



**STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION**  
**BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CONSUELO FEMENIA**  
**PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SPAIN TO THE OPCW**  
**AT THE 28th SESSION OF STATES PARTIES TO THE CWC**  
**(The Hague, 27 November- 1 December 2023)**

**Agenda item 9 (d) – Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use - SAR**

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

Mr. Chairperson,

The Syrian Arab Republic has repeatedly used chemical weapons over the past years, causing numerous victims. The comprehensive and thorough investigations carried out by the UN and OPCW substantiate this failure of the Syrian regime to comply with its international obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, and its willingness to breach them. It must fully declare and destroy its chemical weapons stockpiles and programme in accordance with its obligations under UNSC Resolution 2118 and the CWC.

The Decision adopted by the 25<sup>th</sup> Conference of the States Parties suspending the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic was a strong message against impunity for the use of chemical weapons, and in defence of International Law, including International Humanitarian Law, as well as the integrity of the Convention. It was an appropriate response by the Conference to the clear violations by Syria of the Convention and its core principles. However, the prolonged non-compliance causes serious damage to the objective and purpose of the Convention and requires further collective measures by the Conference to address the situation. We therefore call all States Parties to support a new decision on additional measures related to, inter alia, transfers of scheduled chemicals, their pre-cursors and equipment to Syria and elsewhere.

In order for its voting rights and other privileges to be restored, Syria needs to resolve all pending issues, declare the full extent of its chemical weapons programme, and return to full compliance with the Convention. There is no alternative to full and effective cooperation by Syria with the OPCW and all its established mechanisms. In this context, the European Union takes note of the holding of the 25<sup>th</sup> round of consultations but regrets the complete lack of progress: ten years after Syria's initial declaration, important questions about its chemical weapons programme remain unanswered.

Mr. Chairperson,

The OPCW reporting is a crucial contribution to efforts to end impunity for the use of chemical weapons. The European Union looks forward to the release of next IIT report, and is determined to ensure appropriate follow up. We have already imposed restrictive measures on 33 senior officials, military personnel, scientists and businesspersons as well as eight entities and companies for their role in the development and use of chemical weapons. The EU is ready to consider introducing further measures as appropriate and will continue to work towards ensuring full accountability for those responsible for these heinous crimes, including through the International Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

The Candidate Countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Türkiye and Ukraine, the potential candidate country Georgia as well as 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.

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

Thank you.

\* \* \*