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FSC.EMI/195/24

5 June 2024

ENGLISH only



Permanent Representation of the Kingdom of
Belgium to the OSCE

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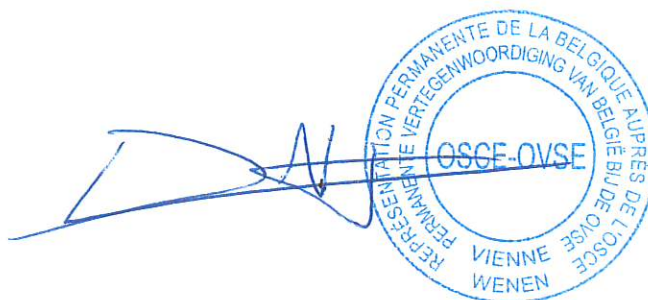
NOTE VERBALE

The Permanent Representation of Belgium to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe presents its compliments to all Permanent Representations and Missions to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre and has the honor to provide herewith Belgium's reply to the Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Landmines and the Explosive Remnants of Wars for the calendar year 2023.

The Permanent Representation of Belgium to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe avails itself of the opportunity to renew to all Permanent Representations and Mission to the OSCE and to the Conflict Prevention Centre the assurances of its highest consideration.

Vienna, 03 June 2024

to: All Permanent Delegations and Missions to the OSCE
OSCE Conflict Prevention Centre



OSCE

**Questionnaire on Anti-Personnel Mines
and Explosive Remnants of War (FSC.DEC/7/04)**



BELGIUM – 2024 Report

1. Is your country a State Party to the 1996 Amended Protocol II on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices annexed to the 1980 Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW)?

Yes, Belgium ratified Amended Protocol II on 10 March 1999.

2. Please attach the most recent annual report submitted by your country in accordance with Article 13 of the Amended Protocol or give the appropriate electronic address for the report.

The report can be found enclosed

3. Is your country considering ratification/accession to the Amended Protocol II?

Cfr. Q 1.

4. What measures have been taken to prevent the indiscriminate use of mines, booby-traps and other devices?

Cfr. Belgian report for CCW Amended Protocol II.

5. Would your country be interested in receiving assistance related to the implementation of this Protocol? If so, please describe.

No.

6. Does your country have the capacity to assist others related to this Protocol? If so, please describe.

Cfr. Belgian report for CCW Amended Protocol II.

Belgian Defense has been active in demining during deployments in Afghanistan (2005-2018) and Lebanon (2006 –2014) and is active in a series of smaller deployments in other countries. The Royal Military Academy and the Service for Clearance and Destruction of Explosives (SEDEE- DOVO) are involved in research and development for improved humanitarian demining and in the training of demining personnel from third countries.

In 2023, Belgium contributed to the following interventions and programs:

Country	Organisation	Action	Project	Amount disbursed in 2020
Iraq and Syria	UNMAS	Humanitarian mine action, including survey, clearance, risk education and victim assistance	Contributions to Iraq (750.000 €) and Syria (750.000 €) mine action programs	1.500.000 €
Angola and Cambodia	APOPO	Land release, incl. use of mine detection rats	A mine impact free Preah Vihear Province (Cambodia) and a mine free Cuanza Sul Province (Angola)	643.963 €
Angola	NPA	Humanitarian mine action	Humanitarian Mine Action intervention in Bengo province in Angola	344.444 €
Ukraine	OSCE	Humanitarian mine action	support to enhance the effectiveness of national authorities in conducting environmental rehabilitation with focus on humanitarian mine action	250.000 €
Ukraine*	APOPO*	Humanitarian mine action	Landmine clearance in Ukraine: Support to the training and deployment of Technical Survey Dog (TSD) teams in the countries most affected regions	1.000.000 €*

*support given by the Flemish Government

Total amount directly disbursed for humanitarian mine action in 2023: 3.738.407 EUR

From 01 May 2022 until 30 April 2024, BEL provides a pool of five EOD Operators in support of UNMAS. Through NATO DCB, Belgium contributes to the UNMAS TMAT (threat mitigation advisory team) EOD and C-IED.

The EOD operators provide ad-hoc support to the UNMAS, with train-the-trainer and mentoring missions. Belgium is the only troop contributing nation.

