

NEWS RELEASE



Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer
of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction

PRESIDENT-DESIGNATE OF THE FIRST REVIEW CONFERENCE

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Estonia joins anti-landmines convention: momentum builds in advance of Nairobi Summit

Thimphu (Bhutan)—Estonia has become the 142nd State to join the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel mines. Estonia's decision became official earlier today when it deposited its accession instruments with the United Nations Secretary-General.

Ambassador Wolfgang Petritsch of Austria, President-designate of the 29 November – 3 December *Nairobi Summit on a Mine-Free World*, or First Review Conference of the Convention, was quick to congratulate Estonia: "I commend Estonia embracing this important humanitarian instrument. Estonia's acceptance of the Convention complements its recent entry into the European Union as yet another step out of the past and into the future."

Speaking from Thimphu, where he currently is encouraging Bhutan to accede to the Convention, Ambassador Petritsch added: "I expect that Estonia's decision will catalyze support for the Convention amongst those few European countries which remain outside of it. Of the European Union's 25 member States only Finland, Latvia and Poland have yet to join the Ottawa Convention."

Ambassador Petritsch added that Estonia's decision to accept the Convention is another sign of important progress being made in advance of the Nairobi Summit. "Support for the Convention continues to grow and we are achieving important milestones in implementation," said Ambassador Petritsch, noting in particular the recent steps taken by Romania and Tajikistan to complete the destruction of their stockpiles of antipersonnel mines. "The growing membership of this Convention has now destroyed almost 31.5 million stockpiled landmines."

However, Ambassador Petritsch also expressed that while progress has been made, more needs to be done. "Efforts to end the suffering caused by antipersonnel mines must continue," said Petritsch. "I call upon all States to use the *Nairobi Summit* as a springboard for action, renewing commitments and further seizing the responsibility to clear mined areas and assist survivors."

For further information, contact:

Alexander Kmentt
Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in Geneva
41 (22) 748 20 50

Wolfgang Petritsch
Ambassador and Permanent Representative
Permanent Mission of Austria to the United Nations in Geneva
Avenue Giuseppe Motta 35-37, 1211 Geneva

Tel: 41 (22) 748 20 48

Fax: 41 (22) 748 20 40

www.nairobisummit.org