



## EUROPEAN UNION

### OSCE Forum for Security Co-operation Nr 730 Vienna, 16 October 2013

#### **EU Statement in response to the presentation on demining activities in Tajikistan**

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The European Union (EU) warmly welcomes H.E. Ismatullo Nasredinov, Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to the OSCE, and Mr Luka Buhin, OSCE Office in Tajikistan, to the Forum for Security Cooperation and thanks them for their interesting presentations on tackling the threats and challenges posed by anti-personnel mines. We regret that Lt.-Gen. Ramil Halilovich Nadyrov was prevented from being with us today as initially planned. We would also like to express our deep sympathy to the families of the victims and to wish speedy recovery to the injured persons during the accident involving a Tajik military train on 10<sup>th</sup> October.

The EU is a strong supporter of the Ottawa Convention on The Prohibition of Anti-Personnel Mines and all EU Member States are parties to it.

We welcome Tajikistan's support for the Convention and call on those of her neighbours who have not yet joined the Convention to do so in the interests of promoting the peaceful social and economic development of the region and preventing the devastating injuries that land mines cause to innocent men, women and children going about their daily lives.

We commend the work the Tajik Government has undertaken to fulfil its commitments under the Convention and support its aim of being a mine-free country by 2020. The EU and several EU Member States have contributed substantial financial resources to this end. In September 2013, for instance, the EU financed a workshop in Dushanbe to concretely assist with the efforts of all relevant actors towards the completion of demining activities in Tajikistan.

In this context, we also welcome the OSCE's valuable contribution towards the establishment of a humanitarian demining capacity within the Tajik Ministry of Defence and the support provided for their operational deployment along the Tajik-Afghan border. De-mining in this area will help return scarce land to agricultural use and complements the Office's work on the development of cross-border trade links. We commend the Office's role in developing local civil capacity by supporting the creation of Tajikistan's first and only mine action NGO. We regard the work carried out by the Office on Mine Action activities to be a model of local capacity-building and look forward to the complete transition of work in this area to national institutions and ownership.

We welcome the Office's activities in supporting the development of a regional mine action initiative and capacity, including Afghanistan. We hope that such an initiative will play an important part in strengthening border management and security and fostering greater regional cooperation and understanding at this sensitive period in the region's history.

The candidate countries the FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA<sup>\*</sup>, MONTENEGRO, ICELAND<sup>\*\*</sup> and SERBIA, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate countries ALBANIA and BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, the European Free Trade Association countries LIECHTENSTEIN and NORWAY, members of the European Economic Area, as well as the REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA and ANDORRA align themselves with this statement.

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<sup>\*</sup> The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

<sup>\*\*</sup> Iceland continues to be a member of EFTA and the European Economic Area.