

**Second international conference of the
*Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the
Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in
Populated Areas*
San Jose, Costa Rica, 19-20 November 2025**

***Serbia statement - Session 1: General Debate: Strengthening the Protection of Civilians
from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas***

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,

The Republic of Serbia is honored to participate in the second international conference of the Political Declaration on Strengthening the Protection of Civilians from the Humanitarian Consequences Arising from the Use of Explosive Weapons in Populated Areas. We would like to extend our sincere appreciation to the Government of Costa Rica, for convening this conference, thereby drawing attention to the importance of this matter and fostering collective understanding.

The Government of Serbia has designated the Mine Action Centre as the national focal point responsible for facilitating the implementation of this Declaration and engaging with relevant partners. In this regard, we emphasize the essential role of mine action, which constitutes a prerequisite for ensuring the safety and well-being of civilians. Building on our experience, we recall that the use of explosive weapons in populated areas generates long-term consequences for the lives of civilian populations. The destruction of water supplies, electricity, and other civilian infrastructure, together with environmental harm, continues to have lasting effects long after conflict, impeding the return of communities and hindering economic development. In this regard, particular emphasis must be placed on victim assistance, which remains a cornerstone of recovery efforts and a prerequisite for building resilient societies. Equally, it is crucial to integrate the principles of international humanitarian law and promote awareness within national institutions, on the humanitarian impact of explosive weapons.

A comprehensive understanding of the direct and indirect effects of explosive weapons use requires careful consideration of the years needed for mine action following armed conflict. While enhancing the national capacities of affected countries remains essential, it is equally important to underscore that donor support is vital for empowerment. Serbia has, in this respect, significantly benefited from donor support, which has played a crucial role in strengthening national capacities and addressing the challenges of mine action. We therefore wish to express our sincere appreciation to the U.S. State Department, the European Union, the Republic of Korea and others as donors whose continuous support has been of great importance. We also recognize that long-term partnerships and sustained international cooperation are indispensable for achieving the objectives of this Declaration. Only through joint action we can translate commitments into visible and measurable results on the ground and ensure that recovery and rehabilitation efforts truly serve affected communities.

In addition, the establishment of mechanisms for exchanging experiences and lessons learned, together with the application of innovative approaches consistent with international humanitarian law, can play a vital role in advancing the implementation of the Declaration and in raising awareness of its significance. Serbia remains committed to contributing actively to these efforts and to sharing expertise gained through its own post-conflict recovery experience, including the integration of new technologies and methodologies in humanitarian demining.

In this context, the Mine Action Centre of Serbia has established an Innovation and Educational Park, designed to strengthen capacities for the safe conduct of demining and to foster innovation, with the aim of reducing the impact of explosive weapons on civilian environments.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our practices. We remain firmly dedicated to the principles and goals of the Political Declaration and to strengthening global cooperation to protect civilians from the devastating consequences of explosive weapons in populated areas.