

ROMANIA: NATIONAL STATEMENT BY H.E. NICOLAE COMĂNESCU,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE OPCW,  
AT THE 111TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
under Agenda item 5 - General Debate

Mr. Chairperson,  
Mr. Director – General,  
Excellencies and distinguished delegates,

Romania fully endorses the statement delivered by Cyprus on behalf of the European Union. Let me now stress in my statement a few aspects of particular interest from the national perspective.

The Chemical Weapons Convention remains one of the most successful disarmament treaties in history. Its achievements prove that determined multilateral action can eliminate entire categories of weapons of mass destruction. This very success, however, places upon us an ongoing responsibility to remain vigilant, as any re-emergence or misuse of chemical weapons undermines security everywhere.

Today, the global norm against chemical weapons is under serious strain. The Russian Federation's continued aggression against Ukraine, credible reports of chemical agents uses on the battlefield, the poisoning of Alexei Navalny, the 2018 Novichok attack in Salisbury, and the unresolved issues surrounding Syria's chemical weapons program all demand sustained attention and decisive action.

Mr. Chairperson,

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine constitutes a flagrant violation of international law and the UN Charter. Beyond the enormous suffering caused by this war, the conflict also threatens international arms control and non-proliferation regimes, including the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Romania strongly condemns Russia's aggression and the continued attacks against Ukrainian civilians and civilian infrastructure. Reports and investigations have raised serious concerns regarding the use of toxic chemicals and riot control agents as methods of warfare. Any such use constitutes a direct breach of the Convention, erodes decades of progress, and must be thoroughly investigated.

Ukraine, exercising its rights under the Convention, has requested assistance from the OPCW to clarify allegations and strengthen its capacity to respond to chemical threats. Romania commends the Technical Secretariat for its rapid and professional response in supporting Ukraine, including through technical assistance missions and laboratory analysis.

Romania reiterates the appeal voiced by Lithuania during CSP-30 on behalf of 56 States Parties, urging the Russian Federation to return to full compliance with its obligations under the Convention. We remain ready to support Ukraine and the Technical Secretariat in ensuring effective attribution and full accountability. Accountability is indispensable — without it, violations risk becoming precedents.

Mr. Chairperson,

Romania notes with deep concern the conclusions reached by France, Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden and the United Kingdom regarding the cause of Alexei Navalny's death. We underline that responsibility rests with the Russian authorities and reiterate the need for a thorough, transparent and independent clarification both of the 2020 poisoning case and the death of Alexei Navalny in 2024, in line with international law.

The confirmed use against a political opposition figure of a nerve agent from the Novichok group — as established by OPCW designated laboratories — represents not only a serious crime, but an attack on

the integrity of the Convention itself. The continued lack of meaningful cooperation and the circulation of extensive but unsubstantiated narratives do not contribute to restoring trust.

Chemical agents must never be tolerated as instruments of intimidation or assassination.

Mr. Chairperson,

Romania reiterates that the complete and verifiable elimination of Syria's chemical weapons program remains essential. Partial implementation cannot suffice when dealing with weapons of mass destruction.

We commend the Technical Secretariat for its sustained engagement and acknowledge recent efforts of cooperation from the Syrian authorities aimed at addressing outstanding discrepancies. Continued technical engagement, adequate resourcing of the Secretariat, and sustained political will are essential to achieve full resolution of this dossier.

Mr. Chairperson,

Scientific and technological advances are transforming our societies at unprecedented speed. While chemistry, biotechnology, and artificial intelligence bring immense benefits, they may also lower technical barriers to the development or misuse of toxic chemicals.

The OPCW must therefore remain forward-looking. Romania supports strengthened dialogue between scientists, policymakers and industry to promote responsible innovation and ensure that technological progress reinforces — rather than undermines — the Convention.

Mr. Chairperson,

Romania expresses its appreciation for the leadership of the Director-General and the dedication of the Technical Secretariat. In a challenging international context, their professionalism and impartiality remain essential to the credibility of this organization.

Whether overseeing destruction activities, conducting investigations, supporting assistance missions or addressing emerging technological risks, the Secretariat continues to implement its mandate with competence and integrity.

It is crucial that the TS act independently and without political pressure. Adequate and predictable resources are not merely administrative necessities — they are investments in the effectiveness of the Convention itself.

Excellencies, distinguished delegates,

The Convention is not self-enforcing. It depends on our collective resolve. When violations go unanswered, the norms weaken; when accountability is delayed, the risk of impunity grows.

Romania remains firmly committed to ensuring that chemical weapons are never again used — against soldiers, civilians or political opponents. We stand with Ukraine. We call for accountability in the Navalny case. We support the full resolution of Syria's chemical weapons dossier. And we reaffirm our confidence in the professionalism and independence of the Director-General and the Technical Secretariat.

The prohibition of chemical weapons must remain a universal and unwavering norm.

I thank you, Mr. Chairperson.

I would like to ask to circulate this statement as an official document of the 111th Session of the Executive Council and publish it both on the Catalyst platform and the OPCW's official website.