



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

STATEMENT BY H.E. JOŽEF DROFENIK, AMBASSADOR, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA TO THE OPCW

29th Session of the Conference of the States Parties to The Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction

Mr. Chairperson, Director-General Arias, Your Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by paying tribute to the chairperson of the 28th Conference of the States Parties to H.E. Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan and to the Executive Council for their tireless efforts and skills in guiding the States Parties' work. While congratulating to the newly elected chairperson, I am fully confident that H.E. Ambassador Almir Šahović of Bosnia and Herzegovina will lead the work of the Conference with equal competence and vigor. We wish him all success.

In addition to the statement delivered on behalf of the EU to which we fully subscribe, I would like to offer a few remarks in national capacity.

Firstly, few days ago we marked a thousand days since the beginning of Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine. Russian's federation continued its unprovoked and unjust aggression, which has lastly even intensified, continues to bring unrest on the European soil, violate international legal norms and trample the values and norms we unanimously accepted after the Second World War.

Russia's unfounded accusations of Ukraine's use of chemical weapons through the misuse of OPCW-assigned laboratories are yet another in a series of disinformation campaigns. In this regards, we share deep concern regarding the findings of the independent TAV report, issued on 18 of November 2024, which confirmed the presence of riot control agents "CS" in samples collected in in the Dnipropetrovsk region of Ukraine. At the same time, we commend the cooperation of Ukraine authorities with OPCW TAV team in Ukraine, which enabled the preparation of a professional and independent report. We urge the Secretariat to work on attributing this breach of the Convention.

Furthermore, we continue to call on Russia to clarify the circumstances of the poisoning of Alexei Navalny with a military grade nerve agent on its territory. The case should be thoroughly investigated by an independent investigative body.

Secondly, The OPCW's Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) work tirelessly to uncover the facts surrounding chemical weapons use in Syria. Their work is invaluable for ensuring accountability and preventing reoccurrence. We continue to call on Syrian authorities to cooperate fully with OPCW designated personnel with aim to resolve the open issues of Syria's CWC declaration without further delays. In relation to this, I urge the State Parties to press on Syria for full compliance with the CWC, because here shouldn't be any place for politicizing, it is about upholding the basic purpose of the CWC.

On a more positive note, we welcome valuable discussions at the recent first-ever Global Conference on the Role of Artificial Intelligence in Advancing the Implementation of the CWC, held in Rabat. AI presents an invaluable potential to strengthen the OPCW's mission of promoting global security and preventing the use of chemical weapons. However, its integration must be carefully managed, with appropriate safeguards to preserve the integrity of the OPCW's work and ensure the continued protection of human life and dignity. At the same time, we must continue to address the risk of AI to the CWC with its potential use by non-state actors and terrorist group.

Additionally we would like to welcome Japan's endeavors in carrying out the Abandoned Chemical Weapons (ACW) destruction project in China. Despite many difficulties and challenges, Japan showed its commitment to complete the destruction as soon as possible.

Mr. Chairperson

We have an important task to accomplish during this session, to elect members of the Executive Council for the coming two years. It is of utmost importance that this body remains professional and credible. Czech Republic and North Macedonia are countries with an excellent record of supporting the Convention. Therefore, Slovenia is joining the overwhelming majority of State Parties within the EEG in supporting the candidacy of these two countries.

Finally, I wish to assure Director-General Arias, as well as States Parties, that Slovenia's full cooperation and support to the OPCW and its fundamental purpose of eliminating the threat of chemical weapons.

I kindly ask that this statement be considered as an official document of this session and for it to be posted on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.