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COUNCIL DECISION (CFSP) 2026/2619

of 23 November 2026

in support of enhancing the operational effectiveness of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Articles 28(1) and 31(1) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

(1) On 12 December 2003, the European Council adopted the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (the 'EU Strategy').

(2) The EU Strategy underlines the crucial role of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (the 'CWC') and of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (the 'OPCW') in creating a world free of chemical weapons. As part of the EU Strategy, the Union has committed to work towards universal adherence to key disarmament and non-proliferation treaties and agreements, including the CWC.

(3) Since 2004, the Union has supported the activities of the OPCW through Council Decisions 2009/569/CFSP ([1]); 2012/166/CFSP ([2]); (CFSP) 2015/259 ([3]), (CFSP) 2019/538 ([4]); (CFSP) 2021/1026 ([5]), (CFSP) 2021/2073 ([6]),

([1]) Council Decision 2009/569/CFSP of 27 July 2009 on support for OPCW activities in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 197, 29.7.2009, p. 96, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2009/569/oj).

([2]) Council Decision 2012/166/CFSP of 23 March 2012 in support of activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 87, 24.3.2012, p. 49, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2012/166(1)/oj.

([3]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/259 of 17 February 2015 in support of activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 43, 18.2.2015, p. 14, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2015/259/oj).

([4]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/538 of 1 April 2019 in support of activities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 93, 2.4.2019, p. 3, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2019/538/oj).

([5]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/1026 of 21 June 2021 in support of the Cyber Security and Resilience and Information Assurance Programme of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 224, 24.6.2021, p. 24, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/1026/oj).

([6]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2073 of 25 November 2021 in support of enhancing the operational effectiveness of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) through satellite imagery (OJ L 421, 26.11.2021, p. 65, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2021/2073/oj).

(CFSP) 2023/1344 ([7]), (CFSP) 2024/1984 ([8]), (CFSP) 2025/2354 ([9]) and Council Joint Actions 2004/797/CFSP ([10]); 2005/913/CFSP ([11]) and 2007/185/CFSP ([12]).

(4) The continued provision of intensive and targeted assistance by the Union to the OPCW is necessary in the context of the active implementation of Chapter III of the EU Strategy. In particular, there is a need for further activities to enhance the operational effectiveness of the OPCW and the capacity of State Parties to the CWC to fulfil their obligations. The Union should therefore adopt this Decision in order to provide that assistance.

(5) The OPCW Technical Secretariat should be entrusted with the technical implementation of the activities to be carried out under this Decision,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1. With a view to the implementation of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the Union shall support the implementation and universalisation of the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (the 'CWC') through an operational action. The overall objective of that action shall be to ensure the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) Secretariat's capacity to facilitate and improve States Parties' implementation of the CWC, with a view to contributing to international peace and security through upholding the norms of the CWC and to the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons, while promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry.

2. The action referred to in paragraph 1 shall have the following specific objectives:

(a) verifying the elimination of any remaining undeclared chemical weapons stockpiles and chemical weapons production facilities, subject to the verification measures provided for in the CWC;

(b) ensuring the responsiveness of the verification regime to new and emerging developments, for better effectiveness of and compliance with the CWC;

(c) reducing the threats of use of chemical weapons and preventing re-emergence through the non-proliferation of chemical weapons;

(d) retaining effective organisational capacities to prevent and respond, upon request, to allegations of use of chemical weapons, or other uses of toxic chemicals prohibited under the CWC;

([7]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1344 of 26 June 2023 in support of enhancing the operational effectiveness of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (OJ L 168, 3.7.2023, p. 27, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2023/1344/oj).

([8]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1984 of 15 July 2024 in support of the Institutional Transitional Planning for Non-Routine Missions and Investigative Capacities of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) (OJ L, 2024/1984, 16.7.2024, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2024/1984/oj).

([9]) Council Decision (CFSP) 2025/2354 of 20 November 2025 in support of enhancing the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) mission activities related to Syria and Ukraine and enhancing OPCW operational effectiveness through satellite imagery (OJ L, 2025/2354, 21.11.2025, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2025/2354/oj).

([10]) Council Joint Action 2004/797/CFSP of 22 November 2004 on support for OPCW activities in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 349, 25.11.2004, p. 63, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/joint_action/2004/797/oj).

