

**STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
BY MR. MORTEN SKOVGAARD HANSEN
CHARGE D’AFFAIRES A.I. AND DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF
DENMARK TO THE OPCW
AT THE 68th MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 22 July 2025)**

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

The European Union remains strongly committed to peace, security and stability in the Middle East, and urges all actors to exercise maximum restraint, to avoid any further violence, and to uphold international law, including international humanitarian law.

On 23 of June 2025 the European Union agreed Council Conclusions on Syria. In this context I would like to refer to the following elements of the conclusions: The EU urges all external actors without exception to fully respect Syria’s unity, independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The EU condemns any unilateral foreign military actions and presence as well as attempts to undermine Syria’s stability and prospects for a peaceful transition, including through foreign information manipulation and interference. In this regard, the EU remains seriously concerned by the actions of Russia and Iran, the main accomplices of the Assad regime’s brutal repression against its people, aiming to once again fuel violence and destabilise Syria. While Israel’s security concerns should be addressed, the EU is deeply concerned by the strikes by the Israeli Defence Forces in several regions, and their continued presence and military operations, notably in Southern Syria.

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union welcomes the agreement on cease-fire between Israel and Syria, and continues to call for an immediate end to violence across Syria. The EU calls on the transitional authorities to maintain order, ensure control over armed groups, protect all Syrians, regardless of their ethnic or religious background, hold all perpetrators accountable in line with international law, norms and standards, and to take forward an inclusive transition. The EU stands ready to assist. We call on Syria’s transitional authorities to de-escalate the situation in Sweida, which has already resulted in a high number of casualties, authorize the delivery of humanitarian and medical aide and facilitate the evacuation of civilians from combat zones. All parties should show restraint, and refrain from taking action which could lead to further escalation.

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union has taken good note of the information provided by the Director-General on the latest developments. It is of paramount importance to ensure the safety of Syrians and OPCW staff that are working to identify the remnants of the chemical weapons programme of the former regime. We also stress the need to maintain the Syrian capacity to support the OPCW's in-country deployments to identify the remnants of the Assad-regime's chemical weapons programme. Identification and verified destruction of these remnants is urgent to counter proliferation risks in the region and beyond.

Concluding, the European Union welcomes the transitional government's cooperation with the OPCW and calls on the transitional government to ensure swift implementation of the next steps to eliminate the chemical weapons programme for good and to counter proliferation risks. The EU will continue to actively support OPCW's activities including through financial support, with a view to investigating, securing and fully destroying all chemical weapons in Syria, including production facilities, and urges others to do the same.

Thank you.

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