



OPCW

Executive Council

Fifty-Seventh Meeting
4 April 2018

EC-M-57/NAT.8
4 April 2018
ENGLISH only

ITALY

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR ANDREA PERUGINI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE ITALIAN REPUBLIC TO THE OPCW
AT THE FIFTY-SEVENTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

Italy aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union (EU) by Ambassador Krassimir Kostov, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Bulgaria.

The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland informed the Executive Council at its Eighty-Seventh session on the use of a military-grade nerve agent of a type developed by the Russian Federation and briefed the Executive Council that it was highly likely that the Russian Federation was responsible and that there was no plausible alternative explanation. The European Council on 22 March agreed with such assessment and called upon the Russian Federation to address urgently the questions raised by the United Kingdom and the international community.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms any act in violation of the fundamental prohibition on the use of chemical weapons contained in Article I of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Under Article X, the Director General offered the Technical Secretariat's assistance and the Government of the United Kingdom invited the Director-General to send a team of experts to the United Kingdom to assist in the technical evaluation of unscheduled chemicals in accordance with Article VIII subparagraph 38(e). I wish to thank the Director-General for the additional information provided today.

Italy again expresses its full solidarity with the United Kingdom and its deep concern about the first offensive use on European territory since WWII of a nerve agent. This horrendous act is the subject of a criminal investigation by the British authorities and we have full confidence on the United Kingdom's investigations and its cooperation with the OPCW.

The United Kingdom has provided timely information in accordance with its law and the Convention's obligations. We are confident that the United Kingdom will continue to provide updates on the developments to the Technical Secretariat and to the Executive Council.

We express our strong conviction that we all have a common responsibility to prevent any use of chemical weapons and to ensure accountability of the perpetrators, thus avoiding



further erosion of the chemical non-proliferation regime. No effort should be spared to identify and hold accountable those involved in the use of chemical weapons.

- - - 0 - - -