Council of the European Union

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LIMITE

PE-QE 366

PUBLIC

REPLY TO PARLIAMENTARY QUESTION

From:	General Secretariat of the Council
To:	Permanent Representations of the Member States
Subject:	PRELIMINARY DRAFT REPLY TO QUESTION FOR WRITTEN ANSWER E-007032/2016 - Marietje Schaake (ALDE) "Production by South Korean company Poongsan of cluster munitions and Euro coin blanks"

1. Delegations will find attached:

   – the text of the above question for written answer;

   – a preliminary draft reply prepared by the General Secretariat.

2. If no comments have been received from delegations by 7 December 2016 (17.00), this preliminary draft reply will be submitted to the Permanent Representatives Committee (Part 1) and to the Council for approval.

   Any comments received will be examined by the Working Party on General Affairs.

Question for written answer E-007032/2016
to the Council
Rule 130
Marietje Schaake (ALDE)

Subject: Production by South Korean company Poongsan of cluster munitions and Euro coin blanks

According to the Dutch NGO Pax for Peace, the South Korean company Poongsan produces various types of cluster munitions[1]. Poongsan also produces coin blanks, which it supplies to the EU market. In collaboration with major European mints, it has supplied Latvian euro coins in 2014 and Lithuanian euro coins in 2015[2]. According to a Poongsan employee interviewed on a Dutch TV programme in March 2016, the company does business with France, Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands as well[3]. The Royal Dutch Mint has since decided to stop purchasing coin blanks from Poongsan[4].

All but 7 EU Member States have signed the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM), which took effect in August 2010 as a legally binding agreement banning all use, production, transfer and stockpiling of cluster munitions. Non-signatory states are Estonia, Finland, Greece, Latvia, Poland and Romania, with Cyprus yet to ratify.

1. Is the Council aware of any other Member State doing business with Poongsan?

2. Would the Council consider a transaction of this type, e.g. buying coin blanks from a company that produces cluster munitions, to be a violation of Article I of the CCM?

3. Is the Council pressing for ratification of the CCM by all Member States, and if so, how?

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1 http://www.paxforpeace.nl/publications/all-publications/worldwide-investments-in-cluster-munitions-a-shared-responsibility-2016
2 http://www.poongsan.co.kr/eng/products/fabricated-nonferrous-material/coin-blanks
3 http://www.npo.nl/npo3/keuringsdienst-de-industrie-achter-clustermunitie
4 http://www.npo.nl/npo3/keuringsdienst-de-industrie-achter-clustermunitie

EN
E-007032/2016
Reply

While no information is available to the Council about the business activities referred to in the question, the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) represents an important step forward in responding to the humanitarian problems caused by this type of munition, and all EU Member States, whether or not they are parties to the CCM, share the same humanitarian concerns.

This enabled the EU to deliver a common statement on 7 September 2016 at the Sixth Meeting of the States Parties to the CCM in Geneva, where the European Union supported the humanitarian goal of the CCM and stated that it remains committed to supporting mine action, especially in the fields of clearance, stockpile destruction, mine risk education and victim assistance.

The EU itself is not a Party to the CCM and the Council has not addressed the question of Member States' ratification of the CCM. It falls on those Member States who are Parties to ensure compliance with the CCM.