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From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: Council Conclusions on the 5th Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention

Delegations will find attached Council Conclusions on chemical disarmament and non-proliferation to define the EU position with a view towards the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, which will be held in The Hague from 15-19 May 2023, as approved by the Council on 20 February 2023.

Council Conclusions on chemical disarmament and non-proliferation with a view towards the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the Chemical Weapons Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction, The Hague, 15-19 May 2023

1. The European Union stands united in its support for the total prohibition and elimination of chemical weapons as well as for the fight against impunity for the use of chemical weapons. The Council strongly believes that the use of chemical weapons, including the use of any toxic chemicals as weapons, by anyone, be it a State or a non-State actor, anywhere, and under any circumstances is unacceptable and must be vigorously condemned. It constitutes a breach of international law and may amount to a war crime or a crime against humanity. As there can be no impunity and those responsible for such abhorrent acts must and will be held accountable, the European Union and its Member States are steadfast in their resolve to pursue their commitment to this cause, notably through the Partnership Against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.
2. The European Union welcomes the release of the third report of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to the Executive Council of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and to the Secretary General of the United Nations on 27 January 2023. The report concludes that there are reasonable grounds to believe that on 7 April 2018 in Douma, Syrian Arab Republic, the Syrian Arab Air Force used chlorine during a military attack, killing 43 persons and affecting dozens more.
3. The European Union strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force, as concluded by the report. We fully support the reports' findings which further confirm the systematic failure of the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). The Investigation and Identification Team's professional reporting is an important contribution to efforts to end impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

4. The Council considers the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction , which entered into force on 29 April 1997, to be a key disarmament and non-proliferation instrument, the integrity and strict application of which must be fully guaranteed to safeguard international peace and security. In this regard, the Council is convinced that in its 25 years of existence, the Convention has significantly reinforced the rules-based international order by establishing a global norm against the use of chemical weapons as well as by strengthening international cooperation in eliminating and preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons worldwide.
5. The Council welcomes the significant progress achieved in the destruction of declared chemical stockpiles. As of 31 October 2022, 99,4% of the world's declared chemical stockpile has been verifiably destroyed while the only remaining possessor State is on track to complete the destruction of its remaining stock by 30 September 2023.
6. The CWC has one of the most extensive memberships amongst the international disarmament and non-proliferation regimes. The objective must continue to be global coverage, and therefore States not party to the CWC should continue to be urged to join the Convention. Our efforts shall remain firm until full universality of the Convention has been achieved and the world's entire population lives under the protection of the Convention.
7. The Council finds it deeply distressing that the international community is still confronted with the use of chemical weapons. The Council has strongly condemned the proven use of chemical weapons in Syria on various occasions since 2013, in the UK in 2018 and in Russia in 2020. Chemical weapons have also been used in Iraq and Malaysia. Responding to the re-emergence of chemical weapons use, the Council on 15 October 2018 adopted a Decision establishing a regime of restrictive measures against the proliferation and use of chemical weapons. The Council has also imposed sanctions in the framework of its Global Human Rights Sanctions Regime, which was established on 7 December 2020. The Council is ready to consider taking further measures as appropriate, and will continue to work towards ensuring full accountability for those responsible for these heinous crimes.

8. The Council underlines the strong conviction that it is the international community's responsibility to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators of any chemical weapons attack. In this respect, the Council strongly supports the continued implementation of the decision adopted by the Fourth Special Session of the Conference of States Parties on 27 June 2018 leading to the establishment of an independent mechanism for attribution, the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT).
9. The Council reaffirms its support to the full implementation of the CWC and recalls the vital role the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons plays in fulfilling the goals set by the Convention. In order to continue its vital work, the OPCW requires a predictable and solid financial base. The European Union calls upon all States Parties to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time. In this context, the Council recalls that the EU is the biggest contributor of voluntary funding to the OPCW through projects financed via the EU budget and via individual EU Member States' national budgets. These projects support, inter alia, capacity building, OPCW Cyber security and information protection as well as provision of satellite imagery for OPCW activities.
10. The Council reiterates its full confidence in the OPCW Technical Secretariat, its professionalism, independence, impartiality and well-established technical expertise. The EU remains steadfast in defending the Organisation against deliberate and baseless attacks on its integrity and credibility. In this context, the Council underlines the complementarity of the work between the OPCW and the United Nations and appreciates the regular sharing of information of the OPCW activities and investigations with the United Nations Secretary-General and the UN Security Council.
11. The Syrian regime's failure to respect its international obligations under the Convention is substantiated through comprehensive and thorough work and investigations carried out by the OPCW-UN Joint Investigation Mechanism (JIM), the OPCW Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the IIT.

