



STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
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PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC TO THE
OPCW
AT THE 100th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 5-8 July 2022)

Agenda item 6 (c) – Elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Mr. Chairperson,

The Decision adopted by the 25th Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention suspending the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic due to Syria's failure to comply with the Convention is a strong message by the international community against impunity for the use of chemical weapons, and in defence of International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, and the integrity of the Convention. It is an appropriate response by the Conference to the clear violation by the Syrian Arab Republic of the Convention and its core principles. This message has become even more important as the international community is exposed to aggressive and irresponsible behaviour of one of the States Parties that could result in further violations of the Convention. In order to reverse the decision, Syria needs to resolve the pending issues, declare the full extent of its chemical weapons programme, and return to full compliance with the Convention.

The Syrian regime's failure to respect its international obligations under the Convention is substantiated through comprehensive and thorough investigations carried out by the Joint UN – OPCW Investigation Mechanism (JIM) as well as the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), Fact-Finding Missions (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).

The European Union commends the work of the Technical Secretariat on all aspects of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. In this context, we value the confidential TS briefings to States Parties on their on-going work and working methods. We also commend the Director-General's continuous efforts to engage with the Syrian Arab Republic, and we encourage Syria to act constructively, as there is no alternative to cooperation. Refusal to issue visas for OPCW staff and preventing their deployment on the ground seriously hampers the work of the Technical Secretariat and its ability to fulfil its mandate. We urge Syria to issue visas without delay for all staff members of the OPCW, including all the members of the DAT, in accordance with the obligations of States parties under Article VII paragraph 7 of the Convention and UNSCR 2118.

The European Union looks forward to the continuation of the work of the IIT and the release of its next reports, and is determined to ensure full follow up of all findings. We have already imposed restrictive measures on 32 senior Syrian officials and scientists and two entities for their role in the development and use of chemical weapons. We are ready to consider introducing further measures as appropriate, and we will continue to work towards ensuring full accountability for those responsible for these egregious crimes.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

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