

STATEMENT BY
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HEAD OF THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND
AT THE 29th SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO
THE CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION
(The Hague, 25-29 November 2024)

*Mister Chairperson,
Director General,
Distinguished Delegates,*

First of all let me congratulate my dear colleague Ambassador Almir Šahović of Bosnia and Herzegovina on his election as Chairperson of the 29th Conference of the States Parties. Dear Ambassador we have full confidence in your ability to smoothly guide the work of this Conference to its successful conclusion. Let me also assure you of my delegations full support. At the same time I wish to thank Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan for his work as Chairperson of the 28th CSP.

Poland fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union, therefore, in my intervention I can focus only on additional remarks in my national capacity.

Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) remains a unique instrument created to eliminate an entire category of weapons of mass destruction. Undisputedly, over the years much has been achieved to reach that goal, however,

universalisation and full implementation of the CWC as well as compliance with its provisions must remain in the focus of the States Parties.

This is especially important in view of the extremely worrying security developments and numerous attempts to undermine the international security architecture. Conflicts are being waged across all continents marked by violations and abuses of international law. Let me just mention the Russian illegal aggression against Ukraine, the ongoing war and humanitarian disaster in Gaza and deteriorating situation on Sahel and other parts of Africa.

Mr Chairperson,

This is the third CSP session taking place against the background of an ongoing war in Ukraine. Russia's aggression against Ukraine is a gross violation of the international law, including the United Nations Charter, undermining global security and the rules-based international order and destabilising political and security situation in the region and beyond. Poland is deeply concerned about and condemns Russian attempts to escalate the conflict by employing missile systems designed to be used with nuclear weapons and targeting Ukrainian critical infrastructure and civilians. We also deplore the irresponsible nuclear threats.

With regard to chemical weapons let me recall that we, States Parties to the CWC, committed to exclude completely the possibility of the use of chemical weapons and ban them under international verification. It is therefore our joint responsibility to defend the norm against the use of chemical weapons if it is violated.

Poland on numerous occasions expressed its concern over the allegations that Russian soldiers systematically use riot control agents for military purposes in Ukraine. In this context the findings of the Technical Assistance Visit conducted by the Secretariat at the request of Ukraine, confirming the presence of riot control agents in samples collected in the Dnipropetrovsk region are extremely worrisome. There must be zero tolerance for any instance of use, or threat of use, of chemical weapons and those responsible for any use of these weapons must be identified and held accountable.

We also remain concerned about continued non-compliance with the Convention by Syrian Arab Republic, which after more than 11 years since acceding to the CWC still has not cleared its initial declaration from serious gaps and inconsistencies.

Mr Chairperson, Distinguished Delegates,

Poland fully supports the CWC, the OPCW and its Director General Ambassador Fernando Arias. We thank the professional and dedicated staff of the Technical Secretariat for their hard work.

The OPCW is a great platform of cooperation and we appreciate working with other members of the Executive Council from all regional groups who share our goals and values, who also want a world free of chemical weapons, and who understand that peace is always better than war. Of course, we can disagree on many things, but the October EC showed that with a good faith approach it is still possible in the OPCW to achieve consensus, like in the case of the decision recommending for the CSP the approval of the revised OPCW budget for 2025.

We need more of this kind of constructive and in good faith engagement in the work of the OPCW. We are confident that two members of the EEG, namely Czechia and North Macedonia, can deliver in this respect. They have an excellent record when it comes to the implementation of the CWC and their positive engagement in the work of the OPCW, thus, we wholeheartedly support their candidatures for the membership in the Executive Council for the term 2025-2027.

I understand that there is some interest in having a closer look at the Rules of Procedure guiding the work of the CSP in order to have more clarity when it comes to elections. Poland supports starting a facilitation that would offer a chance for a thorough discussion of all views and proposals and working out a solution acceptable to all States Parties. This should be done in a consensual way that avoids further divisions among States Parties.

Poland supports the CWC by doing little but important things, like contributing to the OPCW Associate Programme – in September Poland’s leading chemical group Azoty successfully hosted programme’s participants from Bahamas and Nicaragua for an industry attachment. This summer a lab from Poland at the same time as a lab from Algeria – and I congratulate Algeria – received the status of OPCW officially accredited laboratory.

We try to engage in a positive way with other States-Parties also through promoting additional matters for everyone’s consideration, for example discussing the topic of chemical weapons dumped at sea. This year once again Poland, Germany and Lithuania are organizing a side-event on this issue to which everyone is invited. At the same time we follow with great interest the debate regarding rapid development of AI and its possible impact on the CWC and examine all possibilities to contribute to that discussion too.

Last but not least, I should mention our annual UNGA resolution on the implementation of the CWC, which also this year received overwhelming support of the UNGA First Committee. The resolution records the most important developments in the area of chemical non-proliferation on yearly basis and offers a unique opportunity for the international community to react to pressing challenges, support implementation of the Convention, uphold the norm against the use of chemical weapons. We thank everyone who supported the text in the First Committee and ask for your support also during the vote in the General Assembly, expected in the first week of December.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the 29th CSP and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.