

**ROMANIA: NATIONAL STATEMENT BY H.E. NICOLAE COMĂNESCU,
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW, AT THE 108TH SESSION
OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Agenda item 5 – General debate

Mr. Chairperson,

Mr. Director General,

Dear Colleagues,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As this is my first statement as Permanent Representative, I would like to tell you how honored I am to represent Romania at the OPCW. I look forward to working closely with you to ensure that this organization fulfills its mandate as the implementing body of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Romania's strong political support for the OPCW has been underlined time and again, and I can assure you that it will remain unchanged, both in terms of national positions and within the European Union. Our common goal is to make the Organization stronger and more effective, together with all States Parties..

Romania fully supports the statement delivered by the distinguished representative of Poland on behalf of the European Union. In my intervention, I will emphasize a few aspects of particular interest from a national perspective.

In order to meet the challenges of these very complicated times for international peace and security, we must ensure the resilience of multilateralism, international law and the rules-based international order. Romania has a proud record of contributing to international non-proliferation efforts, including in the context of the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC), the first universal international legal instrument aiming at the elimination of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction within a set timeframe. We continue to urge all States Parties to uphold the CWC and the work of the OPCW, which are essential for the international non-proliferation and disarmament architecture.

Mr. Chairperson,

Since February 24, 2022, Romania has unequivocally condemned the unjustified, unprovoked and premeditated aggression of the Russian Federation against Ukraine, which constitutes a flagrant violation of international law, including the UN Charter. We will continue to call for a complete cessation of the attacks and the immediate withdrawal of the aggressor forces from the territory of Ukraine within internationally recognized borders.

The growing number of uses of munitions containing toxic chemicals by the Russian aggressor army is staggering. Since February 17, 2023, almost 6.800 cases have been recorded and documented by Ukraine. Looking through this lens, we are very alarmed by the findings of the OPCW technical assistance visits to Ukraine, which confirmed in its reports S/2338/2024 and

S/2370/2025 the presence of the riot control agent "CS" in samples collected in the Dnipropetrovsk region of Ukraine. We must remind the perpetrators that such use as a method of warfare is clearly prohibited under Article I of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

At the same time, we must not lose sight of the use of the Novichok nerve agent in Salisbury and the attempted assassination of the Russian opposition politician, Mr. Alexei Navalny. This is still an open issue on the OPCW agenda, as the Russian Federation has not yet responded to the questions on the circumstances of the assassination attempt posed by 45 States Parties in October 2021.

Mr. Chairperson,

I will briefly address a subject of paramount importance for the implementation of the Convention: the Syrian file.

While we are very concerned about the impact of the latest developments in Syria on the possible proliferation or use of chemical weapons, we consider it important to encourage the authorities in Damascus to remain on the path of a genuine transition to democratic and inclusive governance, in the spirit of UN Security Council Resolution 2254 (2015).

My delegation fully shares the view contained in para. 10 of DG report. EC - 108/DG.4, "The evolving political and security situation in the Syrian Arab Republic presents an opportunity for the Organisation to obtain clarifications on the full extent and scope of the Syrian chemical weapons programme."

We fully support the Director General and the Technical Secretariat's efforts to work closely with the Syrian authorities in Damascus, on the basis of the 9-Point Action Plan, to quickly clarify concerns about the extent and scope of the chemical weapons program. We believe that Syria needs to demonstrate that it is complying with its international obligations, and we therefore count on Damascus' full support for all three mechanisms of the Secretariat, namely the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), to fulfill the mandates that have been conferred upon them by States Parties.

Before concluding, let me reconfirm my country's strong support for the work of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat to promote the objectives of the Convention. We have full confidence in their professionalism, expertise and impartiality. At the same time, we oppose any attempt to undermine the credibility and integrity of the OPCW, which threatens to weaken the foundations of the chemical disarmament system.

The use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime, by anyone, under any circumstances, is totally unacceptable and I express Romania's full support for the destruction and verification of all chemical weapons, which must remain a priority for the OPCW, along with preventing their re-emergence.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson.

I would like to ask to circulate this statement as an official document of the 108th Session of the Executive Council and publish it both on the Catalyst platform and the OPCW's official website.