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**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
DELIVERED BY H.E. AMBASSADOR MARKUS LEINONEN EUROPEAN
EXTERNAL ACTION SERVICE AT THE TWENTY-SEVENTH SESSION
OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES
UNDER AGENDA ITEM 9(D)**

Mr Chairperson,

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union.

Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine is an attack on our common principles. It grossly violates international law, notably the United Nations Charter. It undermines the international rules-based order and multilateralism. It damages the global economy and aggravates global food and energy security, which, across the globe, hit the most vulnerable.

The European Union resolutely condemns Russia's war of aggression and demands that Russia immediately, completely and unconditionally withdraws all its troops and military equipment from the entire territory of Ukraine and fully respects Ukraine's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The European Union is unwavering in its support to Ukraine and its people in its inherent right to self-defence against Russia's aggression and to build a peaceful, democratic and prosperous future. Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it has and will cause. It will be held accountable for its actions.

Moreover, as part of its aggression against Ukraine, Russia has engaged in a campaign of disinformation and state-controlled propaganda by spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and others regarding chemical weapons whilst also risking exposure of the Ukrainian population to toxic chemicals through deliberate attacks against civilian industrial facilities. Let us recall that Russia, the country responsible for the ongoing war and for violations of international law and international humanitarian law in Ukraine, has a track record on the use of chemical weapons for assassinations and assassination attempts as well as in sowing disinformation.

It is well established that Ukraine is a responsible Member of the Chemical Weapons Convention ("the Convention") and is in full compliance with the Convention. In this context, we also remain steadfast in defending the OPCW Technical Secretariat against baseless accusations and attacks on its integrity and credibility through deliberate campaigns of state-sponsored disinformation.



Following the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the European Union has adopted massive and unprecedented sanctions packages against Russia. On 3 June 2022, the scope of sanctions was amended to ban the export of chemicals to Russia that could be misused for the manufacturing of chemical weapons.

Mr Chairperson, addressing the threat of chemical weapons use sits at the core of the Convention and is essential for upholding international legal norms. The European Union reiterates its strong concerns that the Russian Federation has not reacted to international calls—including those made in the sessions of the Executive Council and the Twenty-Sixth Session of the Conference of the States Parties in December 2021—for a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination attempt on the Russian opposition politician Mr Alexei Navalny. The poisoning of Mr Navalny in Russia in August 2020 by a military grade chemical nerve agent from the novichok group (a substance developed by Russia), has been confirmed, beyond doubt, by specialised laboratories in Germany, France and Sweden, as well as by the OPCW. The European Union has condemned this poisoning in the strongest possible terms and sanctioned fourteen Russian nationals and a State research institute linked to the assassination attempt.

The European Union once again urges the Russian Federation to provide substantial answers to the questions posed by 45 States Parties in the framework of Article IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention on 5 October 2021, and to disclose, without further delay, the circumstances of the assassination attempt against Mr Navalny.

Impunity for the use of chemical weapons must not and will not be tolerated. Those responsible for the assassination attempts must be brought to justice. On 15 October 2020, the European Union imposed restrictive measures under its chemical weapons sanctions regime against six Russian individuals and one entity responsible for inducing and providing support to the poisoning of Mr Alexei Navalny with the toxic nerve agent novichok. On 14 November 2022, additional measures were imposed targeting eight agents and high-ranking officials of the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and Russian chemical weapons experts. Those designated are subject to an assets-freeze and a travel ban preventing them from entering or transiting through European Union territories. European Union persons and companies are also forbidden from making funds available to those listed. Previously, the European Union has introduced sanctions on four senior officials from the Russian military intelligence service involved in the poisonings with novichok in Salisbury in 2018.

The candidate countries Albania, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine, the potential candidate countries Bosnia and Herzegovina and Georgia, and the EFTA (European Free Trade Association) countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the EEA (European Economic Area) align themselves with this statement. Andorra, Monaco and San Marino also associate themselves with this statement.

I kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document of the Twenty-Seventh Session of the Conference of the States Parties and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

Thank you.