



The Cluster Munition Coalition thanks Bulgaria for its good extension request and for providing additional clarifications and updates.

As we just heard, Bulgaria is asking for additional 24 months, until 1 October 2022, to destroy all of its stockpiled cluster munitions and submunitions.

After years of unsuccessful attempts to identify a contractor and missing its art. 3 deadline, the destruction of Bulgaria's cluster munitions is well underway, with solid plans to finish the job by the newly-requested deadline.

Among the many positive points of the request we see the following:

- Bulgaria is asking for a relatively short amount of time to complete destruction of its stocks;
- The presented plan is comprehensive, and contains a detailed workplan for destruction of Lot 1 and Lot 2 of the stockpile. Moreover, based on the latest updates, the destruction of the two Lots is on track to be completed by February next year. As we understood from the information provided today, Lot 3 is planned to be destroyed by October 2021 (versus by April 2022 as in the written request) – this is a positive development and we appreciate Bulgaria presenting a detailed plan in this regard today;
- Bulgaria has already secured all required funding for the destruction of all three lots; and,
- It has reported on the destruction progress and challenges, and shared plans for the cluster munitions and submunitions retained for training purposes.

We ask Bulgaria to stay on course, provide regular updates on progress and any challenges, and to complete its destruction as soon as possible and by its new deadline in 2022 at the latest.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the Analysis Group for its bold engagement and outstanding efforts that have led to significant improvements in all extension requests under art. 3 and 4 considered this year.

Lastly, while the Cluster Munition Coalition wishes there will not be any future requests for extension to deadlines for clearance or stockpile destruction, we do hope that the Review Conference will re-introduce intersessional meetings under this convention. A short and focused intersessional meeting, held back-to-back with the Mine Ban Treaty's intersessional meeting, would provide an informal opportunity for public exchange on the requests. Such meetings would also contribute to much needed re-energizing of efforts on universalization and implementation and foster the spirit of transparency, openness and collaboration that should prevail under this convention.