

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR NEILAS TANKEVIČIUS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA TO THE
OPCW
AT THE 108TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
THE HAGUE, 4–7 MARCH 2025**

Mr. Chairperson,
Director-General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Lithuania aligns itself fully with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union. Allow me to add the following remarks in my national capacity.

At the outset, I thank you, Chairperson of the Executive Council, H.E. Ambassador Andrés Teran Parral of Ecuador for the efficient steering of our debate and assure you of Lithuania's continuous support. We also extend the appreciation and our confidence in the Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias and to the Technical Secretariat for their professionalism, impartiality and expertise in implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Lithuania remains steadfast in its commitment to the objectives of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and the mission of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We commend the OPCW for its unwavering dedication to eliminating chemical weapons and preventing their re-emergence.

Mr. Chair,

We have noted with satisfaction the completion of the destruction of declared chemical weapons stockpiles. This milestone underscores the effectiveness of the Convention and the collective efforts of States Parties. However, recent evidence collected by the OPCW team in Ukraine proves the cases of riot control agent use. Such actions are reprehensible and violate international law.

Lithuania supports OPCW initiatives to assist Ukraine in strengthening its emergency response capabilities. In this context, we note the OPCW's recent Technical Assistance Visits to Ukraine, conducted upon the country's request. These visits have been instrumental in providing support and expertise to Ukraine in addressing threats related to chemical weapons use by the aggressor. We commend the OPCW for its prompt response and encourage continued collaboration to enhance Ukraine's safety and security against the chemical weapon use.

Unfortunately, Technical Assistance Visit's mandate does not include attributing responsibility for the use of the agent. We need to work on an instrument that aligns with the CWC's provisions to investigate cases of alleged use of chemical weapons in Ukraine and to identify those who were perpetrators, organisers, sponsors or otherwise involved.

We remain deeply alarmed by Russia's ongoing war of aggression against Ukraine and its blatant disregard for international norms, including the CWC.

The use of chemical weapons is completely unacceptable, regardless of the location, time, perpetrator, or circumstances. Despite this, they were used in the attempted assassinations of the late Mr. Navalny

and Mr. and Mrs. Skripal, and there are indications of their use once more. Meanwhile, Russia continues to propagate conspiracy theories and distort the facts, without taking any action to address the confirmed use of chemical weapons on its own soil.

Lithuania strongly supports Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity. We call on the Russian Federation to fully comply with its obligations under the Convention and to cease its aggression immediately.

Using this opportunity, I would like to thank member states, which has supported joint statement "On the Support to the Full Implementation of the Provisions of the Chemical Weapons Convention, including the Prohibition of the Use of Riot Control Agents as a Method of Warfare", delivered by my delegation during the last Conference of the State Parties. It continues to be relevant.

Mr. Chair,

Considering recent developments, we appreciate the extraordinary meeting of the OPCW Executive Council held on 12 December 2024, timely convened to address the evolving situation in the Syrian Arab Republic. During this session, we have reiterated the imperative for Syria to fulfil its obligations under the CWC and underscored the necessity of clarifying outstanding issues related to its initial declaration. The Council emphasized the importance of full cooperation with the OPCW to ensure the complete elimination of chemical weapons in Syria. OPCW Director-General's visit to Syria was another important step. Today we welcome Syrian participation in person at this EC session.

We face a historic chance to radically change the situation fast. We hope that the current Syrian-led and Syrian-owned political process will enable the government to engage constructively with the OPCW, fostering an efficient cooperation in the pursuit of full destruction of chemical weapons in the region as well as investigation the cases of CW use.

We have noted the upcoming steps for OPCW in-country deployments and eagerly await further details on the needs and requirements to facilitate these deployments as soon as possible. In this context we also strongly support draft decision on rehiring presented by New Zealand and Mexico.

Mr. Chair

Lithuania remains concerned by the issue of sea dumped chemical weapons. I would like to remind everyone that the UN General Assembly's resolution on this topic has received widespread understanding and support from member states. Consequently, we urge all contracting parties, particularly those in the Baltic Sea region, to actively cooperate and engage in addressing this matter.

In conclusion, Lithuania reaffirms its unwavering support for the OPCW and its mission. We remain committed to working collaboratively with all States Parties to achieve a world free of chemical weapons.

I kindly as this statement to be made an official document of this session and posted on the Catalyst as well as external website.

Thank you, Mr. Chairperson.