

**TWELFTH MEETING OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CONVENTION ON CLUSTER
MUNITIONS**

10-13 SEPTEMBER 2024

**STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA
GENERAL EXCHANGE OF VIEWS**

Mr. Vice-President,

Since this is the first time my delegation takes the floor, allow me, through you, to congratulate Ambassador Francisca E. Méndez Escobar of Mexico, for the assumption of her duties as President of the Twelfth Meeting of States Parties (MSP) to the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) and assure you of Bulgaria's full support and cooperation. I would also like to thank the Implementation Support Unit for their invaluable assistance to States Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention.

Bulgaria aligns with the statement to be delivered by the European Union, and would like to add a few remarks in our national capacity. Bulgaria also aligns with the Joint statement on gender, to be delivered by Germany later during the meeting.

Mr. Vice-President,

First of all, let me join the other delegation in extending our sincere condolences to Peru and its Permanent Mission in Geneva, on the unexpected and sudden passing of Peru's Permanent Representative Ambassador Ana Cecilia Gervasi Diaz.

Mr. Vice-President,

It is deplorable that, yet again, the MSP convenes in a highly volatile global security situation where the increased use of cluster munitions during the ongoing armed conflicts continues to cause loss of innocent human lives, destruction of civilian infrastructure and severe environmental damages.

It is in this same vein that we strongly condemn Russia's unjustified, unprovoked and illegal military aggression against Ukraine and call upon it to end this war of choice where cluster munitions have been used by the Russian Armed Forces, abide by its international commitments and immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraw its military forces from the Ukrainian territory within its internationally recognized borders.

In that respect, we regret the fact that, due to the worsened security situation, Lithuania had to announce its withdrawal from the CCM.

Mr. Vice President,

Bulgaria is a firm supporter of the humanitarian aims of the CCM, which is in force for us since October 2011, and is determined to put to an end the suffering caused by these indiscriminate weapons worldwide and to continue promoting the protection of civilians and the victim assistance.

We invested a lot of efforts at national level in order to proceed with the fulfillment of all our obligations under the CCM. Thanks to the committed efforts by the Bulgarian institutions in charge, mainly the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and in close and constructive cooperation with the NATO Supply and Procurement Agency (NSPA) and the Italian company “Esplosivi Sabino”, the process of destruction of all cluster munition stockpiles in possession of the Bulgarian Armed Forces was accomplished in 2023. That marked the successful fulfillment of Bulgaria’s obligations in accordance with Article 3 of the Convention, which was reflected in our Declaration of Compliance, presented during last year’s MSP.

The complexity of the destruction process under Article 3 provided us with valuable experience and important lessons learned, which might be of use to others. Let me reaffirm, Mr. Vice-President, that Bulgaria stands ready, both in capital and in Geneva, to support all interested States Parties with pending Article 3 obligations by exchanging experience information, views and observations.

Thank you, Vice-President for giving me the floor!