

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

Geneva, 4-6 September 2017

Statement by Bulgaria under Article 3 - Storage and stockpile destruction

Mr. President,

First I would like to thank you for the excellent work done during your presidency and in preparation of this meeting. I also thank the coordinators on this topic – Croatia and Mexico, for their dedicated efforts and the ISU for their valuable support.

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

The Convention entered into force for Bulgaria on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2011. All cluster munitions possessed by the Bulgarian Armed Forces have been decommissioned and separated from other types of munitions retained for operational use. The entire 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.

After entering into force in December 2015 of a Law on the Implementation of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction, in June 2016 the relevant articles of the Penal Code were amended in order to establish penal sanctions for violating the prohibitions, contained in the abovementioned Law.

The work regarding the destruction of the cluster munitions is well under way, with the needed resources secured and the implementing agency chosen - the NATO Support and Procurement Agency (NSPA). However, the process suffered some delay. This was due to the failure of the company, selected by the implementing agency for the destruction process, to meet the licensing requirements. The relevant authorities explore new options for the destruction of the cluster munitions in order to fulfill in time the obligations stemming from art. 3 of the Convention.

A National plan for the destruction of the cluster munitions, containing deadlines and describing the methods for destruction, is in a process of preparation. This plan will be based upon a plan already developed by the Ministry of Defence. More information will be provided upon adoption. 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.

As we have declared in the last two transparency reports, a certain amount (41825) submunitions, owned by the Armed Forces of the Republic of Slovenia, are stockpiled in warehouses of the private company “EXPAL BULGARIA” JSC. The submunitions are parts of artillery shells, which were decomposed in 2011; the submunitions were not destroyed due to misinterpretation of the CCM provisions by the private company. We are in close cooperation with the Slovenian side in order to solve the problem as soon as possible. In January this year, a Slovenian delegation together with the

Bulgarian counterparts inspected the warehouses of “EXPAL BULGARIA” JSC and the remaining submunitions. The company “EXPAL BULGARIA” JSC has undertaken the necessary procedure to obtain a permission to destroy these cluster submunitions.