

Statement of Estonia at the OPCW 108th Session of the Executive Council (The Hague, 4-7 March, 2025)

Mr Chair,

To begin with, I would like to commend the Chair of the Executive Council, His Excellency Ambassador Andrés Teran Parral of Ecuador, for his outstanding leadership and assure him of our full support as he directs the work of the 108th Session of the Executive Council.

I commend the OPCW Technical Secretariat and Director-General, His Excellency Ambassador Fernando Arias, for their dedication to upholding the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) and ensuring its effective implementation.

Estonia has full confidence in the professionalism, impartiality, and technical expertise of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and its established mechanisms, especially in light of the re-emergence of chemical weapons use, which poses a significant threat to international peace and security.

Mr Chair,

Estonia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. I would like to add following remarks in my national capacity.

Estonia firmly reiterates that the use of chemical weapons is unacceptable under any circumstances. We demand strict enforcement of the Convention to prevent the recurrence of these weapons in all their manifestations. For many years, we have expressed our concern about the unresolved issues surrounding Syria’s chemical weapons programme and condemned the Bashar al-Assad regime’s use of these weapons, which highlights the horrific and indiscriminate nature of chemical warfare. Alongside the European Union, we call on the Syrian authorities to fully cooperate with the OPCW, to declare and destroy all chemical weapons stockpiles and eliminate the chemical weapons programme entirely. In this context, we acknowledge the recent encouraging visit of Director-General Arias to Syria.

We welcome the Syrian authorities’ readiness to turn the page and meet Syria’s obligations under the Convention. This opportunity should be used for the good of the Syrian people and the international community.

Mr Chair,

We have surpassed three years since Russia launched its illegal, unprovoked and unjustified full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. Estonia condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia’s acts of aggression and we demand Russia to immediately and completely withdraw its forces from the entirety of Ukraine. Russia must be held fully accountable for all destruction and crimes perpetrated. There can be no impunity for the perpetrators.

We are deeply concerned about the findings of the TAV reports of 18 November 2024 and 14 February 2025, which confirmed the presence of the riot control agent "CS" in the Dnipropetrovsk region. Ukraine has separately reported over 6700 cases of the use of ammunition containing toxic chemicals by the Russian Federation since the beginning of the

full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The use of Riot Control Agents (RCAs) by Russian forces on the battlefield in Ukraine constitutes a breach of the Convention. We call on the Secretariat to continue its work to enable the timely identification of the origin and attribution of the RCA munition used. Likewise, we call on all States Parties to assist in this endeavour. Needless to say – such breaches of the Convention are entirely intolerable and demand accountability. It is essential to uphold the global norm against chemical weapons and maintain this fundamental prohibition.

Estonia would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.
