



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

Fifty-Ninth Meeting  
18 April 2018

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**BULGARIA**

**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR KRASSIMIR KOSTOV  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA  
TO THE OPCW AT THE FIFTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

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

The candidate countries Albania and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries Norway and Iceland, members of the European Economic Area, as well as Georgia and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

First of all, we welcome the prompt and transparent way in which the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland has approached this grave situation. This responsible approach contributes to strengthening the regime of the Chemical Weapons Convention at this challenging time.

We are grateful to the Director-General H.E. Ambassador Ahmet Üzümcü for the prompt and appropriate reaction, taking all necessary measures in response to the United Kingdom's request under Article VIII of the Convention, and for keeping all States Parties and the Executive Council regularly updated.

The European Union (EU) welcomes, and expresses full confidence in the report from the OPCW Technical Assistance Visit (TAV) team following the request from the United Kingdom for technical assistance.

We take note that the OPCW was able to collect both, biomedical and environmental samples under full chain of custody and also splits of earlier samples taken by the British authorities for comparative purposes.

The TAV analysis clearly confirms the findings of the United Kingdom relating to the identity of the toxic chemical used in Salisbury that severely injured three people.

Due to the mode of action of the toxic chemical, the symptoms, and the clinical presentation of the three individuals, the toxic chemical is categorised as non-scheduled nerve agent. In addition, the OPCW notes that the chemical was of high purity, indicating that the chemical



is not volatile and degrades slowly. All this is cause for grave concern as we now face a clear case of a new family of toxic chemicals intended to kill.

The European Council in its conclusions of 22 March 2018 condemned the Salisbury attack in the strongest possible terms and expressed unqualified solidarity with the United Kingdom in the face of this grave challenge to our shared security.

It agreed with the British Government's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation is responsible and that there is no plausible alternative explanation.

The use of chemical weapons, including the use of toxic chemicals as weapons under any circumstances, is completely unacceptable. It constitutes a security threat to us all. It is a breach of international law and a violation of the Convention. It must be systematically and rigorously condemned and those responsible must be held accountable.

In the face of this shocking and reprehensible act, we expect the Russian Federation to act in accordance with its obligations under the Convention and urgently address the questions raised by the international community.

We regret that we continue to witness persistent and malign Russian attempts to undermine the credibility of the OPCW Secretariat and the TAV report. All this is aimed at hampering and obscuring the investigation in a manner that damages the credibility of the Convention.

We reiterate the call on the Russian Federation to urgently address the British Government's legitimate questions, begin to co-operate with the OPCW Secretariat, desist from attacking the integrity and validity of the OPCW and the Convention, and provide immediate, full, and complete disclosure to the OPCW of any programme with relevance to the case.

The EU Member States will coordinate on the consequences to be drawn in the light of the answers provided by the Russian authorities.

The EU will remain closely focused on this issue and its implications.

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

Thank you, Mr Chairperson.

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