([11]) Council Joint Action 2005/913/CFSP of 12 December 2005 on support for OPCW activities in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 331, 17.12.2005, p. 34, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/joint_action/2005/913/oj).

([12]) Council Joint Action 2007/185/CFSP of 19 March 2007 on support for OPCW activities in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 85, 27.3.2007, p. 10, ELI: http://data.europa.eu/eli/joint_action/2007/185/oj).

(e) contributing to the OPCW's and States Parties' preparedness and response capacities to requests for assistance and protection from use or threat of use of chemical weapons;

(f) ensuring that the OPCW remains fit for purpose, in line with advances from scientific and technological perspectives;

(g) communicating in favour of a world free from chemical weapons and the peaceful uses of chemistry; and working towards universal adherence to the CWC;

(h) integrating substantive capacity building efforts for international cooperation.

3. A detailed description of the action referred to in paragraph 1 is set out in the Annex to this Decision.

Article 2

1. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the 'High Representative') shall be responsible for the implementation of this Decision.

2. The technical implementation of the action referred to in Article 1 shall be carried out by the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

3. The Technical Secretariat of the OPCW shall perform the task referred to in paragraph 2 under the supervision of the High Representative. For that purpose, the High Representative shall enter into the necessary arrangements with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW.

Article 3

1. The financial reference amount for the implementation of the action referred to in Article 1 shall be EUR 3 978 934,10.

2. The expenditure financed by the reference amount set out in paragraph 1 shall be managed in accordance with the rules and procedures applicable to the general budget of the Union.

3. The Commission shall supervise the proper management of the expenditure financed by the reference amount referred to in paragraph 1. For that purpose, it shall conclude an agreement with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. The agreement shall stipulate that the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW is to ensure the visibility of the Union's contribution, appropriate to its size.

4. The Commission shall endeavour to conclude the agreement referred to in paragraph 3 as soon as possible following the entry into force of this Decision. It shall inform the Council of any difficulties in that process and of the date of the conclusion of the agreement.

Article 4

1. The High Representative shall report to the Council on the implementation of this Decision on the basis of regular reports of the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. The reports of the High Representative shall form the basis of the evaluation carried out by the Council.

2. The Commission shall provide information on the financial aspects of the implementation of the action referred to in Article 1.

Article 5

1. This Decision shall enter into force on the date of its adoption.

2. This Decision shall expire 36 months after the conclusion of the agreement referred to in Article 3(3). However, it shall expire six months after the date of its entry into force if no agreement has been concluded within that period.

Done at Brussels, 23 November 2026.

For the Council

The President

M. HEYDON

PROJECT DOCUMENT FOR COUNCIL DECISION IN SUPPORT OF THE OPCW

Background and Rationale

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (the 'OPCW') is an international organisation established by the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (the 'CWC'). The CWC entered into force on 29 April 1997 and now has 193 States Parties, reflecting nearly universal membership. The mission of the OPCW is to achieve a world free of chemical weapons through the verified destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles and the prevention of re-emergence of the production and use of chemical weapons.

In December 2003, the European Union (EU) adopted the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (EU Strategy), in which it recognised the threat posed by weapons of mass destruction to international peace and security. The EU Strategy underlines the crucial role of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and of the OPCW in achieving a world free of chemical weapons. The objectives of the EU Strategy are complementary to those of the CWC. The EU and the OPCW, since the adoption of the EU Strategy, have pursued cooperation including engagement through a series of Joint Actions and Decisions ([1]). The EU-OPCW Memorandum of Understanding (2024) further reinforces this partnership essential in promoting and implementing the OPCW's core objectives.

With the destruction of all declared chemical weapons stockpiles verified in 2023, the OPCW continues to adapt to rapid evolution within science and technology, a shifting chemical weapons landscape and a degraded international security environment. At the same time, priorities remain to ensure compliance with CWC obligations and the verification regime, provide effective prevention against the use of chemical weapons, contribute to threat-reduction and preventing the re-emergence of chemical weapons, and promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry. Partnership and support through the EU Common Foreign Security Policy (CFSP) budget have proven instrumental in amplifying the impact of the OPCW's activities and assisting the implementation of its strategic priorities to date. The EU's continuing support remains essential to ensuring the OPCW Secretariat is fully equipped to identify and address current and emerging priorities effectively. The OPCW welcomes the EU's continued commitment to supporting its efforts to fulfil its mandates, thus contributing to international peace and security. Furthermore, recognising emerging challenges, the OPCW also welcomes the EU's sustained interest in strengthening its support to the OPCW's technical teams when providing assistance to States Parties, as necessary, in the active implementation of Chapters II and III of the EU Strategy.

