Convention for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons

110th sitting of the Executive Council

Statement by the Austrian delegation

General Debate

Chair, Excellencies, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen

Austria commends you, Ambassador Schieb, for the able stewardship of our deliberations. We also would like to congratulate the Director General of OPCW, the Deputy Director General and the Technical Secretariat for their excellent and hard work.

Austria is fully aligned with all statements delivered by Denmark on behalf of the European Union and we would like to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

Firstly, we would like to express our confidence in the integrity of the selection process for the nomination of a candidate for the post of Director General as well as the integrity of all the candidates that have put forward their candidatures. We are convinced that the Executive Council will – as is foreseen in the Convention – recommend one person for the election by the Conference of States Parties.

Secondly, we would like to thank the delegation of the Syrian Arab Republic for its intention to dismantle and destroy the chemical weapons program left by the Assad regime. This is certainly a change from the evasion, subterfuge and denial we heard in this room just one year ago. Our gratitude also goes to the State of Qatar for so ably representing Syria in our Organization. The teams from the Technical Secretariat that go to Syria have to be applauded for their professionalism, dedication and risk taking.

It is necessary that the chemical weapons program left by the Assad regime is destroyed as quickly as possible. Therefore, we joined others across the regions and cosponsored the draft decision entitled "Expedited On-Site Destruction of Any Remnants of Chemical Weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic". We have to act quickly in words and in deeds and we would regret any delays in the adoption of the decision.

Chair,

In concluding we would like to reiterate calls on the Russian Federation to stop its unprovoked and unlawful aggression against Ukraine and to answer questions concerning the poisoning of the Skripals and the death of Mr. Nawalny, whose lawyers are now put in jail by the authorities on spurious claims.

The Russian Federation should also stop misleading this Council. Civilian casualties in Ukraine are not caused by NATO missiles as the Russian Federation alleged in this forum not so long ago. Allegations by the Russian Federation that Ukraine is using Chemical weapons are not any closer the truth because they are backed up by bulky classified information and repeated in a side event as happened at a previous Executive Council meetings.

This time the Russian Federation has circulated a note EC-110/NAT.6 C-30/NAT.2 dated 30 September 2025 alleging that Ukraine has prepared terrorist attacks using chemical weapons. In the short time between the circulation – late circulation of information also seems to be a means used by the Russian Federation to confuse and to distract – it is not possible to come to a comprehensive analysis of the information. However, some details of the communication are worthy of attention. The note speaks of the - and I quote - "Donetsk People's Republic of the Russian Federation" an entity not recognized internationally. The samples were analysed by the - and I quote again - "Laboratory of Chemical and Analytical Control of the 27th Scientific Center of the Russian Ministry of Defense". It is stated in the

communication by the Russian Federation that this laboratory is certified. Certified by whom? The “Donetsk People’s Republic”? Another striking element is the fact that the plastic container supposedly containing the incriminated substances in question was found in May, so well ahead of this current sitting of the Executive Council. If there would have been an imminent danger of chemical terrorism an earlier information of the alleged threat would have been welcome. Furthermore, it is not clear why Russia is considering the captured vials and chemicals as „improvised explosive devices“ (IEDs). To be labelled as „IED“, major components need to be present and were not described, e.g. fuze, switch, explosive charge or any other means of dissemination.

Thank you for your attention.