



*The Permanent Representation of Italy to the
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons*

ITALY

**STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF ITALY TO THE OPCW
AT THE 100th SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,
Mr. Director-General,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

first of all, I would like to thank the Technical Secretariat for organising this 100th OPCW Executive Council. I would also like to thank you, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia HE Ziad Al Atiyah, for wisely leading the EC Bureau in the position as Chair. It is my good luck to be able to act as Vice Chair under your careful guidance.

Mr Chairperson,

The past few years have been characterised by difficult times for the OPCW and for that global hope that the chemical threat could disappear forever on the horizon for nations.

Unfortunately, every event reminds us that this hope of ours is still far from being realised.

Today we stand disgusted at the violent and unjustifiable Russian aggression on Ukraine and with the anguish that every war brings, we are forced to hold our breath on the chemical threat as well. As I write this message and we convene the 100th session of the Executive Council, while the belligerent parties are clashing in the Severodonetsk area, which is known to be an industrial chemical risk zone. At any moment, a chemical catastrophe is possible, and it is not enough, periodically we are forced to read about possible chemical attacks, traps with dangerous aggressives or false flag operations.

In 2022, it is not possible to justify any kind of military aggression, nor is it possible to justify even the possibility of chemical weapons.

We join the EU, the German statement and all countries that dream of a world free of prevarication and full of freedom in condemning Russian aggression and calling for a stop to hostilities.

Although the Ukraine crisis focuses our current attention, we cannot forget how the chemical threat still lurks in those events that have yet to be clarified and for which the world awaits answers.

Italy strongly supports the activities of the IIT and DAT in and about Syria. The Syrian Arab Republic's attitude continues to be elusive and to follow the dictates of the CWC only in words. Facts are needed and there is a need for the Syrian leadership to expedite the meeting that the OPCW Director General has continuously called for. It is also necessary that Syria no longer obstructs the work of DAT and IIT by allowing the free passage of operators and inspectors. Their sole aim is to uncover the truth about the horrendous chemical attacks perpetrated in Syria.

Similarly, the Russian Federation maintains an attitude that is not conducive to achieving the truth about the facts surrounding the poisoning of Mr. Navalny. Italy is among the signatories of the requests for clarification made to the Russian Federation under Article IX of the Convention and we are still waiting for clear and exhaustive answers and not paper piles that have little to do with this story.

Mr Chairperson,

The world's horizon is dark, it is worrying. War and the chemical threat come on top of difficult years of pandemic and economic crisis.

In this context, we must keep a firm grip on our certainties and our goals. We want a world free of war, tyrannies and all chemical dangers.

Our hope still rests on the positive news that we can count on even in this contingent moment.

This is why we greet with particular emphasis the preparations for the complete destruction of the world's chemical weapons stockpiles, the near completion of the Chem Tech Centre project, the recent 25th anniversary of the entry into force of the CWC, and the approach of the 5th CWC Review Conference in 2023.

These are the starting points to restore the chemical security, and these are the starting points from which all States Parties to the OPCW must find inspiration for a world free of the chemical threat.

I would kindly ask to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the Catalyst and on the OPCW public website.