Overall Objective of the Proposed Action

The overall objective of the EU Council Decision is to ensure the Secretariat's capacity to facilitate and improve States Parties implementation of the CWC. Such support contributes to international peace and security through upholding the norms of the CWC. It also contributes to the prevention of the re-emergence of chemical weapons, while promoting the peaceful uses of chemistry.

Specific Objectives of the Proposed Action

— Verifying the elimination of any remaining undeclared chemical weapons stockpiles and chemical weapons production facilities, subject to the verification measures provided for in the CWC.

— Ensuring the responsiveness of the verification regime to new and emerging developments, for better effectiveness of and compliance with the Convention.

— Reducing the threats of use and preventing re-emergence through the non-proliferation of chemical weapons.

([1]) Inclusive of Joint Action 2004/797/CFSP (expired); Joint Action 2005/913/CFSP (expired); Joint Action 2007/185/CFSP (expired); Decision 2009/569/CFSP (expired); Joint Action 2012/166/CFSP (expired); Council Decisions (CFSP) 2015/259 (extended with Decision (CFSP) 2018/294 and expired); (CFSP) 2017/2302 (extended with Decision (CFSP) 2019/1092, expired); (CFSP) 2017/2303 (extended with Decisions (CFSP) 2018/1943 and (CFSP) 2019/2112, expired); (CFSP) 2019/538 (expired); (CFSP) 2021/1026 (expired), and (CFSP) 2021/2073 (expired); (CFSP) 2023/1344 (in force through 31 December 2026); (CFSP) 2024/1984 (in force through 30 September 2027); and (CFSP) 2025/2354 (expires 31 December 2027).

— Retaining effective organisational capacities to prevent and respond, upon request, to allegations of use of chemical weapons, or other uses of toxic chemicals prohibited under the Convention; and Contributing to the OPCW's and States Parties' preparedness and response capacities to requests for assistance and protection from use or threat of use of chemical weapons.

— Remaining fit for purpose, as an organisation, in line with advances from a scientific and technological perspectives.

— Communicating in favour of a world free from chemical weapons and the peaceful uses of chemistry; and working towards universal adherence to the CWC.

— Integrating substantive capacity building efforts for international cooperation.

Expected Outputs of the Action

— **Output 1:** Retain organisational capability to prepare scenarios and targeted solutions based on robust institutionalisation of chemical demilitarisation knowledge and records.

  — *Expected Results:* Institutional response capacity preserved for any chemical weapons destruction request to identify specialised facility or equipment to verify destruction in line with the CWC.

  — *Indicative Activities will cover: Integration and digitalisation of specialised demilitarisation verification information into an interactive and secured knowledge database. Application of the database to inform TS training on verification (development and roll out) and routine missions (Art IV and V) operations, deployments and verification activities covering production, destruction and storage facilities.*

— **Output 2:** Identification and development of industry verification measures that ensure a comprehensive assessment and target risk-based site-selection for increased probability against diversion and prevention of re-emergence.

  — *Expected Results:* Industry verification methodologies adapted to provide a comprehensive picture of activities at declared facilities, including through utilisation of a broader range of sources of information and technologies in assessment and monitoring of verification activities.

  — *Indicative Activities will cover: Creation of customised systems for open-source information integrating new technologies within OPCW policies and verification regime processes. Establishing an enabling environment for Secretariat utilisation of open-source analyses and data for decision-making in industry verifications. Development and deployment of advanced digital tools (such as immersive training (VR) technologies) to support industry verification assessment and deployments. Update inspection procedures to reflect advances in technology-including in relation to new production processes, advanced manufacturing techniques, and emerging chemical technologies.*

— **Output 3:** Increase States Parties capacities to prevent the re-emergence of chemical weapons and reduce emerging threats of the use of chemical weapons.

