

LITHUANIA
STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR VIDMANTAS PURLYS
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA TO THE OPCW
AT THE HUNDRIETH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Warm welcome to the new Chairperson of the Executive Council, H.E. Ambassador Ziad Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia.

Lithuania aligns itself fully with the statement delivered by H.E. Ambassador Katerina Sequensova, Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to the OPCW on behalf of the European Union and I would like to make the following remarks in the national capacity.

We condemn in the strongest possible terms Russia, and its shameful accomplice Belarus, for waging a war of aggression against its peaceful and democratic neighbor Ukraine. It is a fact that Russia is grossly violating international law and putting in danger millions of people of a peaceful nation, including by shelling residential areas, attacking and taking over civilian infrastructure, and greatly increasing the risk of accidents involving industrial chemicals. We stand together with Ukraine in fighting back against the aggressor.

The flow of Russian disinformation has intensified significantly since the start of the war in Ukraine, especially as EU began imposing sanctions on Russian Federation for aggression against Ukraine. One of many examples – baseless accusations about chemical weapons “provocations” being prepared in Ukraine. We remind once again that it is the Russian Federation behind numerous violations of international law and norms today, including the blatant violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”) by actually using chemical weapons in the assassination attempt on Alexei Navalny in 2020 and in Salisbury in 2018. Despite the evidence and many calls on the Russian Federation to fully disclose the circumstances of the assassination attempt, Russia still refuses to cooperate with the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW. We will continue to work towards ensuring that there is no impunity for those responsible for such heinous attacks.

The suspension of certain rights and privileges is likely to stay for longer than we had hoped for in Syria because of the country’s continued failure to comply with the Convention, including not complying with its obligation to allow full and unfettered access to OPCW personnel. We urge Syria to act constructively and cooperate fully with the Technical Secretariat, and issue visas without delay for all staff members of the OPCW, including all the members of the Declaration Assessment Team.

Lithuania has full trust in the OPCW’s leadership and commends the professional manner in which the Technical Secretariat carries out its work in the Syrian Arab Republic. We strongly support the work of the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT), the Fact-Finding Mission (FFM), and the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT). A month ago, the Government of the Republic of Lithuania made a contribution of €30,000 to support the activities of the Trust Fund for Syria Missions at the OPCW.

It is with great interest that we observe the advancement of building the Centre for Chemistry and Technology (ChemTechCentre). As it will be key to enhancing the OPCW’s capacity to perform its tasks, we are keen to explore the possible ChemTechCentre’s role in promoting the OPCW as a forum for voluntary cooperation on the Sea Dumped Chemical Weapon, as presented in the Joint paper by Bulgaria, Colombia, Estonia, Georgia, Latvia, Lithuania, Mexico, Poland, Romania and Ukraine for the 4th Review Conference.

We ask that this statement be made an official document of the Council and published on the external server and the public website of the OPCW.