

*Courtesy translation*

**Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) - Protocol V  
Meeting of the High Contracting Parties  
Geneva, 14 November 2022**

<b>National statement under item 6 of the agenda</b>
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*[Mr Chairperson, first of all, let me reiterate that we condemn in the strongest terms Russia's military aggression against Ukraine, with the culpable complicity of Belarus. Russia's aggression against Ukraine constitutes an exceptionally serious violation of Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence, as well as of the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter, and undermines international peace and security. We stand with the government and people of Ukraine in their efforts to resist the Russian invasion. We deplore the loss of life and suffering caused. We call on Russia to cease hostilities immediately, to withdraw its troops from all Ukrainian territory and to respect international humanitarian law].*

Mr Chairperson,

Allow me first of all to congratulate you on your assumption of the chairperson's office and to assure you of my delegation's full support.

France is aligned with the statement made on behalf of the European Union. I would like to add a few additional remarks in my national capacity.

Explosive remnants of war still claim a victim every two hours worldwide. The persistence of large areas contaminated by explosive remnants of war in the aftermath of conflict is an obstacle to the return of displaced populations, to stabilisation and reconstruction and to a return to normal economic and social life. *[In Ukraine, one third of the territory might already be contaminated by explosive remnants of war].*

France joined Protocol V in 2006. Since then, France has been strongly committed to the implementation and universalisation of Protocol V and is pursuing ambitious action in the field of explosive remnants of war and victim assistance.

The French armed forces have drafted instructions and put in place operating procedures to record, to the maximum extent possible and as far as practicable (in accordance with Art IV of the PV), on the use or abandonment of explosive ordnance, in order to facilitate the destruction or neutralisation of unexploded ordnance after an armed conflict, which poses a real risk to the civilian population. In addition, military demining teams are provided for when land forces are

deployed in a theatre of operations. They have the necessary skills to deal with explosive remnants of war.

Experience from military operations conducted by the French armed forces has shown that these data recording and transmission procedures are an effective tool for the authorities responsible for clearing land.

In some theatres, abandoned ordnance represents a very significant threat and also sustains conflict, either through direct use or for the manufacture of improvised explosive devices. France therefore considers the destruction of these stocks of abandoned or unexploded ordnance to be a matter of priority.

The French armies therefore apply the requirements of Protocol V and adapt their procedures accordingly. Conditions allowing, French specialists intervene in collaboration with local teams and thus share their experience, acquired over many years in different theatres.

France is involved in several specific assistance programmes to countries facing the danger of explosive remnants of war. For example, France supports the Ecole Régionale de Déminage Humanitaire au Liban (ERDHL) and its "Five Schools" project, which will be implemented in five training centres in the Middle East and Africa. In Lebanon, France has been entrusted with its management.

France also organises training courses for foreign trainees at the Ecole du Génie d'Angers. Finally, France regularly conducts expertise and training missions: in 2021 and 2022, such missions have been financed for Benin, Cambodia, Egypt, Lebanon, and Kazakhstan.

These actions demonstrate France's real commitment to the destruction and disposal of explosive remnants of war.

More detailed information can be found in the report submitted by France under Protocol V.

Mr Chairperson,

We believe that a preventive approach combining awareness-raising, training of the armed forces, as well as recording and data transmission procedures is essential and must be encouraged.

It is now imperative to continue our efforts to universalise Protocol V and to deepen international cooperation. France therefore calls on those States that have not yet done so to accede to this protocol.

The success of Protocol V demonstrates the capacity of our forum to adopt concrete norms, allowing the protection of civilian populations from the dangers of unexploded or abandoned munitions, during and after conflicts.

Thank you./.