  — *Expected Results:* Reduced threat risks through increased stakeholder capacities; expanded provisions for chemical safety and security; and extended efforts to address chemical threats, including those posed by non-state actors.

— *Indicative Activities will cover: Strengthening relevant stakeholders (national authorities, states parties, industry, etc.) capacities through dedicated trainings in areas such as: customs and border controls, CWC transfer regime implementation, application and enforcement for scheduled chemicals, relevant chemical security measures and respective legislation, chemical safety and security, etc. Expanding OPCW engagement and capacities of national authorities to cooperate and engage with chemical industry and trade through various coordination mechanisms. Ensuring approaches to emerging technologies (AI, UAVs, etc.) are integrated, adapted and responsive to a dynamic threat landscape.*

— **Output 4:** Effective capacities for assistance and protection, preventing the development and use of chemical weapons and investigating allegations of use.

— *Expected Results:* Strengthened national preparedness capacities and institutional readiness preserved to respond to States Parties requests for assistance and protection; improved forensics capacities to analyse and identify chemical threat agents, precursors, and degradation products; and reinforced OPCW capacities for prevent the development and use of chemical weapons and upholding compliance with the Convention.

— *Indicative Activities will cover: Increasing States Parties assistance and protection response capacities (specialist trainings, instructor development exchange programme, CHEMEX exercises, etc.). Expand the application of forensics organisationally, including for investigative protocols, trainings, and chemical profiling efforts.*

— **Output 5:** Address and incorporate innovations in science and technology within the Secretariat to ensure balancing between risks and opportunities, and better prepare the OPCW to assist States Parties and address the threats of today and the future.

— *Expected Results:* Secretariat capacities are informed by current innovations in science and technology. Secretariat operational capacities for mission preparedness and deployment are enhanced. Augmented analytical and management capabilities for laboratories in States Parties to exchange and gain expertise and develop new methods and analytical approaches. Expanded global network of designated laboratories providing adequate capacities for the OPCW to fulfil possible analytical tasks resulting from inspections or other needs related to the implementation of the CWC.

— *Indicative Activities will cover: Providing a platform for broader engagement on capacities and peaceful uses of chemistry including: laboratory capacities and trainings, science for diplomats, scientific research challenge(s). Enhancing OPCW's readiness to address progress in science and technology through OPCW's Scientific and Advisory Board (SAB), its Temporary Working Groups (TWGs) and related workshops. Expanding science-technology interfaces with organisational integration of AI in areas that could include but are not limited to AI digitalisation of tools (databases, validations, forensics), efforts to address risks associated with misuse of AI models, and other futures forecasting. Enhancing OPCW's operational capacities for mission preparations and deployments.*

— **Output 6:** Reinforcing the authority of the OPCW's global leadership and communications through engagement with diverse audiences, countering disinformation and expanding the universality of global disarmament and non-proliferation norms together with the peaceful uses of chemistry.

— *Expected Results:* Effective outreach and coherent organisational communications increase understanding of the CWC and trust in OPCW's oversight of the CWC.

— *Indicative Activities will cover: Enhancing OPCW's role in promoting the peaceful and authorised uses of chemistry to growing diverse audiences. Safeguarding organisational integrity and credibility through institutional resilience to misinformation and disinformation. Providing target audiences (civil society, NGOs, youth, women etc.) with engagement and specialised capacity building. On-going efforts to ensure universality. Further implementation of an in-depth OPCW-EU partnership.*

— **Output 7:** Establish viable regional and sub-regional programming to support and build States Parties capacities to meet their Convention obligations.

  — *Expected Results:* Improved coordination for regional and sub-regional events that are responsive to validated States Parties' needs, with integrated programming piloted for National Action Plans and specialised support.

  — *Indicative Activities will cover: Connecting countries (across regions, sub-regions) with similar implementation challenges and designing capacity-building approaches in line with specific priorities and contexts. Expanding mentorship, partnership and peer-learning initiatives to accelerate the exchange of practical experience and strengthen implementation capacities across States Parties.*

Final Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries include: OPCW Technical Secretariat personnel and teams; and CWC stakeholders including States Parties, National Authorities, Civil Society, Civilian Protection Units, Universities, Partner Laboratories, International and Intergovernmental Organisations, and the public.

Duration

Total estimated duration of this Action is 36 months.