Belgian Defence donated and provided training and EOD equipment for Ukraine (State Emergency Services and National Police) with a total value of 2,6 million euro. This included 4 Water Abrasive Cutting Systems and 3 vehicles with CMD intervention kits and EOD suits.

**PROTOCOL ON PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF MINES, BOOBY-TRAPS
AND OTHER DEVICES AS AMENDED ON 3 MAY 1996
ANNEXED TO THE CONVENTION ON PROHIBITIONS OR RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF
CERTAIN CONVENTIONAL WEAPONS WHICH MAY BE DEEMED TO BE EXCESSIVELY INJURIOUS
OR TO HAVE INDISCRIMINATE EFFECTS
(PROTOCOL II AS AMENDED ON 3 MAY 1996)**

Provisional Reporting Formats for Article 13 para 2 and Article 11 para 2.

NAME OF HIGH CONTRACTING PARTY BELGIUM

DATE OF SUBMISSION 31/03/2024

NATIONAL POINT(S) OF CONTACT

Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Co-
operation
M5 Disarmament and Non-Proliferation
ArmscontrolM5@diplobel.fed.be

Information about the Armed Forces

a. General Information:

Officers trained as “Advisers in the Law of Armed Conflict” are available in each unit (up to battalion or independent company level) to advise military commanders on the application of the Law of Armed Conflict. The education programme of these advisers encompasses inter alia general information about (amended) Protocol II. Legal advisors with in depth knowledge of Protocol II are also available to advise Units and Commanders on any legal issue regarding mines, booby-traps and other devices.

The Operational Law Manual (currently under revision) was distributed within Belgian Defence in 2016 with the aim of addressing legal questions pertaining to an operational context. The legal framework for mines and booby-traps is dealt with in Chapter 8 “Weapons, means and methods of warfare”.

b. Specific Information:

Combat engineers and EOD personnel involved in mine activities are educated and trained in all matters related to the Belgian doctrine in accordance with STANAG 2036 Land mines procedures, 2143 Minimum standards of proficiency for explosive ordnance disposal personnel, 2485 Countermine operations in land warfare and this Protocol.

These documents are translated into two Belgian doctrinal documents:

- ACOT-TTP-MILENG4-LEC-418 « Procédure en matière de pose, marquage, repérage et compte-rendu des champs de mines »,
- ACOT-TTP-ENGMFD-LECQ-030 « Déminage en Ops » (Draft). This document remains a draft as it was specifically written for UNIFIL BAC/demining mission. Once a similar mission is planned, this document is reactivated.

Explosive Risk Education is part of basic military education for all soldiers. Every year, soldiers receive a refreshment training on mine awareness. Specific training is provided before any operational deployment and is tailored to the risks that the armed forces could be facing during the operation in question.

Information to the civilian population

The “law of 10 August 1998 approving the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and Other Devices as amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996) annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or Have Indiscriminate Effects, adopted in Geneva on 3 May 1996” was made public through publication in the Belgian Official Journal.

On a regular basis, representatives of the Defense Department give lectures as part of the IHL courses organised by the Belgian Red Cross and/or International Committee of the Red Cross. General or specific education related to means and methods of warfare, including the issue of ERW, and in particular Protocol V, is included in these courses.

The Armed Forces Engineer School contributes to BGT (Belgian Generic Training) organised by FPS Foreign Affairs with an ERW module. BGT is a mandatory module for every civilian wanting to participate in a Civilian Crisis Management or Peacebuilding mission.

Form D**Legislation**

Article 13 / 4 / d “The High Contracting Parties shall provide annual reports to the Depository ... on:

(d) Legislation related to this Protocol;

Remark:

High Contracting Party **BELGIUM**

reporting for time period from 01.01.2023 to 31.12.2023

Legislation

Law of 20 March 2007 prohibiting the financing of the production, use and possession of antipersonnel mines and cluster-munitions.

Law of 8 June 2006 concerning the regulation of economic and individual activities with weapons, as amended by the Laws of 25 July 2008 and of 7 January 2018.

Law of 8 January 2004 approving the modification of Article 1 of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or Have Indiscriminate Effects, adopted in Geneva on 21 December 2001.

