



Recommendation 1343 (1997)¹

Anti-personnel landmines and their humanitarian implications

Parliamentary Assembly

1. Every year, anti-personnel landmines ("mines") kill or maim at least 24 000 people. Set apart from other conventional weapons in that their impact is multiple, they cause lasting wounds which are difficult to treat and occasion serious psychological traumas.
2. Mines hamper the repatriation of refugees, make land unusable, complicate humanitarian relief operations, prevent the reconstruction of countries after the havoc wreaked by war and remain able to kill and maim a long time after conflicts have come to an end.
3. Over 113 million mines are scattered around the world, 13 million in Europe itself. In Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, 6 million to 9 million mines were planted, placing these two states among the five countries in the world most seriously affected by mines.
4. Anti-personnel mines are no longer indispensable weapons of war, as their military value is minimal. It has been clearly demonstrated that the main victims of mines are civilians.
5. Whereas anti-personnel mines are priced at US\$ 3 to US\$ 30 each, their clearance costs between US\$ 300 and US\$ 1 000 per mine. Most countries affected by mines have insufficient resources to cope with the enormous cost of clearing them and those who lay them seldom take responsibility for mine-clearance.
6. Despite the efforts to date, the rate of mine-clearance is, and will remain, far too slow for the 2 million to 5 million new mines laid each year. Consequently, the Assembly considers that the only means of effectively fighting this scourge is a total ban on mines worldwide.
7. The Assembly welcomes the increasing awareness among states, international organisations and public opinion against mines. It welcomes, in particular, the results achieved in the follow-up process to the Ottawa conference aimed at persuading the largest possible number of states to introduce a total ban on anti-personnel mines.
8. The Assembly welcomes the consensus reached at the Oslo conference, held from 1 to 19 September 1997, and the fact that 106 states committed themselves to sign, in December next in Ottawa, a treaty to ban anti-personnel mines.
9. The Assembly deplores the attitude of those countries, in particular the permanent members of the United Nations' Security Council, which did not participate in the Oslo conference, or do not intend to sign the treaty to ban anti-personnel mines.
10. Consequently, the Parliamentary Assembly recommends that the Committee of Ministers:
 - 10.1. condemn the manufacture, use, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines; declare these activities contrary to the Council of Europe's principles; and adopt, in this spirit, a recommendation to the member states based on the proposals contained in sub-paragraph iv below;

1. Assembly debate on 24 September 1997 (29th Sitting) (see [Doc. 7891](#), report of the Committee on Migration, Refugees and Demography, rapporteurs: Mrs Fehr and Mr Clerfayt). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 September 1997 (29th Sitting).



10.2. instruct the competent bodies of the Council of Europe to draw up, update and publish a list of companies producing anti-personnel mines established on the territory of the member states;

10.3. ask the Council of Europe EUR-OPA Major Hazards Agreement, through its programme on space technologies for hazard prevention, in conjunction with the European Commission, the European Space Agency and the national space agencies, to consider the contribution that the satellites belonging to the countries of central and eastern Europe could make:

to detecting mines;

to lending assistance, using tele-medicine techniques, to populations living in mined areas and mine-clearance teams;

10.4. invite the member states to:

- a. make every necessary effort to bring about as quickly as possible a total ban on the manufacture, use, transfer and stockpiling of anti-personnel mines worldwide;
- b. undertake to sign, at the next Ottawa conference, to be held from 2 to 4 December 1997, the convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction, as negotiated at the Oslo conference, held from 1 to 19 September 1997;
- c. adopt legislation for a total ban on anti-personnel mines in their territory or, as a first step towards a total ban, introduce national measures to ban, suspend or take other restrictive measures against anti-personnel mines, in particular concerning their use, production and transfer, and impose criminal sanctions in relation to these measures;
- d. apply criminal sanctions against the use of anti-personnel mines in violation of the rules of international humanitarian law;
- e. impose on those who lay mines the responsibility of financing or carrying out the clearance of mines which they have laid;
- f. promote the establishment, as soon as possible, of an anti-personnel mine-free zone in all the member states and applicant member states of the Council of Europe, where the manufacture, use, transfer and stockpiling of mines would be totally banned;
- g. step up their support for mine-clearance humanitarian programmes by supporting, in particular, efforts in the search for rapid and effective mine-clearance and mine-detection methods;
- h. contribute to rehabilitation and assistance programmes for mine victims in Europe and the rest of the world with a view to their social rehabilitation and re-entry into working life;
- i. encourage the media to circulate relevant information among populations exposed to the danger of anti-personnel mines in order to avoid new victims;
- j. raise the population's awareness of the dangers of mines and promote action in order to mobilise international public opinion in respect of the harmful effects of anti-personnel mines;
- k. if they have not already done so, immediately ratify the 1980 United Nations 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 (Convention on Conventional Weapons) and, in particular, revised Protocol No. II on prohibitions or restrictions of the use of mines, booby-traps and other devices;
- l. provide the competent bodies of the Council of Europe, on request, with a list of companies producing anti-personnel mines established in their countries.