



OPCW

Executive Council

Thirty-Third Meeting
27 September and 3 October 2013

EC-M-33/NAT.6
3 October 2013
ENGLISH only

IRELAND

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARY WHELAN
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRELAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE THIRTY-THIRD MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

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

The European Union welcomes the OPCW Executive Council's decision of 27 September 2013 on the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons and the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118, as they represent a major step towards a robust, sustainable, and unified international response to the crisis in Syria. These important decisions provide for the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria, impose a constraining declaration and verification regime on the Syrian Arab Republic, and demonstrate the will of the international community to respond to threats posed by weapons of mass destruction. Legally binding and enforceable, Security Council Resolution 2118 qualifies the use of chemical weapons as a threat to international peace and security, urges the regime to comply with these obligations, condemns the attacks of 21 August, calls for accountability for this crime, and envisages a forceful international reaction in the event of non-compliance. We reiterate our strong support for the OPCW Executive Council's decision of 27 September 2013 and for United Nations Security Council Resolution 2118. Actions speak louder than words and Syria must deliver on its obligations to destroy all its chemical weapons, their means of delivery, and all relevant facilities.

The European Union also welcomed the investigation launched by the United Nations Secretary-General into the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria, and its report on events in Damascus on 21 August, which presented reliable evidence confirming that a large-scale chemical attack was perpetrated on that day with the use of sarin. The report seems to indicate strong evidence that the Syrian regime was responsible for these attacks as it is the only party to the conflict that possesses chemical weapons and means of their delivery in a sufficient quantity. We look forward to receiving information on the next report of the investigation team.

The European Union stands united in condemning, in the strongest terms, this horrific attack which constitutes a violation of international law, a war crime, and a crime against humanity. There can be no impunity and perpetrators of the attacks must be held accountable. We must



not allow this attack to set a dreadful precedent whereby international norms on chemical weapon use are broken, in Syria or elsewhere, with impunity.

Mr Chairperson,

We understand that the OPCW is faced with a challenge unprecedented in its 17 year existence. The European Union and its Member States stand ready to provide whatever support it can to the Technical Secretariat in order to discharge effectively this historic task that has been assigned to it in accordance with the Organisation's mandate. A number of European Union Member States have already committed additional financial resources to the OPCW, air transport for inspectors, technical personnel, and equipment going to Syria and have expressed their willingness to support the OPCW with expertise and other necessary means in order to discharge the new mandate in the Syrian Arab Republic.

In conclusion, I would like to request that this statement be issued as an official document of the Thirty-Third Meeting of the Executive Council.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

- - - 0 - - -