Law of 30 March 2000 on the definitive Prohibition of Antipersonnel Mines.

Law of 10 August 1998 approving the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-traps and other Devices, as amended on 3 May 1996 (Protocol II as amended on 3 May 1996) annexed to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons which may be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Law of 10 August 1998 approving the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on their Destruction, done in Oslo on 18 September 1997.

Law of 24 June 1996 amending the Law of 3 January 1933 on Arms production and Trade, on the Carrying of Weapons and on Ammunition Trade, with the View to Prohibit the Belgian State and Public services from Storing Anti-personnel mines.

Law of 9 March 1995 on Anti-personnel mines, Booby-traps and Similar Devices.

International cooperation on mine clearance

1. Projects:

Total amount directly disbursed in 2023 for humanitarian mine action: 3,738,407 EUR

- Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA): Humanitarian Mine Action intervention in Bengo province in Angola – 344,444 EUR
- UNMAS: contributions to the Iraq and Syria mine action programs: 1,500,000 €
- APOPO: A mine impact free Preah Vihear Province (Cambodia) and a mine free Cuanza Sul Province (Angola): 643,963 € (disbursed in 2023 but part of a five year program and financing over the period 2022-2026).
- OSCE: In the framework of the OSCE's extra-budgetary support to Ukraine, support to enhance the effectiveness of national authorities in conducting environmental rehabilitation with focus on humanitarian mine action - 250,000 EUR
- APOPO*: Landmine clearance in Ukraine: Support to the training and deployment of Technical Survey Dog (TSD) teams in the countries most affected regions - 1,000,000 € *

*Support given by the Flemish Government

Belgium also contributed in 2023 to several humanitarian pooled funds out of which i.e. humanitarian mine action activities were financed: Central Emergency and Response Fund**, Ukraine Humanitarian Fund, Yemen Humanitarian Fund, Syria Cross-border Humanitarian Fund, Palestine Humanitarian Fund (total Belgian contribution for 2023 to these specific funds was 39,6 million €).

**including 600.000 euro support given by the Flemish Government

2. Research and Development:

Research and development activities are conducted both at the national and international level. A national example is the PARADIS project (a Prototype for Assisting Rational Activities in Humanitarian De-mining Using Images from Satellites) led by the Royal Military Academy (RMA) with the participation of the Department of Geography (IGEAT) of the Free University of Brussels (ULB). Its results are still used by different actors.

The NGO APOPO (<http://www.apopo.org/>), in collaboration with the University of Antwerp and funded inter alia by the Belgian Government, started a research project in 1997 on the use of rats for scent detection of mines. The African giant pouch rat (*cricetomys gambianus*) was selected for this task and successfully trained. In 2004 the first group of mine detection rats passed the licensing tests according to the international mine action standards (IMAS). APOPO became an international NGO active in humanitarian demining and is still employing rats for survey of

Form F**Other relevant matters**

Article 13 / 4 / f “The High Contracting Parties shall provide annual reports to the Depositary ... on:

(f) other relevant matters.

Remark:

High Contracting Party BELGIUM reporting for time period from 01.01.2023 to 31.12.2023

Other relevant matters

Belgium has regularly organised EOD courses in French and English to train team leaders of other countries. Currently, these courses are organised on an ad hoc basis.

Since 2017, BEL has contributed to MINUSMA with an EOD specialist in the analysis branch.

On November 30th, 2023 the Belgian Embassy in Bogota co-organized already for the 7th year in a row the ‘Premio CaMINA’ event together with the Embassy of Canada, Gran Tierra Energy (Canadian enterprise) and "Campaña Colombiana Contra Minas" (CCCM, local NGO part of the ICBL network). This to draw public attention to the work of associations of victims in the fight against antipersonnel mines.

Means and technologies of mine clearance.

For detection purposes, two different man portable detectors are used, one based on the magnetic principle, the other one on dual sensors technique.

Only manual removal and disposal means are applied except for some IED devices where a remotely operated robot can be used during the handling process.

