

Statement by Austria

at the 57th meeting of the Executive Council, 4 April 2018

Mr. Gerhard Eisl, Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

Permanent Mission of Austria to the OPCW

Dear Chairperson,

Dear Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Austria aligns itself fully with the EU Statement.

Furthermore, speaking in national capacity, Austria would like to make the following remarks:

The European Council on 22 March has condemned in the strongest possible terms the attack against Sergei and Yulia Skripal in Salisbury/UK, expressing also its unqualified solidarity with the UK and lending its support to the ongoing investigation. Austria, member of the European Union, fully subscribes to these conclusions.

The use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone under any circumstances is – as enshrined in the Chemical Weapons Convention – completely unacceptable and outrageous.

Austria has declared on several occasions that we fully support the use of effective multilateral mechanisms - based on dialogue and mutual trust - to clarify situations which give rise to concern about the possible non-compliance of a State Party with international norms such as the CWC.

It is indispensable that the CWC is upheld and that there are no doubts in the complete implementation of the Convention in order to ensure our common goal – a world free of chemical weapons.

Compliance with the CWC is of utmost importance. This means first and foremost that any alleged use of chemical weapons has to be clarified according to the stipulations in the CWC.

Austria welcomes the work of the OPCW's technical assistance mission as an important element for clarifying this unacceptable incident.

We are looking forward with great interest to the findings of the technical assistance mission and will examine the results to be shared with all States Parties.

In the end, it is essential to bring the perpetrators of this criminal act to justice.

~~(In case of non-confidential mode:~~ I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the OPCW public website.)