



**OPCW**

**Executive Council**

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**GERMANY**

**STATEMENT BY H.E. AMBASSADOR CHRISTINE WEIL  
PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY  
TO THE OPCW  
AT THE FIFTY-NINTH MEETING OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL**

Mr Chairperson, Mr Director-General, distinguished colleagues,

Germany fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union presented by the head of the delegation of Bulgaria, Ambassador Krassimir Kostov.

We thank Director-General Üzümcü for his comprehensive report and commend him for his quick response to the British request for technical assistance in relation to the incident in Salisbury on 4 March 2018. We acknowledge the decision of Director-General Üzümcü to dispatch a team to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland for a technical assistance visit.

A short time ago, nobody would have thought that the OPCW would have to deal with the use of a nerve agent as a chemical weapon in the center of Europe in our days. The attack in Salisbury represents another huge challenge to the international regime of non-use of chemical weapons. We stand ready to support the OPCW in dealing with this difficult challenge.

We welcome the dedicated work of the experts from the Technical Secretariat and the laboratory in Rijswijk as well as the designated laboratories involved. We have full confidence in their professional and impartial work, especially, as it is impartiality which matters here.

We reiterate our unqualified solidarity with the United Kingdom. Together with our allies and our European partners we stand firmly on the side of the United Kingdom.

The full report on the technical assistance visit was distributed to all States Parties by the Technical Secretariat upon the request of the United Kingdom. Also upon the request of the United Kingdom, an unclassified executive summary of the report was published by the OPCW. We welcome this approach with its high degree of transparency.

The report confirms the findings of the British authorities in their national investigation: Mr Skripal and his daughter were attacked with a military-grade nerve agent. The report clearly explains how this conclusion was reached. We learn from the report that the OPCW team was able to collect blood samples from the three affected individuals, to



conduct on-site sampling of environmental samples and that it received splits of samples taken by the British authorities for comparative purposes. The report sets out in a detailed way how the chain of custody was ensured. We are convinced that all findings of the report are valid.

We reiterate our condemnation in the strongest terms of this horrific use of a military-grade nerve agent of a type developed in the former Soviet Union. We agree with the British Government's assessment that it is highly likely that the Russian Federation is responsible for the attack – there is no other plausible explanation. We therefore appeal to the Russian Federation to declare its Novichok programme and to fully cooperate with the OPCW.

The results of the technical assistance visit underline once again and very clearly that the Russian Federation needs to address the many questions that the British Government has rightly asked in the context of the Skripal case. We have made clear that it is up to the Russian Federation to help clarify the circumstances of the attack. The many Russian narratives on what happened in Salisbury do not form a basis for a serious discussion. Like in the Syrian Arab Republic case, the Russian Federation time and again invents new versions. Such an approach is not helpful in rebuilding trust, confidence and credibility, which is what, is needed now.

No use of chemical weapons can ever be justified, be it in the Syrian Arab Republic, be it in a criminal attack in Salisbury, or anywhere. Those who are responsible for such horrific acts must be held to account. We owe that to the victims. It is our shared responsibility to uphold the norms and principles of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

Thank you, Mr Chairperson

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