

AUSTRIA



PERMANENT MISSION OF AUSTRIA
TO THE UNITED NATIONS

First Committee – 80th Session

Thematic Debate – Other Weapons of Mass Destruction

Statement by the Republic of Austria

delivered by

Caroline Wörgötter

Minister Plenipotentiary

New York, 22 October 2025

Check against delivery

Mr. Chair,

Austria aligns itself with the statement by the European Union.

The strong prohibition norms on biological and chemical weapons are reinforced by the nearly universal membership to the respective treaties. We warmly welcome Comoros and Kiribati among the States Parties of the BWC. We call on all remaining States to join these landmark instruments.

While the BWC has proven its effective confidence building measures, this Treaty still lacks a robust verification mechanism. This makes the Convention vulnerable, and particularly so in light of current rapid advancements in life sciences and new and emerging technologies. At the same time, new technological means are also available to facilitate verification.

We appreciate the progress made by the Working Group on strengthening the BWC and commend its Chair for his efforts. We hope its work successfully conclude still this year. We support the establishing of an OEWG as a matter of priority to make progress on verification and compliance. The mechanisms on science and technology as well as cooperation and assistance should be adopted as soon as possible.

Mr. Chair,

The Chemical Weapons Convention embodies a strong set of norms. However, the repeated use of chemical weapons constitutes a grave concern, and particularly the large-scale use of riot control agents as a means of warfare by Russia in its illegal war of aggression against Ukraine, which is a clear violation of the Chemical Weapons Convention. We see it as imperative that States are held accountable for non-compliance with their Treaty obligations.

We remain strongly concerned also by the disinformation Russia continues to spread in the context of the BWC and CWC and we reject all such attempts that undermine peace and security and erode trust among States.

Austria commends the professionalism of the OPCW Technical Secretariat and fully supports its work in fulfilling its mandate. We welcome the cooperation of the Syrian transition authorities with the OPCW and call on them to complete as soon as possible the full elimination of Syria's chemical weapons programme, destroy any remaining material and hold those responsible for the chemical attacks accountable. Austria is also aligned with the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

Austria is proud since this year to contribute to the UN Secretary General's Mechanism for investigation of alleged use of chemical and biological weapons also with a designated laboratory. We further stress the key role of UN Security Council Resolution 1540 (2004) and will continue to contribute actively to its full implementation.

Export control regimes, notably the NSG, MTCR, Wassenaar Arrangement and the Australia Group contribute significantly to the effective implementation of the multilateral disarmament instruments. These regimes enable the sharing of technology and are instrumental to counter proliferation. We must ensure that they can function effectively.

The Hague Code of Conduct with its 145 subscribing states is becoming even more important with the exponential increase in space launches. The Code builds trust and provides a platform to address issues related to ballistic missiles and space launch systems. Subscribers gain important insights into space launch developments. We call on all remaining States to join the Code.

I thank you.