

STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR PÄIVI KAUKORANTA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF FINLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE 92nd SESSION OF THE OPCW EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 8 – 11 October 2019)

Mr. Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

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

The Candidate Countries Albania, Montenegro and North Macedonia, the potential candidate country Bosnia and Herzegovina and the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries Iceland and Norway, members of the EEA (European Economic Area), as well as Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine align themselves with this statement. Andorra, Monaco and San Marino also associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union would like to take this opportunity to thank the Chairperson, Ambassador Andrea Perugini, for his leadership in effectively preparing this session of the Executive Council. Sir, we assure you of our full support in steering the preparations for a successful Conference of the States Parties in November.

We also thank the OPCW Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, for his comprehensive report to the Executive Council. The report testifies to the intensity and quality of work undertaken by the Technical Secretariat (TS) to implement of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC). I would like to put on record our full confidence in the professionalism and capacity of the TS to implement the decisions taken and tasks assigned by the States Parties.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a key instrument of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. The implementing body of the Convention, the Organisation for the

Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), must be funded appropriately to achieve the CWC's aim: a world free of Chemical Weapons (CW).

The Director General's proposed programme and budget for 2020 is proportionate and justified. It maintains the 2019 level of assessed contributions for all States Parties. The budget will enable the OPCW to continue its vital work throughout 2020, including cooperation and assistance projects.

The European Union urges all members of the Executive Council to support the submission of the Director General's draft budget to the Conference of States Parties. A timely decision is needed as the current budget expires in December 2019.

The EU Member States together stand for some 40% of the OPCW regular budget. In addition, the European Union has considerably increased its voluntary financial contribution in support of OPCW activities. On 1 April this year, the European Union Council of Ministers decided to contribute EUR 11.6 million over the next 3 years. This voluntary contribution will be used for a variety of important activities of the organisation, such as financing the establishment of the new Centre for Chemistry and Technology as well as the development of national capacities of States Parties, including through the Africa Programme. With this new decision, the total voluntary contribution from the European Union amounts to EUR 57 million since 2004.

Once again, we take the opportunity to call on States Parties that are in arrears of payment of their annual contribution to pay their share immediately. By not respecting their financial engagement, they are hampering the effective functioning of the Organisation and reducing the resources available to support States Parties in need of assistance.

We wish to express our thanks and appreciation to Mr Daniel Baptista and Mr Marcin Kawalowski for their hard work and dedication as budget 2020 facilitators.

Mr. Chairperson,

The Conference of States Parties in November this year (CSP-24) will address the issue of updating the Schedule 1 of the Annex on Chemicals to the CWC. It is essential that the CWC remains responsive to new and emerging threats. The Joint Proposal submitted by the United States, Canada and the Netherlands to add two new families of the chemicals, including the substance used in Salisbury, to Schedule 1 will help to achieve this. The European Union supports the draft decision which has been circulated and looks forward to its adoption by consensus at the CSP-24. We have also taken note of the modified proposal by the Russian Federation to introduce changes to Schedule 1 of the Annex to the CWC. This modification is a positive step that we hope will pave the way for reaching an agreement at the CSP.

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union reiterates that any use of chemical weapons anywhere, at any time, by anyone, under any circumstances is unacceptable. Those responsible for the use of CW should be held accountable. We commend the OPCW TS for the establishment of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), as mandated by the Decision "Addressing the Threat from CW use" (C-SS-4/DEC.3). We look forward to the issuing of the IIT's first report, which will represent

important progress towards identifying those responsible for Chemical Weapons use in Syrian Arab Republic (SAR).

The European Union has taken note of the OPCW Director General's reports regarding state-of-play in the elimination of the Syrian Chemical Weapons Programme. We express great concern at the Syrian regime's continued breach of its obligations as a State Party to the Convention due to its failure to provide a complete Declaration and its failure to destroy all of its CW and CW production facilities. This is evidenced by the reports of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), and the report by the Director General (EC-82/DG.18 2016) requiring a change in the approach by the Syrian Arab Republic. We commend the continuous commitment the OPCW Director General on the framework of the Structured Dialogue to assist Syrian Arab Republic in the full implementation of its obligations.

We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to fully cooperate with the OPCW Technical Secretariat as required under the Convention and reiterate our strong support for the important work of the Fact Finding Mission (FFM), the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT) and the IIT.

The European Union currently imposes restrictive measures on a total of 32 persons and 2 entities in the Syrian Arab Republic specifically for their role in the development, production and use of chemical weapons, in violation of the CWC. These restrictive measures have been imposed in the framework of the EU's sanctions against the Syrian Arab Republic, and under the EU's autonomous chemical weapons sanctions regime. The European Union is also actively participating in the work of the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union reiterates its strong commitment to work together for a world free of chemical weapons and therefore is supportive to any initiative favoring dialogue among States Parties. We would like to thank the Co-facilitators Ambassadors Pujana of Indonesia and Vásquez Gómez of El Salvador for their hard work, constructive approach and inclusive consultations. We also commend the EC Chairperson's proposal on revitalising the facilitation framework for its balanced approach building on the consensus elements emerging from the extensive consultations undertaken by the Co-facilitators. We agree on the main assumptions that the future framework or mechanism of the facilitation has to be substance-driven and inter-active. We also agree on its cross-cutting nature as many of the topics are inter-related while avoiding duplication and micro-management. We look forward to continue contributing to this inter-active process with a view to arriving at a consensual outcome.

The EU considers it important for the TS to maintain verification expertise relating to the CW in the Inspectorate Division. The rehiring mechanism, as an interim measure, contributes to this purpose and supports the efforts to build up a viable knowledge management system while the overall framework and policy for workforce management is under consideration. We also encourage the DG to continue to recruit staff with the necessary skills and gender balance among TS staff and OPCW activities.

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union attaches great importance to the interest and engagement of all relevant stakeholders such as chemical industry, think tanks, academia, civil society organisations and NGOs for cooperation, synergies and awareness-raising purposes. This is all the more important now that the OPCW's work shifts from stockpile destruction to preventing re-emergence of chemical weapons. The refusal to accredit some of the stakeholders' participation in the Conference of the States Parties by a small number of States Parties is not only regrettable but against the spirit of 2013 Review Conference decision to open the annual Conference of States Parties to civil society groups.

I would kindly ask you, Mr Chairperson, to consider this statement as an official document of the 92nd Session of the Executive Council and post it on the OPCW External Server and public website. The Finnish EU Presidency has issued this statement on the website of its Embassy in The Hague.

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