12. The Decision adopted at the 25th Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention suspending the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic is a strong message for the integrity of the Convention, against impunity for the use of chemical weapons, and in defence of International Law, including International Humanitarian Law. It is an appropriate response by the Conference to the clear violation by the Syrian regime of the Convention and its core principles. In order for its voting rights and other privileges to be restored, the Syrian regime needs to resolve all pending issues, declare the full extent of its chemical weapons programme, and return to full compliance with the Convention.
13. The Council commends the work of the OPCW Technical Secretariat on all aspects of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and appreciates its continuous efforts to engage with the Syrian Arab Republic including at ministerial level. The Council urges the Syrian regime to act constructively as there is no alternative to full and effective cooperation by the Syrian Arab Republic with the OPCW in accordance with the Convention and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118. Almost ten years after the initial declaration by the Syrian Arab Republic, it still cannot be considered accurate and complete, and many important questions about the Syrian chemical weapons programme remain unanswered.
14. The European Union has already imposed restrictive measures on 36 senior Syrian officials, scientists and businesspersons as well as three entities for their role in the development and use of chemical weapons. On 14 November 2022, the Council decided to impose additional restrictive measures against two businesspersons and their company which supplies the Syrian Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) with materials used to produce chemical weapons delivery systems. The European Union is ready to consider introducing further measures as appropriate.
15. The Council reiterates its strong concerns that the Russian Federation has not reacted to international calls for a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination attempt on the Russian opposition figure Mr. Alexei Navalny. The poisoning of Mr. Navalny in Russia in August 2020 by a nerve agent of the “Novichok” group (a substance developed by Russia), has been confirmed, beyond doubt, by certified laboratories in Germany, France and Sweden, as well as by the OPCW.

The Council has condemned this poisoning in the strongest possible terms and sanctioned six Russian government officials and a state research institute linked to the assassination attempt. The Council once again urges the Russian Federation to provide substantial answers to the questions posed by 45 States Parties in the framework of Art. IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention on 5 October 2021, and to disclose without further delay the circumstances of the assassination attempt against Mr. Navalny.

16. The Council further resolutely condemns Russia's unjustified, unprovoked and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. As part of such aggression against Ukraine, Russia has engaged in a campaign of disinformation and state-controlled propaganda in spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and others regarding chemical weapons while risking exposure of the Ukrainian population to toxic chemicals through deliberate attacks against civilian industrial facilities. The European Union and its Member States are committed to supporting the OPCW in case Ukraine requests assistance from the OPCW due to a chemical incident or an alleged chemical attack. In this context, the European Commission has a capacity to provide rapid assessments of chemical incidents in Ukraine and it stands ready to respond quickly to requests from Ukraine for assistance.
17. It is well established that Ukraine is a responsible member of the Chemical Weapons Convention and in full compliance with the Convention. The Council hereby recalls that Russia, the country responsible for the ongoing war and violations of international law and international humanitarian law in Ukraine, has a track record in the use of chemical weapons in assassinations and assassination attempts. Following Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU has adopted a variety of unprecedented sanction packages against it. On 3 June 2022, the list of sanctions was amended to ban the export of chemicals to Russia that could be misused for the manufacturing of chemical weapons.
18. The Council looks forward to the opening of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology ("the ChemTech Centre") as the new flagship of the OPCW, combining state-of-the-art laboratory and verification activities with international cooperation and assistance.