Lists of experts and experts agencies

Belgian Ministry of Defence:

DOVO/SEDEE (Service for the removal and destruction of explosive devices)

ComOpsLand MILENG (Operational Command Land – Military Engineers Branch)

The Belgian military experts working for DOVO/SEDEE have NATO degrees and qualifications for:

- EOD (Explosive Ordnance Disposal)
- IEDD (Improvised Explosive Device Disposal)

National points of contact on mine clearance

Disarmament and Non-Proliferation Department of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs
Tel. 00 32 2 501 31 74 – E-mail: ArmscontrolM5@diplobel.fed.be

**CONVENTION ON THE PROHIBITION OF THE USE, STOCKPILING, PRODUCTION AND
TRANSFER OF ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES AND ON THEIR DESTRUCTION**

Reporting Formats for Article 7 ¹

STATE PARTY:	BELGIUM
DATE OF SUBMISSION	30/04/2024
POINT OF CONTACT	M5 - Non-Proliferation and Disarmament Division of the Federal Public Service Foreign Affairs, Foreign Trade and Development Co-operation Tel. +32.2.501.31.74 e-mail : ArmscontrolM5@diplobel.fed.be

Form D APMs retained or transferred (As adopted at the final plenary meeting on 02 December 2005)

¹ These reporting formats informally provided by Austria on disk are based on document APLC/MSP.1/1999/L.4 of 31 March 1999, as amended and decided upon by the First Meeting of the States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, held in Maputo from 3 to 7 May 1999. Tables of formats may be expanded as desired.

Objective	Activity/project	Supplementary information
Education and training of EOD specialists and deminers with live ammunition Training militaries in "Mine Risk Education"	The use of M35Bg mines takes place during different sessions of courses organized by the Belgian Armed Forces.	priority for EOD community due to operational engagements.

1. b. Voluntary information:

Form D (continued)

2. Compulsory Transferred for development of and training in (Article 3, para.1)

Institution authorized by State Party	Type	Quantity	Lot # (if possible)	Supplementary information: e.g. transferred from, transferred to
NA				

Form J: Other relevant matters

Remark: States Parties may use this form to report voluntarily on other relevant matters, including matters pertaining to compliance and implementation not covered by the formal reporting requirements contained in Article 7. States Parties are encouraged to use this form to report on activities undertaken with respect to Article 6, and in particular to report on assistance provided for the care and rehabilitation, and social and economic reintegration, of mine victims.

State Party: **BELGIUM** reporting for time period from **01 January 2023** to **31 December 2023**

Narrative / reference to other reports

1. At this stage, no live mines (from the stock retained under Article 3) were used for research and development studies. Some of the Belgian studies are using data collected from live minefields abroad.

2. Belgian contribution to international assistance in 2023

Country	Organisation	Action	Project	Amount disbursed in 2020
Iraq and Syria	UNMAS	Humanitarian mine action, including survey, clearance, risk education and victim assistance	Contributions to Iraq (750.000 €) and Syria (750.000 €) mine action programs	1.500.000 €
Angola and Cambodia	APOPO	Land release, incl. use of mine detection rats	A mine impact free Preah Vihear Province (Cambodia) and a mine free Cuanza Sul Province (Angola)	643.963€
Angola	NPA	Humanitarian mine action	Humanitarian Mine Action intervention in Bengo province in Angola	344.444 €
Ukraine	OSCE	Humanitarian mine action	support to enhance the effectiveness of national authorities in conducting environmental rehabilitation with focus on humanitarian mine action	250.000 €
Ukraine*	APOPO*	Humanitarian mine action	Landmine clearance in Ukraine: Support to the training and deployment of Technical Survey Dog (TSD) teams in the countries most affected regions	1.000.000 €*

*support given by the Flemish Government

Starting from October 2021 and lasting until September 2023, the Belgian company Space Applications Services N.V. and the Belgian Royal Military Academy are leading a research project, called AIDED, on the development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) for the detection of explosive devices. AIDED will use a set of state of the art Artificial Intelligence algorithms able to identify unconventional (IEDs) and conventional (buried mines) explosive devices, and autonomously plan offline and run-time missions plans. It will also provide positioning, navigation and mapping to control a fleet of robots that cooperate quickly to identify a safe passage in a high-risk area. The AIDED project is financed by the European Commission and managed by the European Defence Agency in the framework of the Preparatory Action on Defence Research.
