proliferation and trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) and ammunition and their impact in Latin America and the Caribbean in the framework of the EU Strategy against illicit firearms, small arms & light weapons and their ammunition 'Securing arms, Protecting Citizens' (Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/2010)
- Council Decision in support of combating the illicit trade in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons in the Member States of the League of Arab States (Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1789)
- Council Decision in support of iTrace, a global reporting mechanism on illicit SALW and other illicit conventional weapons and ammunition to reduce the risk of their illicit trade (Decision (CFSP) 2019/2191)
- Council Decision in support of OSCE activities to reduce the risk of illicit trafficking and excessive accumulation of SALW and conventional ammunition in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Georgia (Decision 2017/1424/CFSP)
- Council Decision in support of SEESAC disarmament and arms control activities in South-East Europe (Decision (CFSP) 2019/2111)
- Council Decision in support of the UN Programme of Action to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in SALW in all its aspects (Decision/2017/633/CFSP)

Anti-Personnel Mines

The Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention

All 28 EU Member States have acceded to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention and are determined in pursuing its objectives and promoting its universalisation and full implementation. In August 2017 the EU Council adopted Decision 2017/1428/CFSP to promote universal adherence to the Ottawa Convention and to support States Parties in their efforts to implement the mine clearance, victim assistance, and stockpile destruction aspects of the Maputo Action Plan.

Speech by Head of the EU Delegation to Jordan H.E. Ambassador Maria HADJITHEODOSIOU at the opening of the Conference "Fostering Partnerships", Global Conference on Assistance to Victims of Anti-Personnel Mines and Other Explosive Remnants of War, and Disability Rights (10-12 September
The conference is supported by Council Decision 2017/1428/CFSP.

**The EU condemns the use of anti-personnel mines by any actor, whether States or non-State actors.** The EU appeals to all non-States Parties to the Convention and non-State actors to stop manufacturing, trading and using of anti-personnel mines. The EU appeals to all States Parties to actively implement all aspects of the Maputo Action Plan in order to achieve the goal of an anti-personnel mine free world without new victims by 2025.

**The EU's support for mine action**

The EU and its Member States are top donors for mine action to address the threat of mines and explosive remnants of war. Between 2012 and 2016 EU institutions funded mine action for almost €300 million worldwide. EU assistance covers all key aspects – mine clearance, risk education, victim assistance, stockpile destruction and capacity building – and benefits nearly all heavily affected countries, including Chad, Colombia, Croatia, Iraq, Lao PDR, Lebanon, Libya, Myanmar, Syria and Ukraine.

Download the brochure on **The European Union's support for Mine Action across the World** by clicking on the image below.

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To retain its commitment to the fighting of this global threat, the EU is using various instruments. About one third of EU support for mine action is provided through the Commission's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP). The IcSP is a financing instrument specifically designed to respond quickly and flexibly to conflicts and crisis around the world. Mine action programmes are financed under the Article 3 of the IcSP governed by the Commission's Foreign Policy Instruments (FPI). Article 3 covers assistance in response to situations of crisis or emerging crisis to prevent conflicts. EU assistance under the IcSP is provided only to the extent that an adequate and effective response cannot be provided under other financing instruments.

When addressing mines and explosive remnants of war is part of the national development plan or other longer-term strategy or programme of a mine-affected country, EU mine action can be funded through geographic instruments, such as the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI) or the European Development Fund (EDF) that fall under the Commission's DG DEVCO and the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) or the Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance (IPA) that fall under the Commission's DG NEAR, depending on the country in question. Also EU Regional Trust Funds can support mine action.

In humanitarian crisis situations the Commission's DG ECHO funds mine action as part of its overall support to the protection of civilians. Such assistance may be provided on the basis of identified needs and in line with the fundamental humanitarian principles. This may include funding for humanitarian demining, assistance to victims and mine risk education.
Through the EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation the Commission provides funds for research and development with regard to methods and technologies for mine detection and clearance.

Mine action is also funded within the EU through financial instruments such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD) and European Territorial Cooperation (Interreg). For this assistance Croatia is the main recipient.

**EU Delegations** in mine-affected third countries have an important role in the planning and allocation of EU funding for mine action. They are in contact with the authorities and local stakeholders and are well placed to connect local mine action needs with the most suitable EU-funded instrument.

The Council of the EU adopts Decisions to support the implementation and the universalisation of the Ottawa Convention. They are financed from the EU budget for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP). The European External Action Service (EEAS) supports the High Representative in fulfilling her mandates including by preparing the EU's participation to multilateral meetings. The EEAS also sets up EU mine action interagency coordination meetings and compiles information about EU-funded mine action.

Many EU Member States also support mine action on a bilateral basis. In the period 2012-2016, EU Member States supported mine action with more than EUR 300 million according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor.

**Documents**

[Conventional Weapons](#)

**See also**

Combating firearms trafficking: Commission proposes ratification of UN protocol and further action

[The Ottawa Convention Website](#)
[Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining - Secretariat of the Ottawa Convention](#)
[International Campaign to Ban Landmines](#)
[International Committee of the Red Cross-APL](#)
[UN Office for Disarmament Affairs (UNODA)](#)
[www.eeas.europa.eu](#)

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