In the Council's view, the ChemTech Centre will be instrumental in training and maintaining key expertise required for the OPCW's verification tasks, in enhancing international cooperation and assistance programmes and in addressing the emerging science and technology challenges and opportunities, and the full use of its potential should be ensured. The EU is proud to be one of the major donors to the construction of the ChemTech Centre, through important voluntary contributions made by the EU and the EU Member States.

19. In order to remain fit for purpose, the OPCW requires a fully operational Technical Secretariat, equipped with necessary knowledge and expertise. In this context, the Council underlines the need for amending the OPCW Tenure Policy, to bring the level of flexibility closer to other non-career organisations in the field of disarmament. The Council further supports a geographically diverse Secretariat and encourages the Secretariat to continue its efforts in this respect, in full respect of Art. VIII of the Convention. States Parties are also encouraged to intensify their efforts to present qualified candidates for OPCW vacancies.

20. The Council strongly believes that gender equality and gender mainstreaming are necessary to fulfilling the mandate of the OPCW, and should continue to be an integral part in all areas of the work of the OPCW and implementation of the CWC. A wide diversity of views is essential for decision-making and in helping tackle the challenges the OPCW faces with greater effectiveness. We commend the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat for the work they have carried out thus far and look forward to further progress towards gender equality and on implementing the UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace, and Security and its subsequent resolutions by the Organisation. The Council notes that further actions towards gender equality are needed, including through the swift implementation of the recommendations of the Gender and Diversity audit, strengthening the gender focal point network and enhancement of gender mainstreaming in all areas of the Technical Secretariat's work.

21. The Conference of States Parties in its Twenty-Fourth session adopted Decisions (C-24/DEC.4 and C-24/DEC.5 of 27 November 2019) amending Schedule 1 to Annex on Chemicals, by adding three new families of chemicals, including the substance used in Salisbury, UK in 2018. The Council considers it essential that the CWC remains responsive to new and emerging threats, including through regular updates to the Annex on Chemicals, as appropriate.

22. The Council recalls that in its Twenty-Sixth session the Conference of States Parties adopted the Decision “Understanding regarding the aerosolised use of Central Nervous System (CNS) acting chemicals for Law Enforcement Purposes” (CSP-26/Dec.10, dated 1 December 2021). The Council notes that the aerosolised use of CNS-acting chemicals is understood to be inconsistent with law enforcement purposes as “a purpose not prohibited” under the Convention and further notes that the decision does not address the use of CNS-acting chemicals for other purposes not prohibited under the Convention.
23. The Council believes that close engagement of the OPCW with other relevant International Organisations, chemical industry, academia, youth and civil society and non-governmental organisations on a regular basis is beneficial for the work of the OPCW and the implementation of the Convention. The Council is concerned that participation of civil society representatives in OPCW meetings has been continuously hampered by a small number of States Parties opposing such participation without providing any justification and calls for the creation of a clearly defined, fair and transparent procedure for the participation of civil society representatives in the future.
24. The Council welcomes the adoption on 7 December 2022 by the UN General Assembly of Resolution (A/RES/77/73) on the implementation of the CWC. The Resolution is an expression of the UN Member States’ support to and appreciation of the work of the OPCW, the implementing body of the CWC.
25. The Council reaffirms its commitment to strengthening chemical safety and security globally. The EU’s Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (CoE) Initiative is an important enabler for many OPCW States Parties’ efforts to improve their capacities against CBRN threats. The CoE Initiative works in a number of areas that are complementary to the OPCW activities, notably detection, prevention, preparedness, response, and legislative and regulatory measures. Additionally, the EU provides voluntary financial contributions in support of the UN Secretary-General’s Mechanism for the investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons.

