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**STATEMENT BY  
THE EUROPEAN UNION AT THE 1024th PLENARY MEETING OF THE  
OSCE FORUM FOR SECURITY CO-OPERATION**

5 October 2022

**On explosive remnants of war**

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union and its Member States thank the speakers for their presentations on the important and highly topical subject of the risks associated with explosive remnants of war.

At a time when a new war launched by Russia with the complicity of the Belarusian regime is ravaging our continent, it is worth recalling the human devastation and the considerable security risks as a result of the contamination of land and sea with mines, including anti-personnel mines, booby-traps, cluster munitions and all explosive remnants of war. This scourge represents a major threat to our societies, particularly the civilian population, who are the first victims both during and a long time after the end of the conflicts.

Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine poses a direct and very serious humanitarian threat to the people of Ukraine as a result of the brutal and illegal attack to which its territory has been subjected for months. The complete destruction of towns and cities, indiscriminate bombardment of civilian infrastructure and the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions, anti-personnel mines and booby-traps are violations of international humanitarian law that the perpetrators will have to answer for. We therefore urge Russia to respect United Nations Security Council resolution 2365 and put an immediate and definitive end to all indiscriminate use of explosive devices in violation of international humanitarian law.

The European Union is also a staunch supporter of 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 and to apply its provisions straightaway 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 joint efforts to ensure the full and rigorous implementation of the Ottawa Convention.

The European Union supports the efforts to promote the universalization and full implementation of Protocol V of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCAC), which defines the obligations of States and High Contracting Parties 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 the amended Protocol II of the CCAC relating to mines, booby-traps and other devices. The work carried out

in this area, including improvised explosive devices (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 among the civilian population, preventing the risk of diversion, and co-operation and the exchange of information.

The European Union supports the humanitarian aim of the Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions, which entered into force over ten years ago. We are particularly concerned about the unacceptable impact on the civilian population of the indiscriminate use of cluster munitions, including their widespread employment in Syria, Yemen, Libya, Ukraine and the Nagorno-Karabakh region. We urge all actors to refrain from such indiscriminate use and to fully and unconditionally respect the rules of international humanitarian law.

The European Union and its Member States reaffirm their strong commitment to supporting efforts aimed at countering the threats posed by anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, IEDs and explosive remnants of war and 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 European Union supports the development and implementation 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.

The European Union advocates strengthening the role of women in combating explosive remnants of war and taking into account the gender dimension in the entire range of activities in that regard. Increasing the participation of women in mine-clearance activities and also in programmes to raise awareness of the risks will help to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of these activities and permit these projects to be completed with better long-term results, taking particular account of the needs of the different communities.

We appreciate the OSCE's role in supporting mine action at various levels – for example, by strengthening respect for the norms and principles applicable to the participating States and by identifying, developing and implementing practical measures through assistance projects, including the vital task of raising awareness among the populations concerned.

With respect to explosive remnants of war and IEDs, the European Union has assisted the OSCE in its ambitious integrated co-operation programme for 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. The European Union supports and encourages all projects in Ukraine aimed at reducing the threat to the population as a result in particular of the war of aggression by Russia.

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.

Mr. Chairperson,

We thank you for having provided us with an opportunity to discuss this important topic. We hope that this Security Dialogue will foster a level of dynamic co-operation consistent with the challenges confronting us and will raise awareness of the urgent need 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 Macedonia<sup>1</sup>, Montenegro<sup>1</sup>, Albania<sup>1</sup> and the Republic of Moldova, the potential candidate country Georgia, the European Free Trade Association countries and members of the European Economic Area Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, as well as Andorra, Monaco and San Marino, align themselves with this statement.

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