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AUSTRIA

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY MR GEORGIOS KRITIKOS, DEPUTY HEAD OF DIVISION
DISARMAMENT, NON-PROLIFERATION AND ARMS EXPORT CONTROL,
EUROPEAN EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE AT THE FOURTH SPECIAL SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES TO REVIEW THE OPERATION
OF THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION UNDER AGENDA ITEM 11**

I deliver this statement in the capacity of the Austrian Presidency of the Council of the European Union.

We would like to commend you, Chairperson of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention, Ambassador Agustín Vásquez Gómez, the Chairperson of the Committee of the Whole, Ambassador Marcin Czepelak, as well as the Chairperson of the Open-ended Working Group for the Preparation of the Fourth Review Conference, Ambassador I Gusti Agung Wesaka Puja, for your hard work and superior diplomatic skills.

The European Union (EU) deeply regrets that the Fourth Review Conference has been concluded without a consensual final outcome document.

In this light, we welcome the joint statement initiated by France and co-sponsored by 57 States Parties representing all regions, including all EU Member States.

We believe that the deliberations during the Conference have confirmed that States Parties perceive the Chemical Weapons Convention (hereinafter “The Convention”) as a common public good and wish to consolidate its achievements as well as to strengthen its implementing body, the OPCW.

The Chairperson’s Report may serve as a useful description of the challenges to orient the work of the OPCW.

As already stated in the EU’s statement at the general debate, ending the use and preventing impunity for the use of chemical weapons must remain at the centre of our efforts and deliberations in the future. In the face of serious breaches of the non-use norm since the Third Review Conference by State and non-State actors in the Syrian Arab Republic, Iraq, Malaysia and recently in the United Kingdom, concrete measures are urgently needed to deter and end the use of chemical weapons, to hold perpetrators to account, and to prevent further erosion of the non-use norm.



The EU continues to firmly support the important work of the Fact-Finding Mission and the Declaration Assessment Team in investigating reports of chemical weapons use and in seeking to verify Syria's declaration. It is vital to establish the facts on the production and use of these heinous weapons.

The EU deeply deplores that the mandate of the OPCW-UN Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) was not renewed.

The international community must therefore send a clear message and proactively uphold the letter and spirit of the Convention, also through the full and effective implementation of the decision of the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties "Addressing the Threat from Chemical Weapons Use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3) of 27 June 2018.

The decisions on the Programme and Budget for 2019 give a firm and solid basis to the OPCW Technical Secretariat to tackle the manifold tasks and challenges ahead.

The EU would like to reiterate its strongest commitment to the mandate and work of the OPCW. We would also like to express our support to and have full confidence in the Technical Secretariat, under the leadership of Director-General Ambassador Fernando Arias, in addressing the present and future challenges during the next intersessional period.

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