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From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Delegations
Subject:	Council Conclusions on the Seventh Review Conference of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW)

Delegations will find in the annex the Council Conclusions on the Seventh Review Conference of the 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 (CCW), as approved by the Council (Foreign Affairs) at its 4201st meeting, held on 12 October 2026.

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ANNEX

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS

ON THE SEVENTH REVIEW CONFERENCE OF THE 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 (CCW)

1. The Council welcomes the upcoming Seventh Review Conference of the 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 (CCW) to take place in Geneva on 16-20 November 2026. The European Union is fully committed to contributing constructively to a successful outcome of the Seventh Review Conference of the CCW. The Council expresses its appreciation to Switzerland for offering to preside over the Review Conference of the CCW and reaffirms its readiness to support the Presidency during the Review Conference.

2. The Review Conference will be taking place against a deteriorating global security landscape, including a full scale high-intensity war on the borders of the European Union, as well as rapid advances in emerging technologies that require attention and answers. Against this background, the Review Conference offers an opportunity to urgently enhance efforts to strengthen the implementation of the CCW. Ensuring that the effectiveness of the Convention in the future is preserved and further strengthened, including by keeping the Convention responsive to new developments and emerging technologies, should be a priority for the Review Conference.

3. The Council recalls that the CCW and its Protocols are key instruments for and an integral part of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). The expanding use of certain conventional weapons against civilian populations and infrastructure produces alarming humanitarian harm, especially in urban settings, and requires an urgent response. The Council recalls the obligation to respect and ensure respect of IHL in all circumstances. The Council reiterates the commitment of the EU and its Member States to respecting and fully complying with IHL, as well as to continuing adhering fully to the EU Guidelines on the promotion of compliance with IHL.

4. The Council underlines that the CCW is a unique international forum gathering diplomatic, legal and military expertise, and an appropriate forum to respond to fast-paced developments in the field of weapons technology, thus by its mandate contributing to preventing and reducing the suffering of both civilians and combatants.

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5. The Council recalls the challenges posed by weapons deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects and the role of the CCW in addressing them through the adoption of restrictions on the use of or prohibition of specific weapons.

6. The Council emphasizes the importance of the universalisation of the Convention and its Protocols and recalls the EU's efforts in this regard. In view of enhancing the strength and effectiveness of the Convention and its Protocols, the Council encourages all States that have not yet done so to join the CCW and its Protocols without further delay.

7. The Council stresses the importance of inclusive CCW discussions with all stakeholders' active participation and observers' technical expertise playing a pivotal role in broadening the scope of the CCW debate and ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the complex issues under consideration. The Council emphasizes the crucial role that civil society plays in this regard.

8. The Council underlines the importance of transparency and building confidence in the implementation of the CCW and its Protocols and encourages the High Contracting Parties to implement their legal, national reporting and technical obligations, to improve the rate and quality of their national reporting, and engage in further discussion on national implementation.

9. The Council welcomes the work undertaken by the Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on Emerging Technologies in the Area of Lethal Autonomous Weapons Systems (LAWS). The Council welcomes the consensus achieved by the GGE on a set of elements of an instrument, without prejudging its nature, and other possible measures. It is encouraging to see the agreement on the characterisation; the application of and the need to ensure compliance with the principles and requirements of IHL; elements relating to specific prohibitions, requirements, and risk mitigating measures, especially those relating to the human element; and accountability and responsibility. All of these must form the basis for a future mandate.

10. Both the Eleven Guiding Principles and the agreement now reached on the set of elements of an instrument and other possible measures represent important milestones. They demonstrate a sufficient basis from which to establish an operational and legal framework of governance. The Council extends its gratitude to the Chair, Ambassador In den Bosch of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, for his excellent leadership of the GGE LAWS for the past three years.

11. The Council underlines that the CCW is the relevant international forum on LAWS, and expects the 2026 Review Conference to adopt an ambitious negotiating mandate for the GGE to take forward the work on an instrument, without prejudging its nature, building on the set of elements of an instrument and other possible measures formulated in the latest GGE LAWS report and other outcomes of the GGE process.

12. The Council emphasises that the key requirement of control and human judgement must be retained across the life cycle of LAWS. Moreover, accountability and responsibility cannot be transferred to machines, therefore human responsibility and accountability for decisions over the use of force must be ensured, in order to uphold compliance with international law, in particular IHL.

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13. The Council recalls its support for the two-tier approach, which outlines the prohibition of LAWS that cannot be used in accordance with the requirements and principles of international law, in particular IHL, and the regulation of other LAWS.

