



OPCW

Executive Council

Fifty-Second Meeting
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SLOVAKIA

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E. DIMITRIS ILIOPOULOS
ADVISOR TO THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATION OF SLOVAKIA
TO THE OPCW, AT THE FIFTY-SECOND MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Madam Chairperson,

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

The Candidate Country Serbia and Armenia align themselves with this statement. San Marino associates itself with this statement.

At the outset I would like to thank the Director-General for his statement, which 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 efforts regarding the destruction of the remaining Libyan chemicals.

The European Union recalls the discussions during this Council's Fifty-First Meeting on 24 February this year on the destruction of Libya's remaining chemical weapons. The EU has been following with great concern developments regarding the remaining Libyan Category 2 chemicals stored at the Ruwagha site. The existence of terrorist armed groups in the vicinity has been of particular concern and warranted a swift action in order to address this issue. The security situation required Libya to take every step to secure the chemicals, and this Council asked the OPCW and Libya to work further on options to eliminate all the remaining chemicals. We have taken note of the deep concern voiced by States Parties of the African Group in this regard.

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 and the prevailing extraordinary circumstances, the EU will support any agreed action that will lead to the swift fulfillment of this goal.

The EU expresses its appreciation for several positive steps that have been achieved in this direction including the decanting of the chemicals into leak-proof containers, thus preserving



their physical and general integrity and the environment, and their successful transfer to a safer location.

The EU has also taken note that Libya submitted earlier to the Council a proposal to remove the four remaining chemicals for their disposal outside Libyan territory, in a facility specialised in waste disposal. The EU has also taken note of the support of this proposal by the African Group.

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 proliferation risk that the chemicals pose, and the possibility that non-State actors, in particular terrorists, could acquire the precursor chemicals adds further urgency to this action.

We express the hope that this Council will soon be in a position to approve a modified destruction plan which will take into account all the aforementioned considerations. The European Union stands ready to take part in this process, and will consider a contribution in support of the destruction plan once it is approved by the Executive Council. Several EU member states have already offered their support, including in-kind contributions.

Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

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