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UN Day for Mine Action and Mine Awareness

Much remains to be done, all EU member states need to join the Conventions!

Although more than 80% of the UN Member States have banned landmines during the last decade, much needs to be done in order to reach the objective of a mine free world. Too many governments and their armed forces still produce landmines and use them in case of crisis or armed conflict. A special case in this respect is the behaviour of the Syrian regime which not only uses landmines against armed opposition groups but also against civilians who are trying to leave the country and find safety elsewhere. Other recent cases are landmines and cluster munitions being used by the Israeli, Myanmar and the Thai government.

Ulrike Lunacek, Greens/EFA Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, declares: "This acts have to halt. All UN Members States, but also non state actors such as Colombian rebel group FARC shall adhere to the existing legal instruments such as the Mine Ban Treaty (Ottawa Convention) and the Convention on Cluster Munitions (Oslo Convention). These two legal instruments not only ban the production, the stockpiling, the export and the use of these weapons, they also prohibit investments in companies in third countries producing these type of weapons. Many European banks and insurance companies still invest in companies that produce landmines and cluster munitions."

In fact, much needs to be done within the EU: Poland promised to ratify the Mine Ban Treaty but didn't do so far. At least 10 EU Member States still remain outside the Cluster Munitions Convention (Cyprus, Hungary, Sweden: have not ratified; Still to accede: Estonia, Slovakia, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Poland and Romania).

Today's Mine Awareness Day is a good opportunity for the EU to declare that it will seek membership of all its members in both conventions in 2012. The EU should also sustain support for mine action and victim assistance to get the job done within years and not decades. Ulrike Lunacek, Greens/EFA Spokesperson on Foreign Affairs, will raise this issue in a written question to Commission and Council.

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Press release

Adriaan Ploegh

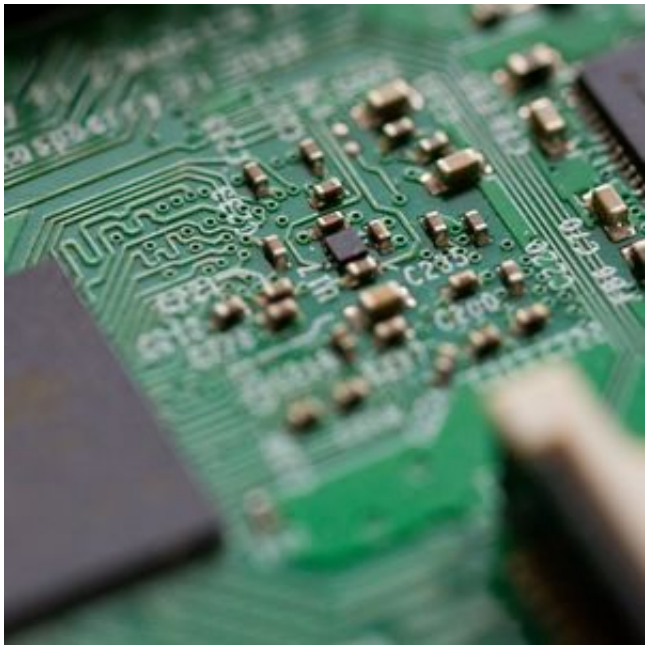


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Ulrike Lunacek

EP Vice-President, Member

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