



European Union

Statement on the occasion of the IAEA Board of Governors

Vienna, 04 – 08 March 2019

Agenda item 2: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety

Madame Chair,

1. I have the honour of speaking on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey[§], North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Norway*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.
2. The EU thanks the Director General for the “Nuclear Safety Review 2019” as listed under GOV/2019/3.

Madame Chair,

3. Nuclear safety is an important matter for the European Union and its Member States, not only within the territory of the EU but also across neighbouring regions. The increase in new nuclear programmes, including decommissioning, presents challenges and opportunities to enhance nuclear safety. It is in the interest of the international community to continuously improve nuclear safety. International collaboration clearly provides benefits to nuclear safety by providing the opportunity to share experiences and best practices. Through our technical, diplomatic and policy experts discussing approaches and refining practices over time the global nuclear safety framework is continuously strengthened. It is crucial that we maintain effective communication, challenge each other and consider the safety implications of new technologies. We have made great progress over the last sixty years, but there is no room for complacency as we face the future.
4. The EU, through its Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC), has allocated € 325 million over the period 2014-2020 in support of third countries, especially EU neighbouring countries, to establish, improve and promote high level of nuclear safety, radiation protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards, as for example in Ukraine and Belarus. This is an example of how seriously the EU and its Member States take nuclear safety matters – putting words into practical actions and effecting positive and tangible change. The EU also supports and commends the efforts of the IAEA to help build capacity in response to Member States' needs and urges all IAEA Member States with nuclear power and radiation technology, especially embarking countries, to make full use of Agency Safety Standards and become active Contracting Parties to all relevant international nuclear safety conventions.

[§] Candidate Country

* Candidate Countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

* Iceland and Norway are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

5. The EU has since 2011 provided its expertise via comprehensive risk and safety assessments, so-called stress tests, in a number of neighbouring countries, with a view to identifying necessary upgrades building a more robust and sustainable nuclear safety framework worldwide, sharing good practice, and opening a constructive dialogue. To this end, we urge these countries to properly implement the findings and recommendations of these assessments in a timely manner. We reiterate our support to them in this effort.

Madame Chair,

6. The EU Member States welcome the International Symposium on Communicating Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies to the Public, held in Vienna in October 2018, which underscored the importance of transparency in maintaining trust and confidence between authorities, the public and the international community in the context of incidents or emergencies that may involve any IAEA Member State's.
7. Building effective nuclear emergency preparedness and response (EPR) capabilities should be a priority for every IAEA Member State. We would like to reiterate our commitment to the international community to uphold the principles of transparency and responsibility to citizens when dealing with incident and emergency scenarios. We applaud the IAEA's recent upgrading of the secure platform Member States use to exchange information. The channels used to share notifications and monitoring data between EU Member States and the IAEA are a valuable part of our emergency preparedness and response, and we encourage all IAEA Member States to use this interface both in the event of an incident or emergency and in a business as usual context. In the interest of transparency, the EU and its Member States encourage timely and transparent reporting, including through IAEA communication channels, on all relevant follow up activities undertaken. EU Member States consider it crucial that information on radiological incidents and emergencies, including those that have an actual, potential or perceived radiological significance for more than one State, is shared directly and through the IAEA, and communicated with a view to satisfying concerns, including those from public.

Madame Chair,

8. The Convention on Nuclear safety (CNS) is a key international instrument in strengthening and expanding international nuclear safety cooperation and provides a legally binding framework for global overview and mutual assessment of safety work in countries having civil NPPs. The implementation of CNS objectives, including VDNS principles, remains a priority for the EU. The EU stands ready to actively participate in the 8th Review meeting of the Contracting Parties for the CNS and encourages all IAEA Member States to do so. We encourage also all Contracting Parties to consider the guidance for reporting on the implementation of VDNS principles in the context of CNS in their next national reports as provided in the letter of the President of the 8th CNS Review Meeting sent to the Contracting Parties on December 13, 2018.
9. The EU/Euratom and its Member States recognise the value of self-assessment, peer review and targeted training to avoid complacency and improve nuclear safety including regulatory infrastructure, as appropriate. In 2018 the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) or their follow-ups were conducted in the Netherlands, Hungary, Austria, and Luxembourg. France, Luxembourg and Bulgaria hosted IAEA Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation (ARTEMIS) missions. An ARTEMIS mission took place also in Italy in June 2018, as a follow up of a similar mission conducted in the country in 2017 at request of the implementer of the Italian decommissioning programme. Spain was the first country to host a combined IRRS and ARTEMIS mission. We understand that a combined IRRS and ARTEMIS mission presents challenges; we therefore encourage the IAEA to

