

Europe and Central Asia are home to two of the world's 10 most mine-affected states: Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Croatia. The estimated number of landmines in the ground is enormous. However, the number of victims, the amount of unusable arable land, the impact on local economies, and the slow pace of reconstruction serve as the best indicators of the adverse impact of landmines. The most insidious aspect of mines is the fear they create by denying human beings the right to live and move freely during their daily lives.

Europe has been at the forefront of the campaign to ban anti-personnel landmines. From the first calls to action from the field in the mid-1990s to the continuing efforts of states to implement the Ottawa Convention, the region has displayed a genuine commitment toward mine action. To date, 40 countries in Europe and Central Asia have signed the Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel landmines and 35 have formally accepted its obligations through ratification or accession.

Europe and Central Asia remain a key focus for the Canadian Landmine Fund, established by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien in 1997 to support global mine action. Canada's contributions are helping Europeans and Central Asians to implement their Ottawa Convention obligations, meet the needs of mine-affected communities and mobilize global resources for mine action.