



**STATEMENT OF THE EUROPEAN UNION  
BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CONSUELO FEMENIA  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF SPAIN TO THE OPCW  
AT THE 28<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE CONFERENCE OF STATES PARTIES TO THE  
CHEMICAL WEAPONS CONVENTION**

**(The Hague, 27 November – 1 December 2023)**

**Agenda item 9 (d) - Addressing the threat from CW use – Ukraine, Navalny, RCA**

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

Russia's illegal, unprovoked and unjustified war of aggression against Ukraine continues unabated. It grossly violates international law, notably the UN Charter. It undermines the international rules-based order and multilateralism. It is an attack on our common principles. It damages the global economy and aggravates global food and energy security. The European Union is unwavering in its support to Ukraine and its people in its inherent right to self-defence for as long as it takes. Russia bears full responsibility for this act of aggression and all the destruction and loss of life it causes. It will be held accountable for its actions.

It is well established that Ukraine is a responsible member of the Chemical Weapons Convention and in full compliance with the Convention. As part of its war of aggression, Russia has engaged in a campaign of disinformation by spreading unsubstantiated and unfounded allegations against Ukraine and others regarding chemical weapons while 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 of using chemical weapons in assassinations and assassination attempts as well as in sowing disinformation.

Furthermore, we remain strongly concerned about reports on the use of riot control agents by Russia as a method of warfare. Such use is prohibited under Article I of the Convention. Until

today, Russia has not provided a plausible explanation for the reports, nor has it provided a convincing answer with respect to the content of a TV interview on a Russian State-controlled TV channel whereby a Russian commander proudly confirmed he was using riot control agents to “smoke out” the Ukrainians. Instead, Russia claims the exact opposite to be true and tries to put blame on the other side. This is not acceptable. Following the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine, the EU 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 is 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 for a thorough and transparent investigation into the assassination attempt on Mr. Alexei Navalny in Russia in August 2020 by a nerve agent of the “Novichok” group (a substance developed by Russia). The poisoning has been confirmed, beyond doubt, by specialised laboratories in Germany, France and Sweden, as well as by the OPCW. 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 Art. IX, paragraph 2 of the Convention on 5 October 2021, and to disclose without further delay the circumstances of this assassination attempt.

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. 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 EU territories. EU 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, 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 of the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference of the States Parties and post it on the OPCW external server and public website.

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