



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Fifty-First Meeting  
24 February 2016

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**NETHERLANDS**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
DELIVERED BY MR PIETER VAN DONKERSGOED  
ACTING PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE NETHERLANDS TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FIFTY-FIRST MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

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

The Candidate Countries Turkey, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Serbia\*, and Albania\* and the EFTA countries Iceland and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement. Andorra, Monaco and San Marino also associate themselves with this statement.

At the outset I would like to thank the Director-General for his statement, which as always provided useful information for our work. I also wish to reiterate our appreciation to him and to the staff of the Technical Secretariat for their commitment to the work of the Organisation and to their efforts regarding the destruction of the remaining Libyan chemicals.

The European Union has been following with great concern developments regarding the security situation of the remaining Libyan chemicals stored at the Ruwagha site. The existence of terrorist armed groups in the vicinity is of particular concern and warrants a swift decision process in order to address this issue.

The EU has supported all relevant Executive Council decisions pertaining to the elimination of the Libyan chemical weapons programme, including those providing an extended timeline for their final destruction.

Libya as the possessor State has the primary responsibility to proceed with the destruction of its remaining chemical stockpile. Nevertheless, and taking into account the request from the Libyan National Authority, the EU will support any agreed action that will lead to the swift fulfilment of this goal.

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



The EU expresses its appreciation for the revised non-paper listing the options for the destruction of the remaining Libyan Category 2 chemical weapons, which constitutes a good basis for the decision-making process. Nevertheless, more time is needed to study and select the most suitable option. Careful consideration of the technical and logistical implications of the options set out in the paper, as well as the estimated costs and timelines is required as a matter-of-course. A meeting of technical experts to discuss the details would seem advisable. However, the paramount consideration has to remain security and therefore a thorough risk assessment, including analysis of security, environmental, technical and political risks is needed for each of the proposed options.

As time is of the essence, the European Union supports the draft decision before this Council, which will allow the Director-General to proceed with the preparations needed to take this process further with the urgency it requires. The possibility that non-State actors, in particular terrorists, could acquire chemical weapons adds further urgency to this issue.

We express the hope that this Council will soon be in a position to approve a destruction plan which will take into account all the aforementioned considerations. The European Union stands ready to take part in this process, including by considering such action as a contribution in support of the destruction plan once it is approved by the Executive Council.

I seize this opportunity to reiterate that the EU wholly condemns the use of chemical weapons by anybody, anywhere and under any circumstances and believes all perpetrators must be held accountable for their actions.

Thank you.

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