26. On 28 April 2004, the United Nations Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1540 (2004), reaffirming that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery as a threat to international peace and security. Implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and the implementation of Resolution 1540 (2004) and subsequent Resolutions are mutually reinforcing. The Council warmly welcomes the outcome of the comprehensive review process in 2022 of Resolution 1540 (2004) and whose centrality, importance and authority was affirmed by UN Security Council Resolution 2663 (2022). The European Union has a long-term commitment to supporting the implementation of the UNSCR 1540(2004) since 2006. The latest EU Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/809, adopted on 11 May 2017, provides for further assistance to interested States to enhance their national capabilities in implementing UNSCR 1540 (2004) and to facilitate greater cooperation among all relevant stakeholders.
27. The Council stresses the imperative of ensuring the EU's continued political, diplomatic and financial support to the implementation of the CWC as well as ensuring the high level representation and visibility and effective protection of the EU's interests on chemical issues in international fora and in particular within the OPCW. The Council recalls that it is essential that all relevant EU actors, including the EEAS, continue their active engagement with and representation at the OPCW. To this end, the Council looks forward to an early establishment of the EU Delegation to the International Organisations based in The Hague.

Position of the European Union relating to the Fifth Special Session of the Conference of the States Parties to Review the Operation of the CWC, The Hague, 15 -19 May 2023

28. The Fifth Review Conference will be an opportunity to consider how to strengthen the implementation of the Convention as a key instrument of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime. Achieving a common vision on countering the re-emergence of chemical weapons and safeguarding the global non-use norm is a shared responsibility of all States Parties.

29. The European Union and its Member States have been contributing actively and constructively to the work of the Open Ended Working Group (OEWG).

The agreed OEWG work programme allows all delegations to express their views on progress made in the implementation of the Convention and offers delegations the opportunity to set out their expectations and priorities for the future. In this context, the Council expresses its gratitude to the Chairperson, Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia, for leading the work in an open and inclusive manner, with the goal of building consensus.

30. The Council will contribute constructively to and strive for a consensus outcome of the Fifth Review Conference during 2023, while pursuing the following key objectives to be reflected in the outcome document of the Review Conference, under the broader chapeau of strongly highlighting the non-use norm, the integrity of CWC/OPCW and accountability:

- i. To strengthen the CWC by building on the progress achieved in destroying declared stockpiles of chemical weapons and the prevention of their re-emergence, through inter alia enhancement and adaptation of the CWC's verification system, improvement of national implementation, addressing the issue of chemical security and safety as well as efforts towards achieving universality;
- ii. To strengthen the CWC by ensuring its effective implementation in light of the global changing security environment and developments in the global chemical industry and in science and technology, and by emphasising that the Fifth Review Conference should provide political support and broad guidance for the work to be undertaken in the intersessional period on the future priorities of the OPCW;
- iii. To strengthen the CWC by enhancing the global norm against the use of chemical weapons by addressing violations of the Convention including through independent investigation and attribution activities;

- iv. To maintain the OPCW as the centre of knowledge on chemical weapons issues in the broadest sense and enhancing OPCW's robustness and up-to-date capacity of the Technical Secretariat through, inter alia, consistent recruitment and promotion policies based on merit while ensuring geographical diversity, gender-balance, and improvement of the tenure policy, as well as making best use of the opportunities offered by the ChemTech Centre;
- v. To contribute to a full review of the operation of the CWC taking into account in particular scientific and technological developments including convergence of chemistry and biology, new production technologies, as well as developments in verification instrumentation and methodologies;
- vi. To promote the above mentioned essential issues by, inter alia:
 - a) **Upholding** the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) as a key instrument of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture and the rules-based international order.
 - b) **Condemning** the cases of use of chemical weapons that took place over the past years in Syria, Iraq, Malaysia, UK, and in Russia.
 - c) **Stressing** the obligation to adopt national implementing legislation as the core of what the States Parties have taken upon themselves when joining the Convention. It is regrettable that 25 years after entry into force of the Convention, 35 States have yet to adopt initial implementing measures.
 - d) **Urging** all the States not party to the CWC to join the Convention with a view to achieving universality.
 - e) **Commending** the leadership of the OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and reiterate the Council's full confidence in the OPCW Technical Secretariat, its professionalism, independence, impartiality and well-established technical expertise in implementing the CWC and tasks assigned by the States Parties.
 - f) **Defending** the OPCW Technical Secretariat against baseless accusations and attacks on its integrity and credibility through deliberate campaigns of state-sponsored disinformation.
 - g) **Appreciating** the ability of the OPCW to address the allegations of use of chemical weapons in Syria, including through the work of the Fact-Finding Mission and the IIT.

