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REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E DR KYRIACÓS KOUROS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF CYPRUS
TO THE OPCW
AT THE SIXTY-NINTH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madame Chairperson,
Mr Director-General,
Distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The acceding country Croatia*, the candidate countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland+ and Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the EFTA country Norway, member of the European Economic Area, as well as Andorra, Georgia, Monaco, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Ukraine, and Armenia align themselves with this statement.

On behalf of the European Union, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you, Ambassador Bhaswati Mukherjee, in the Chair of the Executive Council. As this is your first session as Chair of the Council, Madame Ambassador, let me assure you that the European Union stands ready to work hard and constructively with you to make it a successful one. We are fully confident that under your able stewardship, the Council will exercise its functions in a most efficient and effective manner.

As stated on previous occasions, the European Union considers the future priorities of the OPCW of the utmost importance. Our position on this issue is well known: ensuring a full-fledged prohibition on chemical weapons through destroying what is in existence and preventing any future re-emergence is the overall object and purpose of the Convention. The European Union welcomes the decision of the last Conference of the State Parties on the issue of the final extended deadline for destruction of the remaining stockpiles. We have full confidence that the Possessor States will fulfil their commitments and complete destruction within the shortest amount of time possible. As stockpiles diminish and new threats

* Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

+ Iceland continues to be a member of the EFTA and the European Economic Area.



materialise, driven in part by developments in science and technology, the security environment of the Organisation changes. The OPCW is adapting to this change and must continue to do so. Greater emphasis on preventing re-emergence is needed for the OPCW to remain relevant to the international community and to reach our shared goal of achieving and sustaining a world free of chemical weapons.

From the perspective of the European Union, some of the key issues in optimising the OPCW's ability to deal with its changing environment are renewed efforts in achieving full and effective implementation of the Convention and strengthening the industry verification regime. We remain concerned about the relatively high number of States Parties that have yet to enact legislation covering all key areas of the Convention, which is detrimental to preventing re-emergence. Given the increasing complexity and globalisation of the chemical industry and the speed with which chemical substances traverse the globe, all States should have adequate legislation in place, covering the production, use and transfer of all toxic chemicals, not only those contained in the Schedules. Robust transfer controls, as stipulated by the Convention, are an important part of this. Likewise, strengthening the industry verification regime has been a long-standing priority in enhancing the ability of the OPCW to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons. Ensuring adequate numbers of targeted, effective and efficient inspections is vital. An indispensable prerequisite for this is the timely submission of accurate and comprehensive Article VI declarations to the Technical Secretariat by all relevant States Parties.

The European Union finds it essential that the Third Review Conference addresses these and other priorities related to the future orientation of the OPCW. This is a natural consequence of reviewing the past. In this regard we are pleased by the efforts undertaken in the Open-Ended Working Group preparing the Conference and by its chair Ambassador Nassima Baghli of Algeria. The Open-Ended Working Group should discuss and review all the issues relevant to the implementation of the Convention and the functioning of the OPCW since the Second Review Conference, including outcomes of the activities within the OPCW and proposals made for the OPCW future priorities. We look forward to continuing these fruitful discussions and working together with all States Parties and the Technical Secretariat in preparing for a successful outcome of the Review Conference to be conducted in April 2013, as decided by the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. The active participation and support of the Technical Secretariat is invaluable in ensuring reporting throughout the review process as well as providing the required information and analysis for taking stock of the operation of the Convention, and in providing substantive input to the discussions on the future priorities of the OPCW.

The European Union has repeatedly demonstrated its support for the activities of the OPCW through its voluntary financial contributions and continues to do so through its new contribution. This new voluntary contribution of over EUR 2.1 million is a practical expression of the European Union's support for the implementation of all the provisions of the Convention. The activities supported through this new contribution include support for national implementation in developing countries, the Programme for Africa, international cooperation, developing relationships with the key stakeholders, including industry, the scientific community and NGOs, as well as chemical safety and security and the OPCW's efforts to reduce chemical threats. We would like to encourage all States Parties to attend a presentation of the OPCW activities supported through this new European Union voluntary financial contribution on 12 July, here in the OPCW.

The European Union attaches great importance to the work undertaken under Article X. Building capacity for emergency responses, nationally, in regional groups, and for the OPCW remains, together with the preventive issue of chemical safety and security, an important priority. Enhanced cooperation between the OPCW and other relevant international organisations in providing assistance and protection against chemical weapons is essential, including preparing for interventions in crisis and post-crisis situations involving such weapons. The effective implementation of Article X should assist States Parties to reduce the risk of possible terrorist access to materials, equipment and knowledge as well as to enhance the capacities of States Parties at national, regional and international levels to prevent and prepare for attacks on chemical plants causing the release of toxic chemicals. The OPCW should assist States Parties to adopt measures to enhance their preparedness for rapid and coordinated responses at national, regional and international levels.

Promoting economic and technological development through national capacity building serves likewise the aim of the implementation of the Convention, and the European Union stands ready to discuss concrete proposals put forward under Article XI, in accordance with the decision on the components of an agreed framework for the full implementation of Article XI taken by the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of the States Parties. Enhanced international cooperation is essential for preventing the misuse of toxic chemicals.

The European Union welcomes the consultations undertaken on the working methods of the policy-making organs of the OPCW, and we encourage you to continue this process. This session of the Council is expected to decide on the number of Council sessions for the coming year, and the European Union recalls that in 2008, because of the Second Review Conference, the number of regular Council sessions was reduced. Given that the Third Review Conference is an excellent opportunity to discuss in depth the many challenging issues that await us in the future, we are confident that the Council can be as efficient—if not more—with its use of time in 2013. However, this will require better preparation of the Council sessions and more time devoted to substantive issues rather than report drafting or procedural discussions, which should be pursued in any case. The European Union has full confidence in you, Madame Ambassador, being the right Chairperson to undertake implementing such improvements of the Council's working methods which would further add to the credibility and reputation of the OPCW. The European Union therefore stands ready to continue our constructive dialogue on this particular issue as well as on improving the working methods of the PMOs in general.

Madame Chairperson,

The current economic and financial situation affects us all. No public institution, be it national or international, can escape this. We fully support the Director-General's pursuit of further efficiency gains and cost-saving measures, which should allow the OPCW to absorb any new expenses within existing resources. States Parties should begin discussions on the draft programme and budget for 2013 as soon as possible to examine in detail the proposal recently distributed by the Director-General against the backdrop of the current situation.

I thank you and request that this statement will be treated as an official document of this session of the Council.