

STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOHANNES OLJELUND
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SWEDEN TO THE OPCW
AT THE 102nd SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL
(The Hague, 14 - 17 March 2023)

Agenda item 6 (f): Addressing the threat from chemical weapons use –

Ukraine and Navalny

I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union (EU).

The European Union reiterates its resolute condemnation of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which constitutes a flagrant violation of the UN Charter obligations and OSCE principles and commitments.

Moreover, as part of its aggression against Ukraine, Russia is engaged in a campaign of disinformation and state-controlled propaganda in spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations around chemical weapons against Ukraine and others regarding chemical weapons while risking exposure of the Ukrainian population to toxic chemicals through their deliberate attacks against civilian industrial facilities. Let us recall that Russia, the country responsible for the ongoing war and violations of international law and international humanitarian law in Ukraine, has a track record in the use of chemical weapons in 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 and in full compliance with the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

The European Union reiterates its strong concerns that the Russian Federation has not reacted to international calls 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 nerve agent of 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 14 Russian government officials and a state research institute linked to the assassination attempt. We once again urge the Russian Federation to provide substantial answers to the questions posed by 45 States Parties in the framework of Art. 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.

The Candidate Countries Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro and Ukraine, as well as 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 would kindly ask you to consider this statement as an official document and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

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