

Statement by Martina Filippiova, Deputy Permanent Representative of the Czech Republic to
the OPCW

at the Sixty-Sixth Meeting of the Executive Council

12 December 2024

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished delegates,

The Czech Republic fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to make a few remarks in its national capacity.

Firstly, I would like to commend Your Excellency, dear Ambassador Teran Parral, for your prompt preparatory efforts that allow us to conduct this meeting of the Executive Council.

In the same vein, allow me to express my sincere appreciation to His Excellency Director General Fernando Arias and the Technical Secretariat for all the hard and professional work during the intersessional period.

Mr Chairperson,

I would like to reiterate that Czechia appreciates the work of the OPCW on the Syrian dossier that unfortunately could not have been closed after more than 10 years due to the continued limited cooperation of Syria with the Technical Secretariat. Moreover, three new outstanding issues and two of them very serious were opened in July this year. This only shows that we do not know the full extent of the Syrian chemical weapons programme. Czechia remains concerned by the possibly undeclared production or storage facilities and further weaponisation of chemical warfare agents in Syria.

Under the International impartial and comprehensive investigation, conducted by the UN-OPCW JIM and OPCW IIT, Syria was previously attributed the use of chemical weapons on nine occasions. The use of chemical weapons by Assad's troops as well as ISIL and other non-state actors has been on multiple occasions resolutely condemned by us, as well as many other State Parties.

Chair,

Due to the outstanding issues and many remaining open questions regarding the Syrian chemical programme, Czechia continues to carefully monitor the current political and security developments in Syria. The security, safety and integrity of the declared chemical weapons research, development, production, storage and testing sites/locations also constitutes a grave concern to us under the present circumstances.

We however remain hopeful and call upon Syria to fully cooperate with the Technical Secretariat and fulfil its obligations stemming from the Convention. After all, cooperation is one of the cornerstones of the CWC.

As Czechia remains committed to ensure accountability of all perpetrators of the illegal acts of chemical weapons use, we recently joined discussions with some other States on how to enhance our common capacity thereof. The fall of the criminal Syrian regime by no means marks the end of the fight against impunity for the use of chemical weapons.

Chair,

Czechia as a staunch supporter of the OPCW remains committed to uphold the norms of the Convention. That is why we appreciate that 128 State parties put their trust in us and elected Czechia as one of the EC Members for EEG for period 2025-2027. During our term, we plan to continue supporting OPCW in its efforts, as achieving the world free of chemical weapons is our common goal and our shared responsibility. We also acknowledge that once security environment in Syria allows OPCW might need additional resources.

I would like to ask that this statement be designed an official document of this Council meeting and posted on both the external server and public website.

I thank you.