



2025/2354

21.11.2025

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

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on European Union, and in particular Article 28(1) and Article 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'), Chapter III of which contains a list of measures to combat such proliferation. 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 (CWC) and of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in creating a world free of chemical weapons.
- (2) On 22 November 2004, the Council adopted Joint Action 2004/797/CFSP⁽¹⁾. That Joint Action was followed, on its expiry, by Council Joint Action 2005/913/CFSP⁽²⁾, which in turn was followed by Council Joint Action 2007/185/CFSP⁽³⁾. Joint Action 2007/185/CFSP was followed by Council Decisions 2009/569/CFSP⁽⁴⁾,

⁽¹⁾ 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).

⁽²⁾ 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).

⁽³⁾ 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).

⁽⁴⁾ 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>).

2012/166/CFSP ⁽⁵⁾, 2013/726/CFSP ⁽⁶⁾, (CFSP) 2015/259 ⁽⁷⁾, (CFSP) 2015/2215 ⁽⁸⁾, (CFSP) 2017/2302 ⁽⁹⁾, (CFSP) 2017/2303 ⁽¹⁰⁾, (CFSP) 2019/538 ⁽¹¹⁾, (CFSP) 2021/1026 ⁽¹²⁾ and (CFSP) 2021/2073 ⁽¹³⁾.

- (3) Through the implementation of Decisions (CFSP) 2017/2303 and (CFSP) 2021/2073, the OPCW has come to rely on the unique information provided by the European Union Satellite Centre's (SatCen) imagery analysis both for mission planning and information analysis. Consequently, there is a need to enhance the OPCW operational capacity through the continued provision of SatCen products and services in support of OPCW missions following the end of the implementation period of Decision (CFSP) 2021/2073.
- (4) On 26 June 2023, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2023/1344 ⁽¹⁴⁾. The activities referred to in Decision (CFSP) 2023/1344 primarily relate to the OPCW's support to Syria, including to non-routine missions.
- (5) On 15 July 2024, the Council adopted Decision (CFSP) 2024/1984 ⁽¹⁵⁾, which focuses on the OPCW-mandated missions, such as deployments, technical visits, trainings and provision of equipment to relevant authorities in Syria. The activities referred to in Decision (CFSP) 2024/1984 primarily relate to the processing of data and knowledge transfer within the OPCW,

HAS ADOPTED THIS DECISION:

Article 1

1. For the purpose of contributing to international peace and security, confidence and transparency, and to the implementation of the EU strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, the Union shall support mission activities related to Syria and Ukraine to ensure, through the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), effective responses to the risks of chemical weapons proliferation and use, also empowering States Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction (CWC) to ensure accountability in cases of use of chemical weapons, on the basis of the work and reports of the OPCW. The provision of satellite products and services by the European Union Satellite Centre (SatCen) seeks to enhance the capacities for those OPCW-mandated activities for security and verification accuracy with the following objectives:

- ⁽⁵⁾ 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](http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2012/166(1)/oj)).
- ⁽⁶⁾ Council Decision 2013/726/CFSP of 9 December 2013 in support of the UNSCR 2118 (2013) and OPCW Executive Council EC-M-33/ Dec 1, in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 329, 10.12.2013, p. 41, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2013/726/oj>).
- ⁽⁷⁾ 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>).
- ⁽⁸⁾ Council Decision (CFSP) 2015/2215 of 30 November 2015 in support of UNSCR 2235 (2015), establishing an OPCW-UN joint investigative mechanism to identify the perpetrators of chemical attacks in the Syrian Arab Republic (OJ L 314, 1.12.2015, p. 51, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2015/2215/oj>).
- ⁽⁹⁾ Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2302 of 12 December 2017 in support of the OPCW activities to assist clean-up operations at the former chemical weapons storage site in Libya in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (OJ L 329, 13.12.2017, p. 49, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2017/2302/oj>).
- ⁽¹⁰⁾ Council Decision (CFSP) 2017/2303 of 12 December 2017 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, in the framework of the implementation of the EU Strategy against proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (OJ L 329, 13.12.2017, p. 55, ELI: <http://data.europa.eu/eli/dec/2017/2303/oj>).
- ⁽¹¹⁾ 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>).
- ⁽¹²⁾ 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>).
- ⁽¹³⁾ 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>).
- ⁽¹⁴⁾ 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>).
- ⁽¹⁵⁾ 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>).

