

**Statement by Minister Counsellor Ivan Jerzečić,  
Alternate Permanent Representative of the Republic of Croatia to the OPCW  
at the 101<sup>st</sup> Session of the Executive Council  
(The Hague, 4-7 October 2022)**

**Agenda Item 5 - General debate**

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Director-General,  
Excellencies,  
Distinguished Delegates,

The Republic of Croatia fully aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union, and I would like to make the following remarks in the national capacity.

Croatia condemns in the strongest possible terms Russia's escalating war of aggression against Ukraine. We consider Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine a gross violation of international law, including the UN Charter, and reiterate our full support for Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as its right of self-defence. We will continue to stand in solidarity with Ukraine and the brotherly Ukrainian people, supporting their just and courageous struggle for freedom and self-determination as much as we can.

Croatia is deeply worried about attacks of Russian forces on Ukrainian civilian nuclear infrastructure and chemical industrial facilities, combined with a malicious Russian disinformation campaign concerning the weapons of mass destruction. We are appalled by a constant stream of Russia's false accusations against Ukraine, a State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention with an impeccable record.

It should be noted that the Russian Federation still fails to provide credible information on the circumstances of the use of a chemical nerve agent from the 'Novichok' group on its own territory, in August 2020, in an attempt on Mr. Alexei Navalny's life. Instead of providing credible answers to questions put forward by 45 States Parties, pursuant to Article IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention, Russia sticks to its misleading propaganda narrative.

Croatia is also deeply worried about the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. There should be no impunity for the perpetrators. We join numerous repeated calls on the Syrian Arab Republic to fully comply with the Convention and disclose all details concerning its chemical weapons programme. We urge this State Party to engage constructively with the Organisation and its Technical Secretariat, including the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM) and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT), whose activities we fully endorse.

Croatia remains committed to the implementation of the Convention. We are grateful to the Director-General, His Excellency Ambassador Arias, and the Technical Secretariat, for their tireless work towards a world free of chemical weapons. They can count on Croatia's continued support of their efforts, through concrete actions, not just words. In this regard, I am glad to inform the Council about a Seminar on the CWC and Chemical Safety and Security Management for Eastern European OPCW Member States that was successfully held in Zagreb, Croatia, from 6 to 8 September 2022. The seminar was co-organized by the OPCW and our National Authority for the Implementation of the CWC, in co-operation with the Faculty of Science of the University of Zagreb. Participants reviewed critical resources, tools, and training needed to raise chemical safety measures and secure industry facilities. As part of the programme, participants visited the Petrokemija chemical industry plant, a Croatian chemical facility specialised in manufacturing agricultural fertilisers, to learn about the safety and chemical security management protocols in the production of fertilisers using CWC-scheduled chemicals.

Lastly, I take this opportunity to highlight the importance of the preparatory work for the forthcoming Fifth Review Conference. Croatia commends the Chairperson of the Open Ended Working Group for the preparation of RevCon5, His Excellency Ambassador Kuusing of Estonia, for his wise, inclusive and able leadership in the process.

I kindly request that this statement be considered as an official document and be posted on the OPCW external server and the public website.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.