- h) **Expressing** concern at the continued gaps and discrepancies in the Syrian initial declaration and acknowledging the work of the Declaration Assessment team.
- i) **Recalling** the Council's consistent and strong support to the implementation of the CWC including its extensive voluntary financial contributions in support of the OPCW activities.
- j) **Recalling** that countering the re-emergence of chemical weapons and safeguarding the global non-use norm is a shared responsibility of all States Parties.

On Verification

- k) **Highlighting** and upholding the Convention's verification regime, as carried out by the OPCW through its verification activities, as essential to the successful implementation of the Convention and to the norm against the use of chemical weapons.
- l) **Recognising** that in light of changes in the chemical industry and rapid developments in science and technology the verification regime requires some adaptation in order to remain relevant.
- m) **Improving** the Article VI Verification Regime by rendering the inspection processes more efficient, simpler, and by adapting the selection processes for inspections to current requirements, notably the methodology for the selection of Other Chemical Production Facilities (OCPF) for inspection.
- n) **Highlighting** the importance of increasing chemical safety and security worldwide and **stressing** the need to cover all stages of a chemical life cycle – i.e. not just production but also transportation, storage and disposal.
- o) **Supporting** further development of capabilities, tools and methodologies of the Secretariat to investigate allegations of chemical weapons use, such as chemical forensics.

On Capacity Building and International Assistance

- p) **Underlining** the importance of continued support to capacity building and to promoting peaceful uses of chemistry.
- q) **Recalling** that combatting chemical terrorism effectively requires States Parties to strengthen legislative and regulatory frameworks, develop adequate prevention and response capacities, and improve cooperation at regional and international levels.
- r) **Proposing** that the Review Conference requests the Technical Secretariat to further develop support programmes related to legislation and regulatory frameworks pertaining to chemical security and countering chemical terrorism.
- s) **Maintaining** the ability and capacity of the Secretariat to conduct non-routine missions as they provide the States Parties with objective and reliable information regarding allegations on chemical weapons use.
- t) **Emphasising** the importance to continue the International Cooperation and Assistance activities as they play an essential role in contributing to the full and effective implementation of the States Parties' obligations under the Convention, as well as to ensuring the continued relevance of the Convention as a key instrument of the international non-proliferation and disarmament regime.
- u) **Recalling** the EU's long-standing commitment to support State Parties capacity building efforts, including through the Africa Programme.
- v) **Requesting** the Technical Secretariat to further enhance an integrated approach to the assistance and cooperation programmes, overcoming the article-by-article programming whenever possible.
- w) **Strengthening** the OPCW capacity to respond promptly to a request for assistance under Article X.

On ChemTech Centre

- x) **Welcoming** the opening of the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTech Centre) as the new flagship of the Organisation, combining state-of-the-art laboratory and verification activities with international cooperation and assistance.
- y) **Recognising** that the ChemTech Centre will be instrumental in addressing the emerging science and technology challenges and opportunities.
- z) **Promoting** and supporting the possibility to train inspectors at the ChemTech Centre of the OPCW.
- aa) **Supporting** further development of assistance and protection programmes, making full use of the ChemTech Centre facilities, while at the same time drawing on the top quality expertise available in State Parties.
- bb) **Urging** the enhancement of the system of managing voluntary contributions, including through regularly issuing a list of unfunded activities for potential donors to choose from. Such a list should notably include additional activities that could take place at the ChemTech Centre.
- cc) **Emphasising** that expertise and capacity to deal with chemical weapons, old chemical weapons and abandoned chemical weapons should be retained, while expertise on sea-dumped chemical weapons is to be maintained, developed further and provided, upon request from States Parties concerned to support voluntary cooperation to deal with threats posed by chemical weapons dumped at sea, taking into account relevant regional aspects, and that the OPCW must also continue to develop expertise necessary to deal with challenges in a new security environment, making full use of the ChemTech Centre.

