

Statement by H.E. Kateřina Sequensová, Permanent Representative of  
the Czech Republic to the OPCW

at the Ninety-Seventh Session of the Executive Council

6 – 9 July 2021

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to use this opportunity to underline a few points in its national capacity.

At the outset, we would like to congratulate the new Chairperson of the Council, H.E. Ambassador Abdelouahab Bellouki of Morocco, on his election and assumption of duties. The Council will surely benefit from his diplomatic skills and rich experience. We would like to wish him a successful term of office and assure him of our full support.

We would also like to express our appreciation for the work of the Director General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and the whole Technical Secretariat during the extraordinary times of the pandemic. Moreover, we stress our full confidence in the impartiality and professionalism of the staff of the Technical Secretariat and reject any attacks that question its credibility and integrity.

In April, the Conference of States Parties took a very important step to uphold the Chemical Weapons Convention by adopting the decision “Addressing the Possession and use of Chemical Weapons by the Syrian Arab Republic“ and suspending certain rights and privileges of the Syrian Arab Republic. It is a consequence of continued violations by Syria of the basic principles of the Convention, including repeated cases of use of chemical weapons as confirmed by independent investigative bodies such as the UN-OPCW JIM or OPCW IIT. The Syrian regime was given multiple opportunities to comply with the Convention including by fully declaring and destroying all elements of its chemical weapons programme but has chosen not to do so and thus gave the Conference no choice but to act.

We are concerned by the update shared by the Technical Secretariat at the briefing on 30 June regarding the recent lack of cooperation by the Syrian Arab Republic regarding the planning of further consultations with the Declaration Assessment Team and regular rotation of OPCW staff in the Damascus office. We call on the Syrian Arab Republic to comply with its obligations rooted in the Convention and decisions of the OPCW Policy-Making Organs and the UN Security Council and fully cooperate with the Technical Secretariat.

The assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny who was poisoned on the territory of the Russian Federation by a chemical nerve agent of the „Novichok“ group continues to be a matter of utmost concern for the Czech Republic and requires full attention of this Council. The

circumstances of this attack must be credibly disclosed and it is the responsibility of the Russian Federation, on whose territory the attack took place, to do so.

We would like to ask that this statement be designated an official document of this Council session and posted on both the external server and the public website.