- (a) contributing to the full internationally verified elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and establishing the facts and identifying the perpetrators related to the use of chemical weapons, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the policy-making organs of the OPCW;
 - (b) providing assistance consistent with the CWC to enable Ukraine to have the civil technical capabilities necessary to ensure that it can respond effectively to incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals, including on the battlefield in Ukraine; and
 - (c) expanding the OPCW's operational capacities through imagery analysis, in support of OPCW-mandated activities, particularly with regard to Syria and Ukraine.
2. A detailed description of the Union-supported activities of the OPCW referred to in paragraph 1 is set out in the Project Document.

Article 2

1. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (the 'High Representative') shall be responsible for implementing this Decision.
2. Technical implementation of the project set out in the Project Document referred to in Article 1 shall be carried out by the OPCW Technical Secretariat (the 'Technical Secretariat'). It shall perform that task under the responsibility and the control of the High Representative. For that purpose, the High Representative shall enter into the necessary arrangements with the Technical Secretariat.

Article 3

1. The financial reference amount for the implementation of the operational action referred to in Article 1 shall be EUR 4 447 748,18.
2. The expenditure financed by the 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 referred to in paragraph 2. For that purpose, it shall conclude the necessary agreement with the Technical Secretariat. That agreement shall stipulate that the Technical Secretariat is to ensure visibility of the Union contribution, commensurate with the size of the contribution.
4. The Commission shall endeavour to conclude the agreement referred to in paragraph 3 as soon as possible after the entry into force of this Decision. It shall inform the Council of any difficulties in that process and of the date of 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 prepared by the Technical Secretariat. The High Representative reports shall form the basis for the evaluation carried out by the Council.
2. The Commission shall provide information on the financial aspects of the project set out in the Project Document 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 24 months from the date of conclusion of the agreement referred to in Article 3(3). However, it shall expire six months after its entry into force if that agreement has not been concluded by that time.

Done at Brussels, 20 November 2025.

For the Council

The President

K. KALLAS

ANNEX

PROJECT DOCUMENT

Action in support of OPCW mission activities related to Syria and Ukraine and enhancing OPCW operational effectiveness through SATCEN products and services**1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE**

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (the 'OPCW') is the implementing body of 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 there are currently 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. Since 1997, the OPCW has verified the destruction of all stockpiled chemical weapons declared by countries around the world corresponding to 72 304 metric tonnes.

The OPCW has consistently received support from the European Union (EU) through the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) budget since 2004. The EU-OPCW Memorandum of Understanding of 20 February 2024 has further reinforced this crucial partnership that has been essential in promoting and implementing the OPCW's core objectives, contributing to international peace and security. Recent developments, such as the fall of the Assad regime in Syria and the ongoing war in Ukraine, underscore the importance of the OPCW's mandates and missions.

In Syria, the Secretariat has been operating since October 2013, when Syria joined the Convention, through, inter alia, dedicated missions – the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission in Syria (FFM), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) – in line with mandates received under the Convention and through OPCW policy-making organs decisions and relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Since the fall of the Assad regime on 8 December 2024 and the presence of an interim government willing to engage on the Syrian chemical weapons dossier, contrary to the previous authorities, there is a need and at the same time an opportunity to finally access all information not declared by the previous authorities related to their chemical weapon programme, to secure chemical weapons related sites and their content, and to have any relevant element destroyed by Syria and verified as such by the OPCW Secretariat. There is also an opportunity to continue investigations related to use of chemical weapons in Syria, including identification of perpetrators, as expressed by the Interim President of Syria during his meeting in Damascus with the OPCW Director-General on 8 February 2025.