On Outreach, Education and Stakeholder Cooperation

- dd) **Acknowledging** the expertise of the Advisory Board on Education and Outreach and the key role it plays in recommending education and outreach activities with a view to strengthening the engagement with relevant stakeholders.

- ee) **Maximising** the impact of OPCW programmes by encouraging states to select candidates with the most potential.
- ff) **Requesting** the Technical Secretariat to develop further Guidelines on most relevant topics, as well as to explore other innovative tools that could be made available to State Parties online, such as e-learning courses.
- gg) **Encouraging** the States Parties and the Technical Secretariat to continue their outreach efforts, including through the development of additional materials on the future challenges the OPCW is facing, such as the re-emergence of the use of chemical weapons.
- hh) **Underlining** the importance to raise awareness of the CWC and the visibility of the OPCW through education and outreach activities.
- ii) **Calling** for more tailored guidelines for small and medium-sized companies to fulfil their obligations in accordance with the CWC, as discussed by National Authorities in Doha in October of 2022.
- jj) **Reiterating** the importance to engage all relevant external stakeholders and partners in the OPCW work, ranging from chemical industry to academia, think tanks, civil society and international organisations.
- kk) **Considering** as crucial to deepen cooperation with the chemical industry, relevant international and regional organisations as well as communities of experts. As for Article XI, a deeper relationship between the OPCW and corresponding industries and NGOs would be beneficial for learning from each other's experiences in practical implementations.
- ll) **Thanking** the Technical Secretariat for their efforts to maintain dialogue with chemical industry, in line with the mandate given by the Third Review Conference.

- mm) **Noting** the important contributions that civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have made to support the common objective of a world free of chemical weapons. Their participation must be inclusive and non-discriminatory.
- nn) **Encouraging** the organisation of side-events in the Conference of States Parties and Review Conferences with civil society, NGOs and other relevant stakeholders to make their voices heard.

On Gender

- oo) **Encouraging** senior management of the OPCW to continue working towards a more gender-equal, diverse and inclusive Technical Secretariat as well as applying a gender-responsive approach throughout all policy documents, decisions and programmes and field activities within the Organisation.
- pp) **Underlining** the importance of the swift implementation of the recommendations of the Gender and Diversity Audit, and **encouraging** such audits within each review cycle of the Convention. Enhancing the institutional capacities and expertise on gender equality, including through gender responsive leadership, and strengthening of the gender focal point network could support gender mainstreaming efforts.

On the Technical Secretariat

- qq) **Appreciating** the OPCW Technical Secretariat's effort to approach the issues of the progress and challenges of the CWC in a more integrated manner, working across relevant provisions of the Convention.
- rr) **Affirming** the need to recruit and retain highly qualified and competent staff to ensure that the Organisation remains fit for purpose and able to implement the Convention and the tasks assigned by the States Parties.

- ss) **Proposing** to amend the OPCW Tenure Policy with a view of improving the Technical Secretariat's ability to retain key expertise required by allowing former staff to be re-hired after several years of break in service for a new tenure of 7 years, and by allowing the extension of contracts by a limited number of additional years, in order to ensure successful continuation or completion of a specific task.
- tt) **Calling** upon the Director-General to explore the possibility for the OPCW to join the UN Pension Fund as an additional means to increase the competitiveness of the OPCW as an employer.
- uu) **Calling** for further efforts to strengthen the training and knowledge management of the staff to mitigate the effects of rotation.