14. The Council looks forward to further work to ensure strong operational implementation of the agreed elements. Furthermore, the Council stresses the importance of also addressing the need for a legal review for LAWS and a legal assessment in case of substantive modifications of characteristics of LAWS.

15. On Amended Protocol II, the Council expresses concern over the ongoing use of mines, booby-traps and other devices causing human suffering and harm, including the continued severe global impact of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) and their indiscriminate use and effects, in particular the perpetration of terrorist acts and the use of IEDs by non-state actors. The expanding use of IEDs against civilian populations, infrastructure and objects, including health-care systems, produces alarming humanitarian harm, especially in urban settings, and requires an urgent response. The Council stresses that efforts to enhance prevention, preparedness and response are needed to tackle the global threat and that coordination on national, regional and international levels is required. In this respect, the Council reiterates its longstanding support to national capacity building efforts and to humanitarian demining operations around the globe to address the IED threat.

16. The Council underlines the need to actively engage the private sector, in particular producers and distributors of precursor materials for the production of IEDs, to prevent their diversion to unauthorized end users. The Council stresses the importance of robust national measures to prevent and stop the diversion of weapons and explosive precursors to terrorist actors.

17. The Council highlights the humanitarian impact and the heavy consequences on social and economic development caused by the indiscriminate and disproportionate use of Mines Other Than Anti-Personnel Mines (MOTAPM). The Council acknowledges that MOTAPM are legitimate weapons, but Parties are obliged to ensure that they are used in accordance with IHL, including by taking all feasible precautions, to protect civilians from the effects of these weapons. The Council urges High Contracting Parties to further discuss how to ensure compliance with Amended Protocol II, also with respect to MOTAPM, and calls for MOTAPM to remain on the CCW agenda in order to ensure that High Contracting Parties can continue to consider the matter in a constructive and transparent manner.

18. In relation to Protocol III, the Council expresses concern about and condemns the increased use of incendiary weapons against civilians or military objectives located within a concentration of civilians, with their indiscriminate use causing cruel effects and unacceptable suffering.

19. The Council profoundly regrets that Protocol III issues were removed from the CCW agenda and request to have them back, since a structured debate on the implementation of the Convention should occur on all of its protocols.

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20. On Protocol V, the Council reminds that Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) remain a legacy threat from armed conflict, posing a lasting hazard to civilians, including children, long after hostilities cease. The Council underlines that ERW significantly delay reconstruction efforts and impede socio-economic development and the severe negative consequences that they have on the environment.

21. In recent years, the world has witnessed a resurgence in the use of various types of mines, including anti-personnel mines, cluster munitions, and other explosive weapons, particularly as a result of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine. The Council remains determined to uphold the relevant conventions and international humanitarian law, to preserve the collective security framework of which they are a cornerstone.

22. The Council reaffirms the EU's commitment to continue to provide sustained and continuous support to clearance operations, risk education and victim assistance to bring tangible benefits for communities in affected areas, creating new opportunities for growth and stability.

23. The Council recalls that Russia's unjustifiable and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law, including the UN Charter and IHL, and of Russia's obligations under the CCW and several of its protocols, but also a humanitarian catastrophe for Ukraine and its people.

24. As far as administrative, financial and organizational matters are concerned, the payment of annual contributions by the High Contracting Parties, in full and on time, remains essential to ensure the effective functioning of the Convention and its Protocols, as well as the work of the Implementation Support Unit. The Council therefore calls upon all High Contracting Parties to meet their financial obligations in a timely manner and to pay their mandatory contributions on time and in full. As for the administration and implementation of the CCW and its Protocols, the Council encourages the United Nations to ensure an efficient and effective implementation of the Convention.

25. The Council wishes to reiterate its commitment to mainstreaming a gender perspective into all disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control efforts in line with Resolution 1325 of the United Nations Security Council and related resolutions, including by promoting women's full, equal and meaningful participation in the CCW.

26. Finally, the Council wishes to recall that it has renewed its financial support to the CCW Implementation Support Unit by EUR 1.3 million over 3 years through Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/2322 of 13 November 2025. This builds on earlier EU funding to the CCW and aims at strengthening States' capacities to enhance the protection of civilians and mitigate the impact of conventional and emerging weapons technologies. This decision testifies to the prominence that the Union attributes to multilateralism, a rules-based world order and international law, as well as to the importance it attaches to a solid implementation of CCW objectives.

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