

Courtesy copy

Intervention under Agenda Item 3 (b) Storage and Stockpile Destruction – updates & presentation of extension requests under Article 3

Topic - Renewed extension request under Article 3 of CCM by the Republic of Bulgaria

Excellency,

Distinguished Colleagues,

Last year, during the Second Part of the Second CCM Review Conference, which took place from 20-21 September 2021, States Parties to the Convention responded positively to the Bulgarian extension request under Article 3 of the Convention by taking a decision to grant Bulgaria additional time for the destruction of its cluster munitions by 01 October 2022.

Due to an explosion occurring on 21 December 2020 at the destruction site of the Italian utilization company “Esplosenti Sabino” Srl., all related transportation and destruction activities were put on hold.

The respective investigation was completed and related activity licenses were renewed only in November 2021. This caused an actual delay of 13 months of all related actions, including the transportation of the remaining cluster munitions from Bulgaria to Italy, as well as the destruction of the already transported cluster munitions and sub munitions from Lot 1 and Lot 2. The destruction of Lot 1 and Lot 2 of the Bulgarian Cluster Munitions resumed in February 2022 and I am pleased to inform, that on 11 May 2022, the NATO Supply and Procurement Agency, which is our partner in this operation, reported to the Bulgarian MoD on the **full completion of the destruction of Munitions and Sub munitions of Lot 1 and Lot 2.**

In parallel, in February 2022 Bulgarian authorities resumed transportation of Lot 3 Cluster Munitions to Italy. Due to technological and constructive specificities, **the destruction process is envisaged to end in June 2023.** Based on experience and lessons learned, we foresee a contingency period of several months allowing for due reaction and mitigation measures should unexpected developments occur again.

Courtesy copy

It has to be stated, Mr. Chairman, that the destruction of cluster munitions is in its nature a very complex process, and technologically and logistically a very sophisticated one.

Organization, collaboration and coordination among all stakeholders is not a process marked by lesser complexity or high predictability levels. There are five stakeholders engaged in the destruction process of the Bulgarian cluster munitions. This pentagonal structure is definitely not easy to supervise and coordinate. Neither is it easy bringing it back into motion once stopped in times of pandemic or other unforeseen circumstances.

I mention this complexity in order to underline the fact that this recent Bulgarian experience, also provided **important lessons learned which might be of use to other colleagues**. Members of the Bulgarian delegation both in capital and in Geneva **stand ready to share experience, views and observations** with all interested States Parties with pending Article 3 obligations.

In conclusion, and before giving through you, **Excellency**, the opportunity for my colleague from the Bulgarian MOD, Mr. Stoyan Karastoyanov, to share further details, allow me to put on record our appreciation for the fruitful and committed collaboration with the UK Presidency as well as our recognition for the impeccable work of the ISU team and its director.

I thank you for your kind attention!

Geneva, 16 May 2022