



**OPCW**

**Conference of the States Parties**

Twenty-Seventh Session  
28 November – 1 December 2022

C-27/NAT.11  
28 November 2022  
ENGLISH only

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOANNEKE BALFOORT  
DEPUTY MANAGING DIRECTOR FOR SECURITY AND DEFENCE POLICY  
AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE  
OF THE STATES PARTIES**

Mr Chairperson,  
Director-General,  
Distinguished delegates,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The candidate countries Albania, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine, the potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, and the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the EEA (European Economic Area) align themselves with this statement.

Andorra, Monaco and San Marino also associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union (EU) would like to pay tribute to H.E. Ambassador Bård Ivar Svendsen of Norway, Chairperson of the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties, and H.E. Ambassador Ziad Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia, Chairperson of the Executive Council, for their efforts and outstanding performance in fulfilling their duties. We also warmly congratulate H.E. Ambassador Vusumuzi Madonsela of South Africa for his election as the Chairperson of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties. I would like to assure him of our full support in steering the work of the Conference of the States Parties.

We also take this opportunity to commend the leadership of OPCW Director-General Fernando Arias and reiterate our full confidence in the OPCW Technical Secretariat, its professionalism, impartiality and well-established technical expertise in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) and tasks assigned by the States Parties. The European Union recalls that on 13 October 2022 the United Nations General Assembly First Committee reaffirmed its strong support for the Convention and the OPCW in the resolution on the implementation of the Convention (A/C.1/77/L.55) prepared annually by Poland.

Mr Chairperson, the year of 2022 has completely changed the paradigm of global, as well as European security architecture. Russia’s unjustifiable, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine is an attack on our common principles and it grossly violates the United Nations Charter. The EU resolutely condemns the Russian aggression and demands that Russia withdraws all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine. Moreover, as part of its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has engaged in a campaign of



disinformation and state-controlled propaganda in spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and others regarding chemical weapons programmes. It is well established that Ukraine is a responsible member of, and in full compliance with the Chemical weapons Convention.

The Syrian regime's failure to respect its international obligations under the Convention is substantiated through comprehensive and thorough investigations carried out by all the established mechanisms, notably the OPCW-UN Joint Investigation Mechanism (JIM), the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) as well as the Investigation and Identification team (IIT). We commend the Director-General's continuous efforts to engage with Syria. Unfortunately, there is no progress reported to the Council in any of the open issues. We urge Syria to act constructively, as there is no alternative to cooperation, as explicitly required by the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 and the respective decisions by the Conference of the States Parties.

The EU has condemned in the strongest possible terms the poisoning of the Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny in August 2020 with a military grade nerve agent of the novichok group. We continue to urge the Russian Federation to provide substantial answers to the questions posed by 45 States Parties in the framework of Article IX and to ensure without further delay the disclosure of the circumstances of the assassination attempt against Mr Navalny.

The European Union remains fully committed to counter the proliferation of chemical weapons and to support the fight against impunity for the use of chemical weapons. On 14 November 2022, the EU imposed further restrictive measures linked to the poisoning of Mr Navalny and the production of chemical weapons delivery systems in Syria. Measures under the EU's chemical weapons sanctions regime now apply to a total of 25 individuals and 3 entities.

Mr Chairperson, the EU supports the Director-General's proposed revision of the programme and budget for 2023 that enables the OPCW to continue its vital work including cooperation and assistance projects. In this context, the EU calls upon all States Parties to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time.

The EU has noted with great concern that the Technical Secretariat will face a high turnover in the Inspectorate Division in 2023, affecting its operational capacity. This situation underlines the need for amending the OPCW tenure policy to help maintain key expertise required to ensure the continued implementation of the Convention. As an interim measure, a new decision on re-hiring of inspectors is warranted.

The EU strongly believes that gender equality and mainstreaming of gender are and should continue to be an integral part of the work of the OPCW and implementation of the Convention. A wide diversity of views is essential for decision-making and in helping us tackle the challenges we face with greater effectiveness. We commend the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for the work they have carried out thus far and look forward to further progress towards gender equality in the Organisation, including through the enhancement of gender mainstreaming in all areas of the Technical Secretariat's work.

I would like to reiterate the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders, ranging from chemical industry to think tanks, civil society organisations and non-governmental organisations, in the OPCW work, and their meaningful and broadest possible participation in the Conference of the States Parties, including the Fifth Review Conference.

The Fifth Review Conference will be an opportunity to consider how to strengthen implementation of the Convention as a key instrument of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Achieving a common vision on countering the re-emergence of chemical weapons and safeguarding the global non-use norm is a shared responsibility of all States Parties. The work programme of the Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) for the Preparation of the Fifth Review Conference allows all delegations to effectively express their priorities on relevant topics for the future of our Organisation. The EU and its Member States actively and constructively contribute to the discussions, and we encourage all States Parties to engage in this preparatory process. In this context, I would like to express our gratitude to the Chairperson, H.E. Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia, for leading the work in an open and inclusive manner, with the goal of building consensus.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.

--- 0 ---