



STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR DÁNIEL MIHÁLY HOROGSZEGI SZILÁGYI
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF HUNGARY TO THE OPCW
AT THE 107th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 8 – 11 October 2024)

Agenda item 6 (g) - Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine as well as the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the EEA (European Economic Area), align themselves with this statement. Andorra, Monaco and San Marino also associate themselves with this statement.

The European Union remains strongly concerned about the growing number of reported use of Riot Control Agents (RCA) by the Russian Federation as a method of warfare against Ukrainian soldiers. These reports also include information by Russian sources bragging about how successful the method is. The EU is also seriously concerned by the alleged use of the choking agent chloropicrin. Russia risks exposing the Ukrainian population to toxic chemicals through continuous deliberate attacks against civilian industrial facilities.

We expect the Secretariat to continue monitoring the situation in Ukraine closely and to be fully prepared to take action should this be requested in line with the provisions of the Convention.

Ignoring legitimate international concerns, Russia still has not provided a plausible explanation regarding the widely reported use of RCA in its war against Ukraine, pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention. Instead, Russia attempts to deflect its responsibilities and shift the blame, continuing to engage in campaigns of state-controlled disinformation. Twelve States Parties have therefore requested the Executive Council to assist in clarifying the situation pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 3 of the Convention.

The European Union appreciates the Secretariat's work in providing equipment and training to Ukraine in order to assist them with their preparedness to respond to contingencies. We welcome the second Technical Assistance Visit (TAV) to Ukraine from 9 to 12 September 2024 and the delivery of training and non-military equipment to first responders, medics and firefighters.

Mr. Chairperson,

Four years after the assassination attempt on Mr. Alexei Navalny in Russia in August 2020 by a nerve agent of the “Novichok” group, the Russian Federation still has not reacted to international calls for a thorough and transparent international investigation. The poisoning has been confirmed, beyond doubt, by specialised laboratories in Germany, France and Sweden, as well as by the OPCW. We once again urge the Russian Federation to provide substantial answers to the questions posed by 45 States Parties in the framework of Art. IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention in October 2021. The tragic death of Mr. Navalny does not relieve the Russian Federation of its obligation to provide answers. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons must not and will not be tolerated. Those responsible for the assassination attempts must be brought to justice.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since 15 October 2020, the European Union has imposed restrictive measures under its chemical weapons sanctions regime against fourteen Russian individuals, including agents, high-ranking officials of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and Russian chemical weapons experts, as well as one entity responsible for inducing and providing support to the poisoning of Mr. Alexei Navalny. Previously, the EU has introduced sanctions on four senior officials from the Russian military intelligence service involved in the poisonings with a nerve agent from the “Novichok” group in Salisbury in 2018. The EU has also introduced a ban on the export of chemicals to Russia that could be misused for manufacturing chemical weapons.

I would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the One-Hundred and Seventh Session of the Executive Council.

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