



REPUBLIC OF SLOVENIA

STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR JOŽEF DROFENIK, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SLOVENIA TO THE OPCW AT THE 104TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

General Debate

Mr. Chairperson, Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Slovenia's main views are aptly captured by the statement made on behalf of the European Union, to which we fully subscribe. Allow me, nevertheless, to make a few additional remarks.

Firstly, I wish to welcome the completion of the destruction of all declared chemical weapons earlier this year. That is a remarkable achievement that both States Parties and the organization can be proud of.

Nonetheless, it is clear that the completion of destruction does not signal the end of OPCW's mission.

We are deeply troubled by the many unanswered questions regarding chemical weapons in Syria, as well as by the lack of meaningful cooperation by Syrian authorities with the OPCW, which prevents these issues from being resolved. We are concerned that this means that Syria has retained a part of its chemical weapons programme, as further evidenced by the nine cases of chemical weapons use attributed to Syrian forces in the past ten years. We continue to call for accountability for these crimes.

We are furthermore concerned by reports of alleged use of riot control agents in combat by Russia in its war of aggression against Ukraine – in contravention with the Chemical Weapons Convention. In addition, attacks against civilian infrastructure, including chemical plants, continue to threaten the Ukrainian population and the environment.

Also worrying is the use of small scale chemical weapons for targeted attacks on individuals, such as in the Skripal and Navalny cases.

Because of these concerns, as well as the continued risk of proliferation of chemical weapons, it is crucial that the OPCW remains capable of delivering on its mandate. In order to deliver, the organization must have at its disposal adequate funding to carry out its functions. I trust that the Executive Council will bear this in mind when considering the draft programme and budget for the coming bi-annum.

I ask that this statement be considered as an official document, and posted on Catalyst and the OPCW public website.

Thank you.