



OPCW

Executive Council

Forty-Fifth Meeting
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ITALY

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR FRANCESCO AZZARELLO
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ITALY TO THE OPCW
AT THE FORTY-FIFTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

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

The candidate countries Albania, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Serbia, Turkey, the EFTA country Norway, as well as the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

I would like to thank the Director-General for his statement.

The EU notes several positive developments in the operation to eliminate the Syrian Arab Republic's chemical weapons programme, including the removal of the declared chemical weapons stockpile from the Syrian Arab Republic, the destruction of the stockpile of the most toxic chemicals, and the near completion of the destruction of industrial chemicals. All this has been achieved safely and without harming the environment and represents a considerable success for the international community.

We wish to express our deepest appreciation to the States Parties that have contributed either financially or in-kind to the successful outcome of this operation. Of course, special thanks go out to the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat, the Special Coordinator, and the OPCW-UN Joint Mission staff for their dedication and commitment.

Whilst these developments constitute significant steps towards the complete dismantling of the Syrian chemical weapons programme, we are deeply concerned that the Fact-Finding Mission, set up by the OPCW Director-General to establish the facts around allegations of chlorine use, has confirmed the systematic use of that chemical in its second report. The use of chlorine as a weapon is a clear breach of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The EU notes with concern that the Fact-Finding Mission, in its above-mentioned second report, stated that "it has found information constituting 'compelling confirmation' that a toxic chemical was used 'systematically and repeatedly' as a weapon". New allegations are continuing to be made, some as recently as last month, which bear similar hallmarks to those previously documented. The EU shares the view that the evidence presented by the Fact-Finding Mission is



substantial. This includes the reports of the use of helicopters, a capability that only the Syrian regime possesses.

Therefore, the EU fully supports the intention of the Director-General to have the Fact-Finding Mission continue its work and remains determined to sanction those responsible for these horrific acts. All perpetrators of atrocious abuses and war crimes such as the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic must be held accountable. The EU invites the Executive Council of the OPCW to consider necessary consequences at its next regular session.

The EU calls upon the Syrian Arab Republic to provide full cooperation to the OPCW for the destruction of the remaining 12 production facilities and to the OPCW Assessment Team regarding the verification of the Syrian Arab Republic's initial and subsequent declarations, and of the discrepancies discovered therein. The Syrian Arab Republic must provide the international community with evidence to support their assurances that it has fully abandoned its chemical weapons programme and ensure confidence. This cannot be achieved while use continues, and new allegations of use of chemical weapons continue to be made. Complete and accurate declarations must be provided, and destruction operations must be completed in full in order to deter and prevent further use of chemical weapons against the Syrian people.

The EU calls upon the Syrian Arab Republic to respect fully its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, the OPCW Executive Council decision of 27 September 2013, and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The EU is extremely dismayed by the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. A lasting solution to the crisis urgently requires a political transition.

I would like to request that this statement be circulated as an official document of this meeting of the Executive Council and to be published on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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