Mr Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Iceland, Serbia, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Norway, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia.

2. The EU would like to thank Director General Amano for the Safeguards Implementation Report for 2016 as contained in GOV/2017/23, and to express its appreciation for the Agency’s dedicated efforts in strengthening the international safeguards system worldwide. The EU also thanks DDG Varjoranta for the technical briefing held on 24 May. The EU is of the view that the SIR should report on the Department’s activities to verify and monitor the JCPOA in the background to the Safeguards Statement section of the report (Section B).

Mr Chairman,

3. The EU strongly supports the Agency’s efforts to strengthen the effectiveness and improve the efficiency of its safeguards system. Through comprehensive safeguards agreements (CSAs), the Agency is mandated to verify that States’ declarations are correct and complete, that is to confirm that all nuclear material in these States remains in peaceful activities. Nothing should be done to undermine the authority of the Agency to deliver its mandate.

4. While it is recognised that the implementation of safeguards strengthening measures under the legal authority of the CSA enhances the Agency’s ability to detect undeclared nuclear material and activities to a limited extent, only the Additional Protocol (AP) provides the Agency with the necessary tools to provide credible assurance of the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities. Universal adherence to both instruments will strengthen the non-proliferation regime and contribute to further enhancing international security.

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§ Candidate Country
* Candidate Countries Former Yugoslav Republic of 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 notes in this regard that Resolution 1887 of the UNSC calls upon all States to “sign, ratify and implement an additional protocol, which together with comprehensive safeguards agreements constitute essential elements of the IAEA safeguards system”. The EU also notes that Action 28 of the Final Document of the 2010 NPT Review Conference “encourages all States parties not yet having done so to conclude and to bring into force additional protocols as soon as possible, and to implement them provisionally pending their entry into force.”

6. The EU notes the progress reported in the 2016 SIR regarding the entry into force of AP’s, which were first signed 20 years ago. The EU welcomes the efforts of the Secretariat and Member States to work towards universalisation of the AP. APs for all EU Member States have been in force since 2004, and the EU considers that an AP, together with a CSA, represents the current verification standard based on Article III of the NPT. The EU continues to call on the remaining NPT States parties to bring into force their CSAs and on all States that have not yet done so to bring into force an AP as soon as possible.

7. The EU also recalls the Board’s 2005 Decision that small quantity protocols (SQPs) should remain part of the safeguards system and that their standardised text should be modified to reinforce the Agency’s safeguards. The EU notes that at the end of 2016 there were 38 States with operative SQPs still to be amended. The EU urges those remaining States which have not yet amended or rescinded their SQPs to accelerate their efforts.

Mr Chairman,

8. The EU has been supporting the development and implementation of integrated safeguards approaches that allow for the optimised combination of safeguards measures available under the CSA and the AP, thereby increasing both effectiveness and efficiency. The EU welcomes the fact that by the end of 2016 tailor-made State-level safeguards approaches were implemented in 57 States with a CSA and an AP as well as a broader safeguards conclusion. The EU recognises that both effectiveness and efficiency gains are higher for such States.

9. At the same time, State-level safeguards approaches should be developed and implemented for all States with a safeguards agreement of any type in force. The EU therefore welcomes the fact that in 2016 the Agency not only completed updating the State-level safeguards approaches for the remaining States in the original group of 53 under integrated safeguards, but also developed State-level safeguards approaches for eight States with a CSA and an AP in force and a broader conclusion, two States with a CSA and an AP in force but without a broader conclusion, and one State with a voluntary offer agreement and an additional protocol in force.

10. The EU supports the continued improvement of effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards implementation, notably through the implementation of State-level safeguards approaches. The EU notes that increasing the Secretariat’s productivity is a key objective in this context. At the 2014 September Board of Governors meeting the EU welcomed the Supplementary Document to the
Director General’s report on the conceptualization and development of safeguards implementation at the State level. We also commend the Secretariat for the series of Technical Meetings held with Member States since 2014. The EU welcomes the information provided in the SIR on the Secretariat’s ongoing work in this area. We look forward to the continued development and implementation of State-level safeguards approaches, in close consultation with the State and/or regional authority concerned.

Mr Chairman,

11. We welcome the fact that the IAEA and the EU’s Regional System for Accountancy and Control, EURATOM Safeguards, continue to develop their cooperation arrangements in the framework of the New Partnership Approach. This enables the IAEA to more fully use EURATOM’s verification activities and thereby optimise the use of its resources. The close cooperation between EURATOM and the IAEA, exemplified by the joint inspection of installations underpinned by the joint management and use of common instruments and tools, makes for effective and efficient safeguards, and demonstrates the EU Member States’ continuing respect for their international non-proliferation obligations. In this regard, we encourage the continued joint training of IAEA and EURATOM inspectors. We look forward to re-invigorating and fully exploring all their aspects based on the longstanding reliable cooperation and in the light of State-level integrated safeguards approaches being applied for the countries of the EU.

12. The EU actively supports the Agency’s safeguards system both through the EC Safeguards Support Programme, which is one of the biggest support programmes in this field, and through the support programmes of some of its Member States.

13. The EU recognises the need to strengthen the Agency’s capability to provide credible and timely analysis of safeguards samples. We welcome the fact that additional laboratories for environmental or nuclear material sample analysis in several States are currently undergoing qualification, and encourage the involvement of qualified laboratories in developing countries.

14. The EU acknowledges the thorough manner in which the Agency is strengthening the Safeguards information system through the Mosaic project. We also note the efforts to improve quality management systems within the Department of Safeguards including information protection. We greatly appreciate these efforts. New IT and management tools of this nature have helped significantly to improve productivity and we expect their effects to be felt in the years to come.

15. The EU welcomes the continuous efforts by the Secretariat to present a more detailed and transparent SIR to Member States. The EU stresses the importance of regular dialogue so that States are aware of safeguards issues as they arise and can thereby take timely actions to address them. The SIR also notes some restrictions on the ability of inspectors to access facilities and material.
16. We would also like to reiterate that we remain firmly committed to ensuring that the Agency’s nuclear verification programme continuously receive the necessary resources to enable the Agency to provide assurances that States are complying with their obligations under relevant Safeguards agreements.

17. We note the medium to long term challenge of financing and resourcing the safeguards function of the Agency, including the maintenance of a qualified and trained cadre of inspectors. In this regard it is important that the IAEA continues to benefit from the full experience that trained inspectors have gained. Efficiency gains, implementation of State Level Approaches, stronger SSACs and innovative use of IT will further help address this challenge. We encourage the Secretariat to engage with Member States on all these issues so that we, together with the Secretariat, ensure that the optimised combination of safeguards measures available under the CSA and the AP, which underpin the NPT, is reliably and sustainably resourced in the future.

18. With these comments, the EU supports the recommended Board action set forth in GOV/2017/23.

Thank you, Mr Chairman.