In Ukraine, the threat of use of chemical weapons continues and the OPCW's activities, including technical assistance as requested by Ukraine, are essential, from the provision of protective and detection equipment and training of first responders, to the provision of evaluation of samples related to allegations of use of toxic chemicals found on the battlefield in Ukraine.

Since 2021 the EU provides valuable support to the OPCW through the provision of products and services supplied by SatCen. For the operational effectiveness of OPCW, it is important that SatCen products and services support is sustained, once the Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2073 of 25 November 2021 ⁽¹⁾ expires.

⁽¹⁾ 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).

Therefore, this proposal is to be considered in conjunction with the Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1344 of 26 June 2023 ⁽²⁾ and the activities under Output 3 ('Effective responses to allegations of chemical weapons use'), as well as in conjunction with the Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1984 of 15 July 2024 ⁽³⁾. Activities in the Council Decision (CFSP) 2023/1344 are primarily in relation to OPCW's operations within headquarters, while this proposal focuses on OPCW's operations outside headquarters (deployments, technical visits, trainings and provision of equipment to relevant authorities in Syria and Ukraine). Activities in the Council Decision (CFSP) 2024/1984 are primarily in relation to the processing of data and knowledge transfer within the Organisation, while this proposal focuses on the deployment of missions and the provision of equipment to Syria and Ukraine.

2. OVERALL OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of this action is to contribute to international peace and security, confidence and transparency, and to the implementation of the EU strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction by supporting mission activities related to Syria and Ukraine to ensure, through the OPCW, effective responses to the risks of chemical weapons proliferation and use, also empowering States Parties to ensure accountability in cases of use of chemical weapons, on the basis of the work and reports of the OPCW. The provision of SatCen products and services enhances the capacities for these OPCW-mandated activities as well as security and verification accuracy.

3. SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

The specific objectives of the action are:

- a. to participate to the full internationally verified elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme and establish the facts and identify the perpetrators related to the use of chemical weapons, in accordance with the relevant decisions of the policy-making organs of the OPCW;
- b. to provide assistance consistent with the CWC to enable Ukraine to have the civil technical capabilities necessary to ensure they can respond effectively to incidents involving chemical warfare agents and toxic industrial chemicals, including the provision of evaluation of samples related to allegations of use of toxic chemicals found on the battlefield in Ukraine;
- c. to expand the OPCW's operational capacities through provision of SatCen products and services, in support of OPCW mandated activities.

4. ACTIVITIES AND OUTPUTS

a. Syria:

i. Activity: Technical team deployments (of one-month duration each) over two years to assist Syrian authorities with:

- producing a detailed inventory of chemical weapons, chemical weapons sites ⁽⁴⁾, equipment, munitions and other components of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. It is estimated that the teams will need to visit and assess more than 100 locations across Syria to collect, translate, verify and analyse documents, as well as to interview relevant personnel who were involved in the former Syrian regime's chemical weapons programme. The OPCW technical team will issue reports as needed to inform decision-making by the OPCW policy-making organs;

⁽²⁾ 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).

⁽³⁾ 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>).

⁽⁴⁾ The sites to be visited include all sites declared by Syria, as activities at these sites – such as full-scale production of chemical weapons were not fully declared by the former Syrian authorities. In some cases, Syria declared only research and development activities, while evidence suggests that actual production took place. Additionally, the visits will cover sites identified in OPCW policy-making organs decisions, such as airfields and other facilities involved, inter alia, in the production of sarin and chlorine. In addition, all undeclared sites suspected of involvement in Syria's chemical weapons program will also be inspected. The goal is to determine what was produced, when, with what equipment, in what quantities, and what has happened to these weapons – to prevent their proliferation and ensure their destruction is verified.

