

Statement by Austria

at the 59th meeting of the Executive Council, 18 April 2018

H.E. Ambassador Heidemaria Gürer

Permanent Representative of Austria to the OPCW

Dear Chairperson,

Dear Excellencies,

Colleagues,

Austria fully aligns itself with the EU Statement.

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

Austria has condemned already several times the attack in Salisbury (UK), where a nerve agent was used as weapon, and has expressed full solidarity with the UK jointly with its EU partners.

We have supported from the beginning the work of the OPCW and the Technical Assistance Mission to establish the facts. As always, the TS has thereby shown professionalism, impartiality and objectivity. Therefore, there are no doubts on the outcome of the Technical Assistance Mission: It confirms the exposure of three persons to a specific nerve agent.

Any use of chemical weapons, including the use of toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone under any circumstances is unacceptable.

As the facts are clear, it is now important to establish accountability. Besides the criminal investigation, where we have full trust in the UK authorities, we expect the active and constructive contribution of all States Parties, including the Russian Federation, towards solving this attack.

Austria is dismayed that this incident – instead of providing a rallying point to focus on our common goal countering such attacks – has further increased mistrust among States Parties as we saw clearly in UNSC debates, but also amongst us – here at the OPCW. This cycle of acrimonious tension has to end.

As already said at EC-M-57 on 4 April: In the end, it is essential to bring the perpetrators of this criminal act to justice.

I would kindly ask that this statement be issued as an official document and placed on the OPCW public website.