

ROMANIA

NATIONAL STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR LUCIAN FĂȚU, PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF ROMANIA AT THE 28TH SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF THE STATES PARTIES

Mr. Chairperson, Mr. Director-General, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me start by expressing the appreciation of Romania for the outgoing Chairperson, Ambassador Vusimuzi Philemon Madonsela of South Africa, for his able leadership of the Conference during these complex times.

I would also like to congratulate Ambassador Suljuk Mustansar Tarar of Pakistan on his election as the new Chairperson of the Conference, and to express Romania's support during his mandate.

Romania fully supports the statement of the European Union delivered by the Spanish Presidency. Allow us to highlight some elements from the national perspective.

On 7 July 2023, OPCW confirmed that the last chemical weapons from the stockpiles declared by all States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention were verified as destroyed. This major achievement for the OPCW and the international community remains in the history of disarmament. However, significant challenges to the CWC lie ahead.

This is the tenth year since we keep deploring the fact that the Syrian Arab Republic fails to comply with the Convention. For this reason, we will persist in emphasizing that the most blatant violations of the norm have taken place through the deployment of chemical weapons within the Syrian Arab Republic. Those accountable must face consequences. Simultaneously, the Syrian Arab Republic must address outstanding issues and urgently return to full compliance with the Convention.

In this context, a tribute must be paid to the Technical teams of the OPCW, who do their work in an exemplary and professional manner, in accordance with the mandates given by the States Parties. We also extend our appreciation to Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias, and the Technical Secretariat for their professionalism, impartiality, objectivity and independence in their efforts in upholding the norm against the use of chemical weapons.

Let me remind you that almost a month ago, United Nations General Assembly First Committee reaffirmed its strong support for the Chemical Weapons Convention and the OPCW. This is essential, but not sufficient if the actions of some of the founding States Parties of the OPCW become challenging for the CWC. The invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation has had a significant adverse impact on the global stage, particularly evident in the erosion of the disarmament and non-proliferation framework. Our concern extends to potential deceptive manoeuvres regarding the possible use of riot control agents by the Russian Federation as a method of warfare, a clear violation of Article I of the Convention. Romania aligns itself with other States Parties urging Russia to strictly comply with its commitments under the Convention.

More than ever, we persist in advocating for the removal of Russian Federation's forces from the Ukrainian territory and remain steadfast in supporting the imperative and comprehensive nature of their withdrawal.

The Russian Federation's continuation of the illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine is the main reason why Romania is among the States Parties in the Eastern European Group (EEG) that support the membership of Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania in the OPCW Executive Council for the upcoming mandate.

Moreover, Ukraine, Poland and Lithuania have strong backing from the EEG as they represent and will promote the values shared by the vast majority of states in the EEG.

Among the topics on the OPCW agenda that continue to worry us because of the possible implications on the implementation of the Convention is the assassination attempt on the Russian opposition politician, Mr. Alexei Navalny. Romania once again joins the States Parties that urge the Russian Federation to reveal without delay the circumstances of the assassination attempt against Mr. Navalny. All States Parties bear the responsibility to ensure the prevention of any re-emergence of chemical weapons use. All the more, this must be done by a State Party that contributed to the conception of the Convention, one of the key instruments of the global non-proliferation architecture.

Romania was actively involved in order for the Convention and the OPCW to benefit from the favourable achievements of the Fifth Review Conference. We will continue to act in this spirit on all actionable elements. In this regard, we support the actions to bring the OPCW Tenure Policy in line with those of comparable international organizations, including from the perspective of steps to maintain essential expertise, geographical diversity and gender balance.

We are pleased with the fact that, following the discussions between all States Parties, the strengthening of the OPCW's relationship with the National Authorities is encouraged, with full respect for the Convention, as evident during their recent annual meeting.

All our actions are unfeasible without ensuring an adequate budget for the OPCW. For this reason, Romania supports the Director-General's proposed revision of the Programme and Budget for 2024 -2025. With this in mind, Romania also supports the draft decision that authorises the Technical Secretariat to conclude an agreement to join the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, from 1 January 2025, in accordance with the recommendations of the External Auditor.

Last but not least, we would like to reiterate the importance of engaging all relevant stakeholders, ranging from chemical industry to think tanks, civil society organisations and NGOs, to the OPCW work. Romania supports all the efforts in this regard for strengthening civil society's access to the activities related to the OPCW.

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

Thank you.