



**STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
BY H.E. MARGARETA KASSANGANA
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF POLAND TO THE OPCW
AT THE 108th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 4 - 7 March 2025)**

Agenda item 6(c): Elimination of the Syrian CW programme

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU).

Andorra, Albania, Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Monaco, North Macedonia, Norway, Republic of Moldova, San Marino, Türkiye and Ukraine align themselves with this statement.

Over a decade, the deposed Assad regime never declared its entire stockpile of chemical weapons. Comprehensive and thorough investigations by the UN and the OPCW have proven that the former Syrian regime was responsible for several chemical attacks against its own citizens. We commend the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) for their consistent professional work over the years in an impartial and independent manner, which has enabled these incidents to be well documented. This is a key contribution to the fight against impunity for the use of chemical weapons and to rendering justice to the victims. With the help of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the transitional Syrian authorities have now the opportunity to provide a full and accurate initial declaration, as required by the provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC).

The European Union commends Director-General Arias for his timely and historic visit to Syria and takes note of the promising results. We call on the transitional Syrian authorities to grant access to Syrian territory to all the OPCW established mechanisms and make sure that all the chemical weapons stockpiles and sites are secured. The collaboration will make it possible to locate and destroy remaining stocks of chemical weapons, removing a concrete threat to international peace and stability. This would be a major step towards a world free of chemical weapons.

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union thanks the Director-General for the thorough briefing of his visit to Damascus. We have taken good note of the next steps with a view to OPCW in-country deployments, and look forward to receiving further indications of the needs and requirements enabling those deployments as soon as possible. The EU and several EU Member States are considering possible measures to support the OPCW in the verification of the destruction of the remaining chemical weapons stocks in Syria. We call on all States Parties to contribute to this common effort. We must collectively ensure that the Secretariat has the financial and human resources as well as the logistical and technical capacity to carry out its mission in Syria, which lies at the core of the mandate of the Organization.

In concluding, the European Union would like to commend the State of Qatar for its good offices in facilitating the Director-General's visit to Damascus as well as representing the interests of the Syrian Arab Republic on the OPCW ad interim.

Thank you.

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