

## **Cluster bomb producer world leader for EU coin blanks**

**(Geneva, 16 January 2017) South Korean company Poongsan is a major player on the European market for the production of coin blanks, used amongst others for the production of Euro coins. While Poongsan is also a known producer of internationally banned cluster munitions. Anti-cluster bomb campaigners urge countries that have joined the international treaty banning these weapons to stop buying coin blanks from Poongsan.**

Last year, the Dutch television program *Keuringsdienst van Waarde* broadcasted an alarming episode that uncovered the link between European mints and cluster munitions producer Poongsan. Dutch NGO PAX has frequently published information about Poongsan's involvement in cluster munition production, in its series of 'Worldwide Investments in Cluster Munitions' reports. Cluster munitions are banned by the 2008 Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) because of their indiscriminate effects. 119 countries worldwide have joined the CCM, including 22 countries from the EU.

“Making coins with the help of a cluster bomb producer should be unthinkable for countries that have joined the lifesaving treaty that bans these weapons,” says Firoz Alizada, campaign manager for the Cluster Munition Coalition. “They committed themselves to eradicating cluster munitions, yet have no qualms doing business with a company that is involved in the production of these weapons”, he adds.

The broadcast by *Keuringsdienst van Waarde* and additional research by PAX reveals that the company sells or has sold coin blanks to CCM States Parties Australia, Canada, Chile, Cyprus (signatory), Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain. At least 8 of these appear to have bought coin blanks from Poongsan after they signed the CCM (Australia, Canada, France, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and Spain). What is more, Poongsan is featured on the list of vetted suppliers of the European Mint Director Working Group (MDWG).

Doing business with a company that also produces cluster munitions not only runs counter to the spirit of the CCM, it shows a serious double standard.

“Positively, the Royal Dutch Mint and the Mint of Norway have stated that they will no longer purchase coin blanks from Poongsan for the production of their coins”, says Suzanne Oosterwijk from PAX. “It is vital that other mints from countries that have pledged to eradicate cluster munitions follow this example.”

The Royal Dutch Mint announced it will no longer purchase coin blanks for the production of the Dutch euro coins from Poongsan, which was confirmed by the State Secretary for Finance. The Mint of Norway confirmed to PAX that it has ended its business ties with the South Korean company and will no longer source coin blanks from Poongsan as long as the company is involved in the production of cluster munitions.

In recent years, ten countries have put in place legislation banning investment in cluster munitions, and others have issued statements that in their understanding investments are banned by the CCM. It seems that Australia, Canada, the Czech Republic, France, Slovenia and Spain forgot to apply this same standard for their own policies for making money.

No one should do business with producers of cluster munitions until they stop doing so, especially the countries that have joined the CCM should not buy Poongsan's coin blanks. The Cluster Munition Coalition and its member organization PAX therefore call on States Parties and signatories to the Convention on Cluster Munitions Australia, Canada, Chile, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Lithuania, Peru, Portugal, Slovenia and Spain to provide clarity about their relations with Poongsan. Should they not or no longer buy coin blanks from Poongsan, they should publically declare what year the contract was ended, and make sure no more deals will be made in the future. Additionally, the European Mint Directors Working Group should take Poongsan off its vetted suppliers list.

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**Further resources for the media**

- See the March 2016 *Keuringsdienst van Waarde* episode here: <http://bit.ly/2hzQ9I8>.
- Access our dropbox containing further information through this link: [https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wclhhzr7zfv90jo/AACZwWsL\\_kY9P0ZD\\_h1jXTpKa?dl=0](https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wclhhzr7zfv90jo/AACZwWsL_kY9P0ZD_h1jXTpKa?dl=0)  
The dropbox contains:
  - the fact sheet that shows which countries that have joined the Convention on Cluster Munitions bought coin blanks from Poongsan
  - the 2016 report update of “Worldwide Investments in Cluster Munitions, a shared responsibility” for more information about Poongsan’s involvement with cluster munitions
  - an infographic
- High-resolution images including cluster bombs, cluster bomb survivors and Cluster Munition Coalition campaigners in action available at <http://bit.ly/1sx6GrS>. Please credit all images used.
- Cluster Munition Coalition Twitter - <https://twitter.com/banclusterbombs>
- Cluster Munition Coalition Facebook – <http://www.facebook.com/banclusterbombs>

**Notes to the editor**

- For more information about the campaign to Stop Explosive Investments visit <http://www.stopexplosiveinvestments.org>.
- The Cluster Munition Coalition (CMC) is an international coalition of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working in around 100 countries to eradicate cluster munitions, prevent further casualties from these weapons and put an end for all time to the suffering they cause - <http://www.stopclustermunitions.org>.
- PAX (the Netherlands) is a co-founder and member of the Cluster Munitions Coalition and annually produces the ‘Worldwide Investments in Cluster Munitions; a shared responsibility’ report.
- *Keuringsdienst van Waarde* is an informative television program of Dutch public broadcaster KRO-NCRV. Every episode departs from an everyday object, to find out how they are made. Reporters travel over the world to take a closer look at the supply chain - <http://keuringsdienstvanwaarde.kro.nl/>.
- A cluster munition, also known as a cluster bomb, is a weapon containing multiple explosive submunitions. Like landmines, these submunitions can remain a fatal threat to anyone in the area long after a conflict ends, for details visit <http://bit.ly/1u1ijUb>.

- The CMC believes investing in producers of cluster munitions is banned under the Convention on Cluster Munitions because Article 1 of the Convention reads: “Each State Party undertakes never under any circumstances to: (a) Use cluster munitions; (b) Develop, produce, otherwise acquire, stockpile, retain or transfer to anyone, directly or indirectly, cluster munitions; (c) Assist, encourage or induce anyone to engage in any activity prohibited to a State Party under this Convention.”