

Belgian National Statement for the general debate at the second international conference on EWIPA (19-20/11/2025)

*Chair, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,*

We gather here today with a shared purpose: to prevent and reduce the devastating humanitarian consequences of the use of explosive weapons in populated areas. Belgium strongly supports the Political Declaration and commends the efforts made by all stakeholders to implement its commitments.

The tragic reality is clear: when explosive weapons with wide-area effects are used in cities, towns, and other populated areas, civilians bear the brunt. The destruction of homes, schools, hospitals, and critical infrastructure not only causes immediate suffering but also undermines long-term recovery and development. We have seen this in too many conflicts—from Gaza to Ukraine, from Syria to Sudan.

Belgium reaffirms its commitment to International Humanitarian Law and the principles of distinction, proportionality, and precaution. We believe that the implementation of the Political Declaration must be rooted in these legal obligations, while also going further to promote good practices and operational changes that can save lives.

In this regard, some of the concrete steps Belgium has taken are:

- The nomination of local points of contact among the armed forces at different levels to encourage dissemination and implementation of the EWIPA declaration.
- The continued reviewing of our military policies, training and practices to ensure they align with the Declaration's objectives. Mitigating harm, contributing to a safe and secure environment and facilitating access to critical needs are at the forefront of these review processes.
- The participation in exchange and dialogue with defence partners, civil society and other stakeholders on the implementation of the EWIPA declaration and best practices on further implementation steps.
- Support to data collection, victim assistance, mine action and the sharing of best practices among states, civil society, and international organizations.

We want to emphasize the importance of transparency and accountability and encourage States to report on their implementation efforts. Only through openness and cooperation can we build trust and drive progress.

Finally, Belgium calls on all states that have not yet endorsed the Declaration to do so. This is not only a matter of principle—it is a matter of humanity.

*Thank you.*