

Chemical Weapons Convention: Statement by the High Representative/Vice-President Josep Borrell on suspending Syrian voting rights and privileges

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The European Union welcomes the Decision adopted today by the 25th Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) suspending the voting rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic due to its failure to comply with the Convention. The Decision is a strong message by the international community against impunity for the use of chemical weapons, in compliance with International Law and International Humanitarian Law.

The Chemical Weapons Convention is a key instrument of the global non-proliferation and disarmament architecture. The EU and its Member States consider that the Decision is an appropriate response by the Conference to the clear violation of the core principles of the Convention by the Syrian Arab Republic, more than seven years after the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) on the destruction of the Syrian chemical weapons programme.

The Syrian failure to respect its international obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention has been substantiated through investigations carried out by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), Fact-Finding Missions (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The European Union has strongly condemned the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Air Force in Ltamenah in March 2017 and Saraqib in February 2018, as concluded by the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team report.

We urge the Syrian Arab Republic to reveal the full extent of its chemical weapons programme and return to full compliance with the Chemical Weapons Convention. The European Union and its Member States will continue to work at the national and international levels addressing chemical weapons attacks and other atrocity crimes committed by the Syrian regime.

The European Union reiterates its full support to the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons and underlines the complementarity of its work with the United Nations. We have full confidence in the objectivity, impartiality and independence of the Organisation's Technical Secretariat and its Investigation and Identification Team.

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