

Statement by Mr. Gatis Šneiders
Deputy Permanent Representative of the Republic of Latvia to the
Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons
at the 109th Session of the Executive Council
8-11 July 2025

Mr. Chairperson,
Director General,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and gentlemen,

Latvia aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and would like to make the following remarks in our national capacity.

In the beginning let me warmly welcome H.E. Ambassador Thomas Schieb as the Chairperson of the Executive Council and assure you on my delegations' support.

Let me also express gratitude to the Director-General, Ambassador Fernando Arias for heading the Organisation and ensuring the implementation of the Convention. Latvia reiterates its full confidence in the Technical Secretariat's professionalism and impartiality.

The Chemical Weapons Convention and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) have a major role to play in strengthening of multilateralism, security and international standards. Its mission to achieve a world free of chemical weapons remains important and must be actively supported by all States Parties. I am pleased to note that last week Latvia signed the Voluntary Contribution Agreement with the OPCW providing our financial support to the Trust Fund for Syria and Trust Fund for the Implementation of Article X. Latvia's support to the collective efforts in upholding the global norm against chemical weapons will continue.

Mr. Chairperson,

For more than three years Russia continues its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, in flagrant violation of the UN Charter. Latvia condemns in the strongest terms Russia's

actions and demands an immediate withdrawal of all Russian forces and military equipment from Ukraine within its internationally recognised borders.

We are continuously concerned by the growing number of reported cases of Russia using Riot Control Agents in Ukraine as a method of warfare, which is explicitly prohibited by the Chemical Weapons Convention. We condemn Russia's continued violations of its legally binding obligations. At the same time we praise the Ukrainian law enforcement institutions that are actively cooperating with the OPCW in documenting and investigating these cases. Today we have already three Technical Assistance Visit reports that clearly point to a pattern of riot control agent use as a method of warfare in the frontlines in Ukraine. Such pattern should not continue and the use of chemical weapons cannot be normalized. Latvia fully supports the need to take further steps to ensure compliance with international law, in particular the provisions of the Convention. We join the Ukrainian and more broadly expressed call for the urgent need to identify and hold accountable the perpetrators, organizers, and sponsors of these violations.

Mr. Chairperson,

Latvia welcomes the Technical Secretariat's commitment to monitor all relevant situations and any allegations of use of chemical weapons that could arise. We are particularly pleased to note the Syrian transitional authorities' cooperation with the OPCW. We look forward seeing Syria's return to full compliance of the Convention as soon as possible. Latvia hopes that our contribution towards the Trust Fund for Syria will foster efforts to resolve the outstanding issues related to Syria's chemical weapons dossier, removing a concrete threat to international peace and stability.

Mr. Chairperson,

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

Thank you.