



**STATEMENT BY H.E. JURAJ PODHORSKÝ,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
TO THE OPCW,  
AT THE 29<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES  
(The Hague, 25 to 29 November 2024)**

*General Debate*

Mr. Chair,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the Member States of the European Union.

In my national capacity, I wish to make some additional comments and observations.

In the beginning, I would like to extend the appreciation to the Chairperson of the 28th session of the Conference, H.E. Mr Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan. We also congratulate H.E. Mr Almir Šahović of Bosnia and Herzegovina on his election as the Chairperson of the 29th session and assure him of Slovakia's full support.

Slovakia further commends H.E. Ambassador Fernando Arias, Director-General of the OPCW, for his able leadership of the Organisation. Slovakia highly values the determination, impartiality and professionalism of all OPCW personnel in carrying out the mandate of the Organisation. In this respect, we fully support the initiatives and activities of the Director-General aimed at retaining and developing knowledge at the Organisation. Slovakia is proud to contribute to the development of skills and knowledge of both OPCW personnel and international experts by regularly hosting training activities at the facility in Zemianske Kostol'any in Central Slovakia.

Regarding the challenges to the global non-proliferation regime for chemical weapons, I first have to address the situation in Ukraine.

The war of Russia against Ukraine – besides being a blatant violation of the UN Charter and other basic norms of international law – causes great concern because of the reports on the systematic use of riot control agents as a method of warfare by Russian armed forces which is in contravention of the explicit prohibition contained in Art. I para 5 of the CWC. There have also been numerous reports on the use by Russian armed forces of the choking agent chloropicrin. In spite of repeated calls by a group of States Parties under Art. IX para. 2 and para. 3, Russia has failed to provide any explanations or clarifications. Therefore, we call on the Russian Federation to provide without delay the clarifications on all incidents. This is more relevant than ever, with view to the recent findings of the OPCW that have confirmed the use of riot control agent CS in the zone of combat in Ukraine.

Against this backdrop, the strengthening of protection and detection capabilities of Ukraine is imperative. Slovakia therefore supports the provision of assistance to Ukraine from the dedicated trust fund set up under Art. X CWC which it has also contributed to. Slovakia has further facilitated, as a transit State Party, the provision of assistance to Ukraine within the framework of Technical Assistance Visits, conducted in July, September and October 2024, respectively. We further reiterate our readiness to support any future TAVs to Ukraine.

Turning to the Syrian chemical weapons programme, Slovakia is alarmed by the fact that more than 10 years after its accession to the CWC, the Syrian Arab Republic is still failing to provide a complete and accurate declaration. In this regard, we express our full support to the Declaration Assessment Team and call on the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate fully with the OPCW, in line with its international obligations. It is in the interest of the Syrian Arab Republic and of the international society as a whole to be able to clarify, as soon as possible, the 19 open issues identified by the DAT. However, without the open and faithful cooperation of the Syrian authorities, it is not possible. We wish to stress that the position of the Syrian Arab Republic within the OPCW is the result of its own policy and actions; not a failure of the OPCW or of its Member States.

I wish to kindly request the issuance of this statement as an official-series document of the session, as well as its posting on the OPCW public website.