- developing plans, modalities and detailed inventory for the verified destruction of Syria's remaining chemical weapons, including the identification of related equipment and facilities;
- determining the use of toxic chemicals as weapons and identifying the perpetrators. The OPCW technical team will issue reports to inform decision-making and action by the OPCW policy-making organs, the Syrian authorities, and other international actors (such as the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism – IIIM).

Outputs:

- A full and complete declaration of the Syrian chemical weapons programme pursuant to the obligation that the Syrian caretaker authorities have inherited under the CWC;
- Executable chemical weapons destruction plans for formal consideration by the OPCW Executive Council;
- The establishment of evidentiary bases of chemical weapons use in Syria for victims to receive justice and perpetrators to be held accountable.

Notes: The establishment of the necessary operating facilities (secure office facilities, storage space, communications equipment) to support safe, secure and effective extended deployments by OPCW technical teams as well as support personnel engaged to produce the Syria-related outputs of this project will be required to ensure timely and cost-effective achievement of the results envisioned.

The budget will provide a maximum number of expert days, per diem and transport costs to be allotted to these deployment activities. A portion of the budget will also cover any services and equipment needed to carry out these activities, including relevant project office costs.

b. Ukraine:

- i. *Activity 1:* Provision of tailored technical trainings and related protective and analytical equipment in Ukraine and outside of Ukraine at specialised facilities (such as the OPCW Centre for Chemistry and Technology) for Ukrainian first responders, investigators, and other relevant experts in the areas of incident response, collection of evidence, and analysis:

- *Trainings:* four training sessions are planned for 20 Ukrainian participants during the EU Action period. The trainings will cover expertise in Chemical Weapons (CW) and chemical agent detection, protection, decontamination, and sampling and analysis.
- *Equipment Types:* the equipment to complement the trainings will be provided, such as 'FirstDefender' and related CW detection materials/devices, protective suits, protective masks, mask fit test kits, decontamination kits, sampling and analysis kits, auxiliary field work tool kits (e.g., GPS).

Output: Ukrainian first responders, investigators, and relevant experts are able, through enhanced expertise and preparedness, to deal more effectively with instances and allegations of toxic chemical use, prevent loss of life and injury and promoting transparency and accountability.

- ii. *Activity 2:* Provision of technical assistance visits (TAV) if and when requested by Ukraine to receive and analyse samples, through the independent and internationally certified OPCW Designated Laboratories network, collected by Ukrainian investigators and related to allegations of use of toxic chemicals as weapons, including with regard to allegations of use of Riot Control Agents along the frontline.

Outputs: Provision of reports to Ukrainian authorities for Ukraine to further decide on how to use such reports in their national investigations of use of toxic chemical as weapons, including provision of evaluation of samples related to allegations of use of toxic chemicals found on the battlefield in Ukraine, as well as for the international community, supporting the protection of the CWC and accountability efforts.

- i. **Activity:** Provision of SatCen⁽⁶⁾ products and services to support the safe and effective operational planning of OPCW technical teams preparing for deployments to any contingency operations, to conduct investigations, training or other activities as mandated under the Convention by the OPCW policy-making organs or requested by States Parties.

Output: OPCW technical team deployments are conducted with maximum efficiency, safety and security; and products and services provide useful indications to the substantiation of evidentiary findings reported by OPCW technical teams.

5. FINAL BENEFICIARIES

- a. CWC States Parties;
- b. Government officials and experts in Syria and Ukraine;
- c. Victims of chemical weapons use in Syria and Ukraine;
- d. OPCW personnel deploying on contingency missions.

6. DURATION

The total estimated duration of the action is 24 months.

(5) Implementation of SatCen activities under this new project are to start from the day after the Council Decision (CFSP) 2021/2073 of 25 November 2021 expires.

(⁶) Implementation of SatCen activities will be in full compliance with Council Decision 2014/401/CFSP of 26 June 2014 on the European Union Satellite Centre and take place under article 2.2(iii). It will be without prejudice to the role of the PSC and of the HR, as set out in Article 3 of the Decision.