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**STATEMENT BY
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 999th MEETING OF THE
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

2 February 2022

On mine action

Mr. Chairperson, the European Union and its Member States thank the speakers for their presentations on this important subject.

There are some 100 million anti-personnel mines today buried and active in around 60 countries. This ordnance is the cause of great human devastation and creates major regional security risks. The contamination of certain territories with landmines, especially anti-personnel mines, and the continued existence of explosive remnants of war constitute a major threat, particularly to civilian populations, and obstruct human activity.

Added to that is the growing threat both to armed forces and to humanitarian personnel, peacekeeping forces and civilian populations as a result of improvised explosive devices (IEDs). This ordnance is sometimes made and deployed on a quasi-industrial basis by certain non-State actors, with extremely serious consequences for civilian populations. At a time when resolution 2365 is urging parties to armed conflicts to protect civilians, we recall that 80 per cent of the victims of IEDs are civilians.

Given this vast set of challenges, the EU and its Member States actively support conventional disarmament instruments and the relevant multilateral processes.

The EU fervently advocates the universal prohibition of anti-personnel mines. All its Member States have acceded to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, and we urge those States that have not yet done so to join the Convention without delay or to apply its provisions on an interim basis. We call on all stakeholders to refrain from the production, stockpiling, trade in and transfer of anti-personnel mines, and strongly condemn their use anywhere, at any time and by any actors, whether States or non-State actors. We regret the continued use of anti-personnel mines in certain conflicts, and we must step up our efforts to ensure the rigorous implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

The EU supports the efforts to promote the universalization and full implementation of Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCAC), which defines the responsibilities of States with regard to the clearance, removal and destruction of explosive remnants of war and encourages the development of co-operation and assistance in that area. It also supports Protocol II of the CCAC as amended relating to mines, booby traps and other devices. The work carried out in this area, including IEDs, has highlighted the importance of a comprehensive response to the challenges posed by these devices, in terms of preparation, training and developing the capacity of the armed forces and also of awareness-raising

in the civilian population, preventing the risk of diversion, and co-operation and the exchange of information.

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their strong commitment to supporting efforts aimed at countering the threats posed by anti-personnel mines, IEDs and explosive remnants of war. The EU and its Member States are the principal donors of assistance for mine action. During the past five years, over 500 million euros have been invested in helping to deal with mine action in more than 30 countries, including several OSCE participating States. In particular, the EU supports the development of national strategies for mine clearance and victim assistance. We would remind you that mine clearance is very difficult and demanding work, which could not be accomplished without the commitment and courage of mine-clearing experts from all around the world, which we support.

We appreciate the OSCE's role in supporting mine action at various levels – for example, by strengthening the norms and principles of the participating States and by identifying, developing and implementing practical measures through assistance projects.

With respect to explosive remnants of war and IEDs, the EU has assisted the OSCE in its ambitious integrated programme of co-operation in combating explosive hazards in Central Asia. We welcome in particular the experience acquired by Tajikistan and Kazakhstan in this area, which has enabled them to share their expertise throughout the region.

We welcome the work of the OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre in collecting and analysing the questionnaires presented each year by the participating States on anti-personnel mines and explosive remnants of war.

Through its mine action activities, the OSCE can play an important role in terms of confidence- and security-building measures during the different phases of the conflict cycle, where these involve the presence of landmines and unexploded or abandoned explosive ordnance, including IEDs.

Mr. Chairperson, we thank you for having provided us with an opportunity to discuss this important topic. We trust that this Security Dialogue will give rise to fruitful exchanges and will foster a level of dynamic co-operation consistent with the challenges confronting us, more especially so as to protect civilian populations from the dangers caused by mines, explosive remnants of war and IEDs during and after conflicts.

Thank you.

The candidate countries the Republic of North Macedonia¹, Montenegro¹, Serbia¹ and Albania¹, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Andorra and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

¹ The Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.