



101st Session  
4 – 6 October 2022

EC-101/NAT.16  
4 October 2022  
ENGLISH only

### POLAND

#### **STATEMENT BY THE DELEGATION OF THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND TO THE OPCW AT THE 101ST SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson,

Poland fully aligns with the statement of the European Union delivered by the Czech Presidency in the general debate. We commend H.E. Ambassador Ziad M. D. Al Atiyah of Saudi Arabia for his efforts to conduct the work of this 101st Session of the Executive Council (“the Council”) in the most productive manner. I would like to assure him of our full support.

It has been more than seven months since Russia started its unjustifiable, unprovoked, and illegal war of aggression against Ukraine. Despite all efforts of the international community, the Russian authorities demonstrate no willingness to turn back from the path of military confrontation and stop the atrocities. On the contrary, Russian leaders openly support further escalation, announcing conscription of hundreds of thousands of men into the army, undermining the territorial integrity of Ukraine, and openly threatening the rest of the world with the use of weapons of mass destruction. Russia’s actions not only grossly violate the United Nations Charter, undermining global security and the rules-based international order in which the OPCW plays an important role, but also bring devastating consequences for the entire world. Russia’s actions are totally unacceptable and cannot be tolerated by the international community.

Poland condemns in the strongest possible way Russia’s aggression and joins others in demanding that Russia immediately, completely, and unconditionally withdraws all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and that it fully respects Ukraine’s territorial integrity, sovereignty, and independence within its internationally recognised borders. We also condemn Russia for its campaign of disinformation and state-controlled propaganda, conducted as part of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, and aimed at spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and others regarding chemical weapons.

In recent months, Russia’s aggression against Ukraine has dominated international discussions, including those conducted here in the Council. This is very understandable as there are growing concerns that Russia might decide to move from threats to deeds and use weapons of mass destruction, possibly also chemical weapons. In this situation we must closely follow the developments in Ukraine and be ready to act swiftly and decisively in case of any violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention (“the Convention”). The best way of preventing such violations is ensuring that there is no impunity for the use of chemical weapons and all perpetrators of such crimes are held accountable. The OPCW has the necessary tools at its disposal. The work of the Investigation and Identification Team (IIT) to attribute the use of



chemical weapons in Syria should be a sober reminder. Poland supports the IIT and looks forward to the release of its next reports. We also support calls on Syria to resume full cooperation with the Technical Secretariat (“the Secretariat”) and resolve all pending issues, declare the full extent of its chemical weapons programme, and return to full compliance with the Convention.

Poland strongly believes that all violations of the Convention should be treated in an equally serious manner. Therefore, we must not forget about the assassination attempt on Mr Alexei Navalny, who was poisoned in Russia in August 2020 with the use of a military grade nerve agent of the novichok group—a substance developed by Russia and used also to poison Mr Sergei Skripal in 2018. This case and all its circumstances must be fully examined. We recall that the Russian Federation has not reacted to international calls for a thorough and transparent investigation of Mr Navalny’s poisoning and disclosure of its chemical weapons programme.

In this demanding context, we need to address challenges and threats for the Convention in the future. Poland would like to thank the Chairperson of the Open-Ended Working Group, Ambassador Lauri Kuusing of Estonia, for conducting the preparatory work to the Fifth Review Conference in a transparent and inclusive manner. Poland is very interested in a tangible outcome of the Review Conference, which should take stock of the implementation of the Convention and offer guidance for further strengthening it in the future. We also see merit in including the topic of sea-dumped chemical weapons in the related discussions. Poland highly appreciated the presentation made by the Secretariat at the meeting on verification held in June and the opportunity to present our views on the matter in September. Poland believes that the OPCW might make a valuable input to the international efforts undertaken in various formats aimed at tackling the problem of sea-dumped chemical weapons, and that the Secretariat might support voluntary cooperation of States Parties on the matter. We would like to continue discussing this in the coming months and encourage all States Parties to engage in a constructive and open-minded manner.

The OPCW plays an instrumental role in promoting and verifying the implementation of the Convention. In order to maintain its full capabilities to operate effectively we must ensure that it has predictable and solid financial resources. Poland supports the Director-General’s proposed revision of the Programme and Budget for 2023, and we call on others to do so. We also support addressing the problem of high turnover in the Inspectorate Division that the Secretariat will face in 2023, as well as making sure that the OPCW is fully functional in emergency circumstances, under which the OPCW Headquarters building cannot be used, and Council meetings or sessions could only take place at alternative venues or through virtual meeting technology.

Last but not least, Poland reiterates its full support for OPCW Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and the staff of the OPCW Secretariat, who carry out their work in a highly professional and impartial manner, doing their best to support the States Parties in implementing the Convention.

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

Thank you.