



STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
BY H.E. SPYROS ATTAS
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AT THE 111th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 10 - 13 March 2026)

**Agenda item 6(c): Elimination of any Remnants of the Assad-Era Syrian
Chemical Weapons Programme**

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

Andorra, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Liechtenstein, Monaco, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by anyone – be it a State or a non-State actor – anywhere, at any time and under any circumstances. It is a violation of international law and can amount to the most serious of international crimes - war crimes and crimes against humanity. The EU remains committed to supporting the OPCW with a view to ensuring full accountability for those responsible for these heinous crimes in Syria and beyond, including through the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

On 21 January 2026, the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) issued a report that found Syrian Arab Air Force responsible for a chemical weapons attack in Kafr Zeita, in the Syrian Arab Republic on 1 October 2016. The report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that a military helicopter released a cylinder which contained chlorine gas, injuring 35 named individuals and affecting dozens more.

The EU pays tribute to the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) for its thorough and professional work. The IIT reporting is an important contribution to ending impunity for the use of chemical weapons. In this context, the EU recognises the positive role of the transitional Syrian authorities in facilitating the IIT investigations for its fifth report.

The European Union has imposed restrictive measures on officials and scientists of the Al Assad regime for their role in the development and use of chemical weapons. In light of the new IIT report, the European Union remains ready to consider introducing further measures as appropriate.

Mr. Chairperson,

The EU commends the continued constructive engagement and sustained efforts between the Secretariat and the Syrian transitional authorities, with a view to dismantling the Assad-era secret chemical weapons programme and ensuring that the Syrian Arab Republic fulfils its obligations under the Convention. We thank the Secretariat for its regular reporting and the informative and timely pre-EC briefings on its activities and deployments. We also thank the Syrian Arab Republic for having re-initiated the regular monthly reporting.

In this context, the EU notes with concern the handling of seventy-five (75) cylinders of Category 3 chemical weapons in the Aleppo region. This is not in line with the requirements of the Convention nor the agreed framework for verified expedited on-site destruction. The EU has taken note of the measures taken by the Syrian Arab Republic in response and encourages the Syrian National Authority to complete its inquiries into the matter as soon as possible and to share the results with the Secretariat and the States Parties.

Thank you.

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