



OPCW

Executive Council

Seventy-Fifth Session
4 – 7 March 2014

EC-75/NAT.23
4 March 2014
ENGLISH only

GREECE

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E. MS TERESA ANGELATOU
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GREECE TO THE OPCW AT THE
SEVENTY-FIFTH 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 Serbia, the countries of the Stabilization and Association Process and potential candidates the Republic of Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the Principality of Monaco, Norway and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the Director-General for his statement, which covers the various items on the agenda, and provides useful guidance for our work. We are looking forward to participating actively in the deliberations during this week. I would also like to thank Ms Kaag for her thorough briefing on the implementation of the joint OPCW-UN Joint Mission with regard to the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons, which will also be the focus of this statement.

Allow me first of all to pay tribute to the tireless efforts of OPCW staff and of the Joint Mission since the beginning of the Syrian destruction operation, oftentimes under very difficult and dangerous circumstances. The European Union and its Member States continues to grant their full support, political, financial and material, to the OPCW-UN Joint Mission in order to bring this important mission to fruition.

In this respect, I would like to draw the attention to the decision of the Council of the European Union, dated 10 February 2014 which introduces a derogation to the restrictive measures against the Syrian Arab Republic, so that, if the Syrian Arab Republic chooses, frozen assets belonging to the Syrian Central Bank or to Syrian public entities can be paid on behalf of the Syrian Arab Republic to the OPCW for the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons and for activities connected to the verification mission of the OPCW. The Syrian Arab Republic is, as a party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, responsible for meeting the costs arising from the destruction of their programme. They must fulfil their obligations in this regard.

Recalling our previous statements at the Thirty-Eighth and Thirty-Ninth Meetings of the Executive Council, underlining the ongoing delays regarding the removal of the Syrian



chemicals and the fact that the agreed timelines have been missed, we cannot but reiterate our deep concern regarding the continuing delays incurred in the overall transport process. As major financial contributors to the destruction process, the European Union and its Member States cannot but draw attention to the negative impact of these delays, not only on the agreed timelines, but also on the cost of the operation.

Indeed, we have witnessed the removal of only very limited quantities of chemicals. The new time frame for shipping chemicals to the port of Latakia must ensure that chemicals can be removed from the Syrian Arab Republic in time to allow the completion of the destruction process before the deadline of 30 June established by the United Nations Security Council.

We remain aware of the challenging security situation inside the Syrian Arab Republic. However, we note that the United Nations Secretary-General the OPCW Director-General and the Special Coordinator Ms Kaag, have all confirmed that thanks to the substantial international support already provided for the removal of chemicals from its territory, the Syrian Arab Republic has sufficient material and equipment to ensure the expeditious removal. Furthermore, a number of States have come together in providing the necessary maritime and land-based resources to enable maritime transport, hydrolysis and final destruction of the chemical agents. Thanks to this collaborative effort everything is in place and waiting for the removal to be completed. We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to take early action and deliver this material to port.

The Syrian Government must now demonstrate, on the ground, its professed commitment to the destruction of their chemical weapons in conformity with agreed timelines. It needs to carry out systematic, substantial and accelerated removal of its chemicals from its territory on the basis of the recommendations of the Operational Planning Group, in order to ensure that the agreed timeline of the end of June 2014 for their destruction is met.

The Syrian Arab Republic must also physically destroy the remaining twelve chemical weapons production facilities as provided for in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

At this juncture, considering all the delays incurred and the missed agreed timelines, the time has come for concrete action and not a mere expression of good intentions. We wish to reiterate that it is the responsibility of the Syrian Arab Republic to ensure the removal of relevant chemicals and the destruction of its chemical weapons and chemical weapons production facilities in a timely and safe manner and we urge them to ensure compliance with their obligations. It is the duty of the Council to closely monitor progress in the implementation of its decisions on the basis of reports from the Director-General and substantial weekly updates of the Syria mission.

In view of the above, the European Union expresses their wish that the above concerns be duly reflected in the report of the Seventy-Fifth Session of the Executive Council.

Turning to the other items of the agenda, the European Union reiterates the importance it attributes to the implementation of the Third Review Conference recommendations under the supervision of the Executive Council and in this respect welcomes the new edition of the relevant matrix prepared by the Technical Secretariat as a useful tool serving this goal.

As verification of declared stockpiles remains a key priority for the Organisation, we urge the Possessor states to continue with their efforts to complete destruction in the shortest time

possible in accordance with the decision of the Sixteenth Session of the Conference of States Parties on the issue of the final extended deadlines.

At the same time, in order to remain effective, the OPCW will need to adapt to its changing security environment as well as to developments in science and technology. In this respect engagement and cooperation with all stakeholders, including the chemical industry and civil society ought to be fully utilised.

The European Union underlines the importance of full national implementation of the Convention and urges all States Parties to put in place and enforce all the necessary legislative and administrative measures in accordance with Article VII. The European Union stands ready to continue assisting in this process, not only through its voluntary financial contributions, but also through further concrete action.

Moreover, in our efforts to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons, we need to ensure that the Article VI verification regime is as effective as possible by ensuring that Article VI inspections are directed to the sites of the most relevance to the object and purpose of the Convention.

The European Union has demonstrated its support for international cooperation, and therefore Article XI, through substantial financial contributions over the years. This is in addition to the many individual voluntary contributions made by its Member States. We welcome efforts by the Technical Secretariat to improve evaluation of their programmes to ensure that they are effective as possible. We believe that the Conference of States Parties Decision, taken in 2011 at its Sixteenth Session, provides a sound basis for ongoing consultations at OPCW.

Finally, the European Union reiterates its call upon all States not Party to ratify or accede to the Convention without delay. We encourage the Technical Secretariat to continue its efforts in this direction in a targeted and tailor-made manner, and reiterate our willingness to actively contribute to this common objective with concrete action.

In closing, Mr Chairperson, may I request that this statement be circulated as an official document of the Seventy-Fifth Session of the Executive Council and placed on the OPCW website and external server.

Thank you Mr Chairperson.

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