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Anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions: reaffirming humanitarian commitments in a new security context

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Damien COTTIER and other members of the Assembly

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

Anti-personnel mines and cluster munitions are among the most persistent humanitarian threats: over 80%of victims are civilians, nearly 40%of whom are children. Their deadly effects continue for decades after conflicts have ended and pose a long-term obstacle to post-conflict reconstruction. That is why the Parliamentary Assembly strongly supported the 1997 Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and their Destruction and the 2008 Oslo Convention on Cluster Munitions (Resolution 1085 (1996), Resolution 1668 (2009), Recommendation 1343 (1997) and Recommendation 1871 (2009)).

Yet these pillars of modern humanitarian law are now being called into question, even within member States of the Council of Europe. In the face of the Russian Federation's illegal military aggression against Ukraine and the deterioration of the European strategic environment, several States – the Baltic States, Poland, Finland and Ukraine – have announced their withdrawal from the Ottawa Convention. Lithuania has also withdrawn from the Oslo Convention that Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Finland, Romania and Türkiye had never signed. These developments reflect a genuine shift in the security paradigm for these countries and for the continent, which the Assembly must not downplay.

The simultaneous weakening of both conventions, however, risks eroding international standards and, more broadly, undermining the architecture of humanitarian law.

In light of these developments, the Assembly must analyse the situation in detail, weighing up both the actual operational value of these weapons within modern defence doctrines and their long-term humanitarian and socio-economic consequences.

The Assembly should prepare a report taking stock of the status of the Ottawa and Oslo Conventions in the new European security context, examining the concerns of those States that are deviating from them, assessing the humanitarian, legal and security implications, and formulating recommendations to reconcile defence imperatives, humanitarian obligations and prospects for reconstruction.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed[1]*:*

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