Other Measures

- vv) **Welcoming** the thematic approach and substantive discussions held by the Open-Ended Working Group under the Chairmanship of Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia on the future priorities of and challenges faced by the Convention, as well as a thorough assessment of its implementation over the past five years.
- ww) **Welcoming** the progress achieved since the Fourth Review Conference in the implementation of Articles VII, X and XI while recognising that more efforts are required to ensure the full implementation of all provisions of the Convention.
- xx) **Appreciating** the role and expertise of the Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) in advising the Director-General and States Parties on science and technology related issues, including its comprehensive input to the Fifth Review Conference.
- yy) **Proposing** that the Executive Council takes duly note of the SAB reports and that they are subject of an in-depth discussion in the EC.

31. The Council supports the following actions to be taken by the European Union regarding the aforementioned purposes, including, where appropriate, through outreach demarches prior and during the Fifth Review Conference:

- i. To urge State Parties to support and participate in an effective and complete review of the operation of the CWC, and in this context reiterate their commitment to the fundamental global norm against the use of chemical weapons;
- ii. To promote effective and full national implementation of the CWC by States Parties in accordance with Article VII;
- iii. To promote universal accession to the CWC;
- iv. To promote agreed EU proposals aimed at further strengthening the CWC;
- v. To promote visibility of the long-standing and substantive EU action in support of the CWC;
- vi. To issue statements and working papers, as appropriate, for consideration by States Parties;
- vii. To support the broadest possible participation in the preparatory works and attendance by representatives of International Organisations, chemical industry, academia as well as civil society and non-governmental organisations.

EU action in support of the CWC and the OPCW 2004-2023

On 22 November 2004, the Council adopted the first Joint Action 2004/797/CFSP on support for OPCW activities in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. That Joint Action was followed by Council Joint Action 2005/913/CFSP adopted on 12 December 2005; Council Joint Action 2007/185/CFSP adopted on 19 March 2007; Council Decision 2009/569/CFSP adopted on 27 July 2009; Council Decision 2012/166/CFSP adopted on 23 March 2012; Council Decision 2013/726/CFSP adopted on 9 December 2013; Council Decision 2014/906/CFSP on 16 December 2014 Amending Decision 2013/726/CFSP in support of the UNSCR 2118 (2013) and OPCW Executive Council EC-M-33/Dec 1; Council Decision 2015/259/CFSP adopted on 17 February 2015; Council Decision 2015/2215/CFSP adopted on 30 November 2015 in support of UN Security Council Resolution 2235 (2015);

Council Decision 2017/1252/CFSP adopted on 11 July 2017 in support of the strengthening of chemical safety and security in Ukraine in line with the implementation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) on the non- proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery; Council Decision 2017/2302/CFSP adopted on 12 December 2017 in support of the OPCW activities to assist clean-up operations at the former chemical weapons storage site in Libya; Council Decision 2017/2303/CFSP adopted on 12 December 2017 in support of the continued implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013).

Since the Fourth Review Conference in 2018, the Council has further adopted the following Decisions in support of the CWC and the OPCW. Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/294 adopted on 26 February 2018 amending Decision (CFSP) 2015/259 in support of activities of the OPCW; Council Decision (CFSP) 2018/1943 adopted on 10 December 2018 as no-cost extension of the CD in support of the continued implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013) and OPCW Executive Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons; Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/538 adopted on 1 April 2019 in support of activities of the OPCW; Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/1092 adopted on 26 June 2019 amending Decision (CFSP) 2017/2302 in support of the OPCW activities to assist clean-up operations at the former chemical weapons storage site in Libya; Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/2112 adopted on 9 December 2019 amending Decision (CFSP) 2017/2303 in support of the continued implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2118 (2013) and OPCW Executive Council decision EC- M- 33/DEC.1 on the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons; Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/1026 adopted on 21 June 2021 in support of the Cyber Security and Resilience and Information Assurance Programme of the OPCW; Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2073 adopted on 25 November 2021 in support of enhancing the operational effectiveness of the OPCW through satellite imagery; and Council Decision (CFSP) 2022/573 adopted on 7 April 2022 Amending Decision (CFSP) 2019/538 in support of activities of the OPCW.