
**STATEMENT OF DENMARK TO THE
95th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 6 - 9 October 2020)**

**DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JENS-OTTO HORSLUND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF DENMARK TO THE OPCW**

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

Denmark aligns itself with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Gudrun Lingner of Germany on behalf of the European Union and wishes to highlight only a few points.

Mr. Chairperson,

Denmark condemns in the strongest possible terms the recent attack on Mr. Alexei Navalny apparently using a military chemical nerve-agent of the Novichok group. The use of Novichok has been confirmed by German, French and Swedish specialized laboratories independently. We welcome the German request for OPCW assistance in this regard and express our gratitude to Germany for the assistance provided to Mr. Navalny.

We reiterate that the use of chemical weapons anywhere, by anyone under any circumstance is a violation of international law and urge Russia to investigate the circumstances of this crime and to prosecute those responsible to the fullest extent of the law. This must be done in a transparent manner and in accordance with international standards; any relevant information must be disclosed, including on the presence of Novichok. We further call on Russia to cooperate fully with the OPCW in ensuring a reliable and impartial investigation. Impunity for the use of chemical weapons cannot be allowed. The integrity of the Convention is at stake.

Mr. Chairperson,

As a committed State Party to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Denmark has been a strong supporter of the work of the OPCW in Syria. We strongly condemn the use of chemical weapons by the Syrian regime as concluded by the first report of the OPCW Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) on 8 April 2020. These breaches of the Convention must have consequences.

This Council has already taken steps to remedy the situation and provide a path for the Syrian Arab Republic to return to compliance with our treaty. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to take all necessary steps to honor its obligations under the Convention and look forward to receive the report of the Technical Secretariat on any progress that may have materialized in this respect. It will be for the Conference of States Parties to decide on the way ahead and we urge all States Parties to assume their responsibility as custodians of the Convention. Denmark is ready to do so.

I also want to express our full support for the work of the Declarations Assessment Team and the Fact-Finding mission. The overall picture drawn from these instruments is clear; failure to declare, documented use and identification of those responsible.

Once again – impunity for use of Chemical Weapons cannot be tolerated. We strongly support measures already taken by the EU in the past in sanctioning those responsible for the use of chemical weapons and are willing to take similar measures again when necessary. Denmark is also an active member of the Partnership against Impunity for the use of Chemical Weapons. It is an important avenue for pursuing accountability.

Mr. Chairperson,

Denmark believes it highly important that we, as responsible States Parties, provide the Technical Secretariat with the necessary resources to carry out its mandated activities. In this sense we find the budget proposal for 2021 reasonable and urge its speedy approval by the Executive Council.

In closing let me once again thank the Director General and his staff for their tireless efforts in implementing and safeguarding our Convention. Under difficult and challenging circumstances, they continue to excel in the many different responsibilities placed upon them and they deserve our praise. Any attempts to undermine or discredit the Technical Secretariat and our Director General must be firmly rejected. The completely unfounded attempts to do so are telling in their own right.

I thank you Mr. Chairperson and request that this statement be treated as an official document of this session.