The Defence and Foreign Ministries and the Federal Security Service (FSB) have settled their differences obstructing the ratification of the protocol to the convention on prohibitions or restrictions on conventional weapons that can be deemed excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects, a military diplomat told Interfax-Military News Agency in Moscow on Tuesday.

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Moscow (Russia): "There were certain differences between the Foreign Ministry, the Defence Ministry and FSB on marking the perimeter of a minefield, in particular on the state border. All disparities were removed after additional joint work," the source said. Representatives of the three sides suggested compromise solutions, he said. "In essence, the purpose was not to torpedo the fundamental provisions of the protocol. Therefore it was found permissible to regard the borderline as a perimeter of a minefield without additionally marking it with special mine warning signs," the source said. "From a legal viewpoint, this approach meets the letter and spirit of international humanitarian law that provides for taking due steps to warn the civilian population and guarantee its security," the diplomat said. "This is separately spelled out in the new compromise wording," he said.

The source said that after the differences were settled, the Foreign Ministry supported ratification of the 3 May 1996 amended protocol on landmines, booby-traps and other devices. By now, 44 countries have ratified the protocol. Among them are Germany, Italy, India, Spain, Canada, China, the Netherlands, Norway, Pakistan, Slovenia, the USA, and Japan. Russia is a signatory of the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW), which limits or bans types of weapons that may cause excessive damage or have an indiscriminate use. Signatories of the convention signed the amended protocol limiting or banning the use of mines, booby traps and other devices at a conference on 3 May 1996.

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