



**STATEMENT BY H.E. JURAJ PODHORSKÝ,  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC  
TO THE OPCW,  
AT THE 111<sup>th</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL  
(The Hague, 10 to 13 March 2026)**

*Agenda item 5 – General debate*

Mr. Chair,

Slovakia aligns itself with the statement delivered on behalf of the European Union.

In my national capacity, I wish to make some additional comments and observations.

As this is the last regular session of the Council under the Chairmanship of H.E. Mr. Thomas Schieb, I would like to commend his stewardship of the Council both at its formal meetings and intersessionally, steering it ably through several important processes in the past year.

Mr. Chair,

The rapid scientific developments affect all areas of life and policy, the mandate of the OPCW not being an exception. The OPCW as a science-based organisation, therefore, has to follow the developments in science and technology and adapt accordingly. In this regard, we welcome the recently published report on the work of the SAB Temporary Working Group on artificial intelligence and are looking forward to receiving the report of the SAB Temporary Working Group on chemical forensics.

Turning to institutional governance, we take note of the decision of the CSP last November to extend the mandate of the Open-Ended Working Group, while we

highlight the request to consider how its work should be undertaken «*to promote constructive dialogue and seek broad consensus among all States Parties.*». In this regard, we wish to stress our consistent position, whereby the interpretation and application of the Rules of Procedure or, in more general terms, of the working methods of the policy-making organs, should be based upon the broad support of States Parties. Such a support is a pre-condition for the efficiency and effectiveness of our work towards a world free of chemical weapons.

Mr. Chair,

Turning to the challenges to the global non-proliferation regime for chemical weapons, I wish to primarily address the situation in Ukraine and in the Syrian Arab Republic.

Slovakia continues to be alarmed by the reported systematic use of riot control agents as a method of warfare by Russia which is in contravention of the explicit prohibition contained in Art. I para 5 of the CWC. There have also been numerous reports on the use by Russian armed forces of the choking agent chloropicrin. It is troubling that the Russian Federation has so far failed to provide credible explanations or clarifications in line with Art. IX para. 2 and para. 3 of the CWC.

We have taken note of the finding of a group of five States on the circumstances of the death of Mr. Alexei Navalny. We are concerned by this incident, as it follows the history of use of toxic chemicals by the Russian State against individuals, like against the Skripals in 2018 and against Mr. Navalny in 2020.

Turning to the Syrian chemical weapons programme, it is our sincere hope that – on the basis of genuine and transparent cooperation between the Syrian authorities and the Technical Secretariat – the goal of uncovering the full extent of the Assad regime’s chemical weapons programme and of verifiably destroying it will be achieved. The 5<sup>th</sup> report of the IIT is an example of results such cooperation can yield. This report is already the fourth instance confirming CW use by the armed forces of the Assad regime. Therefore, we view it as another element underlining the troubling pattern of non-compliance with the obligations under CWC by the former Syrian government.

I thank you.