improve the coordination of combined missions and to continue refining these services using the lessons learned from relevant past experiences. Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) peer review missions or their follow-ups visited Finland, Slovenia, Spain and the UK. We encourage all IAEA Member States, especially those that have not done so recently and embarking countries, to request peer review missions which are relevant to their programmes in particular in the areas not previously reviewed and to implement robust follow up arrangements in a timely manner and publish reports from the review missions.

10. In 2018, the EU/Euratom and its Member States completed the first Topical Peer Review on Ageing Management of Nuclear Power Plants and Research Reactors under the Euratom Nuclear safety Directive. The report with the review findings was made public in November 2018. . The completion of this topical peer review practically demonstrates the EU's approach to continuous improvement in nuclear safety, including the development of follow up action plans. We invite the IAEA to make use of the outcomes of the EU topical peer review when developing and revising IAEA safety standards and safety review mission guidelines, as appropriate. We are ready to share our experience at the topical session dedicated to ageing management to be organised during the 8th Review Meeting of the Nuclear Safety Convention in 2020.

Madame Chair,

11. Experience of EU Member States shows the importance of the need prior to embarking on new nuclear power programmes or radiation technology, to carefully evaluate all implications, including technical, financial and human aspects not only of the construction but also of decommissioning and management of all types of radioactive waste and spent fuel.
12. We urge all IAEA Member States to take appropriate steps to avoid imposing undue burdens on future generations and stress the need to seek and apply safe, practicable and environmentally acceptable solutions for the long term safe and responsible decommissioning of nuclear facilities and management of all types of radioactive waste and spent fuel. We encourage Member States to develop final disposal solutions, taking into account the safety implications of long-term storage of spent fuel or radioactive waste, and implement these solutions in a timely and coherent manner with their national strategy of waste management.
13. In this spirit, the EU welcomes the efforts made by the IAEA to tackle the issues surrounding the management of ageing nuclear infrastructure and workforces to ensure the highest levels of safety not only for the present but also for the future. The EU notes several important decommissioning milestones have been reached across its Member States. One of the earliest nuclear sites in the United Kingdom, Bradwell, has entered a care and maintenance state marking an important milestone in the clearance of the site. Germany has an active plan for ensuring the right skills are in place for the decommissioning of its nuclear fleet. The EU continues to provide financial and technical assistance to Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia to decommission their nuclear reactors.

Madame Chair,

14. The EU commends efforts made by EU Member States and the IAEA to increase workforce diversity and inclusion. We can all acknowledge that diverse teams create greater diversity of thought through embracing different views, opinions and ideas - which is key to harnessing the next level of innovation and productivity in the nuclear sector.
15. We welcome the IAEA's efforts to further scope the interface between nuclear safety and security, and welcome continued work in this area, particularly around the development

of a robust safety and security culture. Our focus on safety also stretches into discussions related to new nuclear technologies, such as Small, Medium Sized or Advanced Modular Reactors, which may be transportable. We note the priority the IAEA attaches to developing a strategic approach regarding the development and deployment of transportable reactors. We recognise the efforts of the IAEA to remain at the forefront of this curve, through the establishment of the Task Force on SMRs, a review and assessment of SMRs and the SMRs Regulators' Forum. We recall the request to the Secretariat in the 2018 General Conference resolution on Nuclear and Radiation Safety to hold, in the fourth quarter of 2018, a comprehensive briefing on all their work on Transportable Nuclear Power Plants and look forward to receiving such a briefing.

16. With these comments, the EU takes note of the Director General's report on "*Nuclear Safety Review 2019*" as contained in GOV/2019/3.

17. Thank you, Madame Chair.