



OPCW

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LITHUANIA

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DARIUS SEMAŠKA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE SEVENTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The candidate countries the Republic of Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro* and the Republic of Serbia*, the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates the Republic of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the Principality of Andorra, Georgia, the Principality of Monaco, the Republic of Moldova, the Republic of San Marino and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

I would like to express my congratulations to you, Mr Chairperson, for taking the stewardship of the session of Executive Council for the first time. We are confident you will ensure that the Seventy-Third Session of the Council is effective in proceeding to implement the results of the Third Review Conference, and treating challenges to the purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We believe this session will significantly contribute to our common efforts in enhancing the security of States Parties, as well as international peace and security.

At the Third Review Conference in April 2013 and the following Seventy-Second Session of the Executive Council in May, the States Parties reiterated their deep concern that chemical weapons may have been used in the Syrian Arab Republic. Since then, the situation in Syria has been deteriorating drastically, and reports of the use of chemical weapons have alarmingly intensified. We take seriously the reports by a number of States Parties that they have growing evidence that chemical weapons have been used in Syria.

Obviously, the reported use of chemical weapons by anyone is directly related to the object and purpose of the Chemical Weapons Convention. By the very Preamble of the Convention, the States Parties made themselves clearly determined “for the sake of all mankind, to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons”.

* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro and the Republic of Serbia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.



We strongly believe this is our international duty and obligation to encourage the States Parties to proactively address any actions that are completely contrary to the legal norms and standards of the international community and represent a threat to international peace and security. It is also an essential matter of the credibility and relevance of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) as the international body with the responsibility to fulfil its mission.

We unconditionally condemn any use of chemical weapons in Syria and call on all parties to the conflict to allow access to the United Nations investigating team mandated by the UN Secretary-General. The expertise of the OPCW is a key element in conducting an objective investigation into reports of use of chemical weapons, and we welcome the OPCW's full support to the UN investigation. We reiterate our demand to the Syrian authorities to co-operate fully with the investigation. We call on the Syrian authorities to allow the investigation immediate, full and unfettered access throughout the country to ensure that the investigation is completed rapidly, effectively and safely. We are looking forward to the report by the UN Secretary-General to be delivered to the UN Member States. We are confident that those who may be found responsible for the use of chemical weapons will be held accountable.

We emphasise the need for the secure and safe storage of all chemical weapons in Syria pending their destruction. The Third Review Conference underlined that the objectives of the Convention will not be fully realised as long as there remains even a single State not Party that could possess or acquire such weapons. We repeat our call to Syria to accede to the Chemical Weapons Convention and to safely destroy their chemical weapon stockpiles under independent verification without further delay.

Mr Chairperson,

To conclude on a more positive note, we do acknowledge some progress towards the absolute universality of the Convention. With great satisfaction we welcome Somalia as a new State Party to the Convention from 28 June 2013. We express our firm support to the steps taken by the Director-General, Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü, to pursue universal adherence to the Convention. At the same time, we encourage the State Parties to fully implement the provisions of Article VII of the Convention. We also underline the need to continue working on the follow-up of the Third Review Conference in all agreed areas.

The European Union looks forward to continuing to work constructively with our partners during this session of the Executive Council in order to further the goals of the Convention.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson, and I request that this document be treated as an official document of this session of the Council.