



Permanent Representation
of the Federal Republic of Germany
to the OPCW

**Statement by Ambassador Dr. Christoph Israng
Permanent Representative of Germany to the OPCW
at the 48th Meeting of the Executive Council**

Mr. Chairman, Mr. Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Thank you very much for giving me the floor. Let me join those who conveyed best wishes for the new year. I sincerely hope that this year continues better than it has started – and that the OPCW family can contribute to this.

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union delivered by Ambassador Māris Klišāns. It goes without saying that he can count on the full support of the German delegation. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Italy and the Italian Ambassador for the excellent work throughout the Italian EU Presidency.

The OPCW cannot remain silent when chemical weapons are used to kill and harm human beings. Silence would question the credibility of the Convention and of the OPCW. This holds true wherever and by whomever chemical weapons are used. As a collective body, we have to make clear again and again that we strongly condemn any use of chemicals as weapons.

This is why the Executive Council should make its voice heard, when there is convincing evidence of the repeated and systematic use of a toxic chemical as a weapon in Syria as again compiled in the third report of the Fact Finding Mission of the OPCW.

As there are further allegations of the use of chlorine beyond those incidents included in the three FFM reports, the work of the FFM has to continue.

Once again, we call on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to meet its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, the decisions of this Council and UN Security Council Resolution 2118.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Director-General and all of the OPCW staff for their tremendous efforts to verify and end the Syrian chemical weapons program. The TS staff deserves our highest appreciation for its professional work in difficult, often dangerous circumstances.

Germany is happy to provide security training to OPCW inspectors at the UN Training Center of the German Armed Forces in Hammelburg. After two courses in 2013, there will be two additional courses this February.

We stand at the beginning of a special year at the OPCW. In April, we will collectively remember the first massive and deadly use of chemical weapons in leper a hundred years ago. The first large-scale attempt to use chemical weapons occurred, however, a few months earlier at the end of January. At the Battle of Bolimov in Poland on January 31, 1915, German troops fired gas shells at Russian troops. Fortunately, these attacks caused few, if any casualties.

I am mentioning this today as this is the meeting of the Executive Council closest to the events in Bolimov. This attack and even more the tragic events in leper remind us of the evil of chemical weapons. Germany hopes that in 2015 the OPCW family is able to make considerable steps forward on its way to free the world of this horrific weapon of mass destruction.

In closing, I would like to request this statement to be circulated as an official document of this meeting of the Council.

I thank you, Mr. Chairman.