

Sixth Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on Cluster Munitions

Geneva, 5-7 September 2016

Statement by Bulgaria under Article 3 - Storage and stockpile destruction

Mr. President,

I would like to provide an update on the implementation by Bulgaria of Art. 3 obligations.

The Convention entered into force for Bulgaria on 1st October 2011. All of the cluster munitions possessed by the Bulgarian Armed Forces have been decommissioned and separated from other types of munitions retained for operational use. The entire Bulgarian stock of cluster munitions is marked for destruction. Bulgaria has no intention to retain cluster munitions or explosive submunitions for training purposes, permitted under article 3 of the Convention.

In December last year a new internal legislation entered into force that further strengthens the implementation of the Convention at national level in accordance with Article 9. The bill regulates the implementation of both the Convention on Cluster Munitions and the Anti-Personnel Landmine Convention, including the assistance to victims and their families. It prohibits any activities with cluster munitions and antipersonnel mines on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria, except those permitted by the Conventions. The Law establishes legal definitions about cluster munitions, cluster munitions victims and other key terms as well as regulates the conditions and the legal procedures for transfer, transportation and destruction of CMs. It incorporates the principles and rules of international humanitarian law. The Law provides for assistance to cluster munitions victims, including medical care, rehabilitation, as well as social and economic inclusion. The assistance provisions apply not only to the victims, but also to their close relatives.

As the adoption of the Law preceded the licensing process for the companies that will destroy the stockpile of cluster munitions, the physical destruction has not started yet. In the meantime, in 2014 a Bulgarian company was chosen to destroy the Bulgarian stockpile of cluster munitions under a contract with the NATO Support and Procurement Agency and with the support of the US government. Currently, the legal procedure for the licensing of this company for destruction of cluster munitions is under way.

At the national level, the next step will be the drafting of a National plan for the destruction of cluster munitions, containing deadlines and describing the methods for destruction. Bulgaria plans to destroy its entire stockpile of cluster munitions before the deadline in 2019.

The destruction process will be conducted in observation of all safety and environmental standards.

In compliance with Article 7 Bulgaria submits regularly its annual Transparency Reports and we encourage all States Parties to do so.