



European Union

Statement on the occasion of the IAEA Board of Governors

Vienna, 15 – 19 September 2019

Agenda item 4: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear, radiation, transport and waste safety

READING VERSION

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[§], Republic of 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 report "Nuclear and Radiation Safety" as contained in GOV/2019/27 – GC(63)/4.

Madame Chair,

3. The European Union and its Member States attach great importance to high standards of nuclear safety, not only within the territory of the EU but also across neighbouring regions. It is crucial that we maintain effective and open communication, challenge each other in adapting our approaches to ensure safety as new technologies emerge. As the late Director General Amano once stated "ensuring nuclear safety is key to harnessing the many benefits of nuclear and radiation technologies Complacency must be avoided at all costs".
4. The EU, through its instruments, contributes to the improvement of nuclear safety levels worldwide and has allocated € 325 million over the period 2014-2020 in support of third countries. We have also worked with neighbouring countries to conduct so called 'stress tests', with a view to identifying necessary upgrades, sharing best practice, and opening constructive dialogue and we encourage the countries to implement recommended actions in a timely manner. 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 to make use of the Agency Safety Standards in a comprehensive manner and become Contracting Parties to all relevant international nuclear safety conventions.

Madame Chair,

5. The Convention on Nuclear safety (CNS) is a key international instrument in strengthening international nuclear safety cooperation and provides a legally binding framework for global overview and mutual assessment of safety work in countries having civil NPPs. We encourage Member States that are Contracting Parties to the CNS to actively participate in the review

[§] Candidate Country

* Candidate Countries the Republic of 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.

process and to make use of the guidance provided by the President of the 8th CNS Review Meeting in her letters. Furthermore, we reaffirm that the implementation of the CNS objectives, including the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety on the principles for the implementation of the objective of the CNS to prevent accidents and mitigate radiological consequences, remains a priority for the EU and request the Secretariat to continue to facilitate information exchange on this topic and finalize the publication of the related technical documents.

6. In 2018, the EU Member States and other participating countries completed a Topical Peer Review on Ageing Management of Nuclear Power Plants and Research Reactors and we invite the IAEA to make use of this review outcomes, as well as of the outcomes of the Fifth ENSREG European Nuclear Safety Conference, when developing and revising IAEA safety standards and safety review mission guidelines, as appropriate and facilitate the sharing of the relevant experience amongst interested IAEA MS.
7. The EU/Euratom and its Member States recognise the value of self-assessment, peer review and targeted training to avoid complacency, compare actual practices and continuously improve nuclear safety. Since September 2018, the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) or their follow-ups were conducted in Luxembourg, Germany, Estonia and Hungary. The Netherlands and Estonia hosted the IAEA Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation (ARTEMIS) mission. Spain was the first country to host a combined IRRS and ARTEMIS mission in October 2018. We understand that a combined IRRS and ARTEMIS mission presents challenges; we therefore encourage the Secretariat to improve the coordination and integration of its peer review missions, including the combined IRRS-ARTEMIS missions, and to continue refining these services using lessons learned from relevant past experiences, in close cooperation with Member States, with a view to improve their effectiveness and efficiencies.

Madame Chair,

8. Experience of EU Member States shows the importance of, prior to starting new nuclear power or radiation technology programmes, the need to carefully evaluate all implications, including the technical, financial, human and environmental aspects not only of the construction and operation, but also the arrangements for decommissioning and management of radioactive contaminated land and all types of radioactive waste. This also includes ensuring that the IAEA's safety standards and security guidance are implemented in a targeted and proportionate manner. To this purpose, we encourage the Secretariat to continue improving the ease of use of the Agency's safety standards set, consisting of 126 standards established and 60 in development, of which 52 are updates or revisions of existing ones.
9. We also 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 safe and responsible decommissioning of nuclear facilities and the management of all types of radioactive waste and spent fuel. We encourage Member States to develop final disposal solutions, taking into account safety implications of long-term storage of spent fuel or radioactive waste.
10. The EU welcomes the efforts made by the IAEA to tackle the issues surrounding the management of ageing nuclear infrastructure and workforces to ensure high levels of safety not only for the present but also for the future.

Madame Chair,

11. We welcome the IAEA's efforts to further scope the interface between nuclear safety and security, particularly around the development of a robust safety and security culture. Our focus on safety also stretches into discussions related to research reactors, nuclear fuel cycle facilities and new nuclear technologies, such as Small and Medium Sized (SMRs) or Modular Reactors, including transportable NPP's. We encourage the Secretariat to continue addressing safety and security aspects of SMRs throughout their life cycle when developing safety standards.

12. In light of recently reported cases involving orphan sources we encourage Member States to make use of the Agency's services and seek assistance, where appropriate, when dealing with issues related to the control or regaining of control over such sources.
13. The EU strongly believes that developing safe, technically and economically feasible alternatives to the use of High Activity Radioactive Sources is key to reducing the safety and security risk of certain nuclear applications. We appreciate that there are cost considerations for Member States when choosing which path to pursue, but are confident this balance will shift as technology develops.
14. Building effective emergency preparedness and response (EPR) capabilities should be a priority for every Member State. We reiterate our commitment to the international community to uphold the principles of transparency and responsibility to citizens and the environment when dealing with incident and emergency scenarios, including those that have an actual, potential or perceived radiological significance for more than one State.
15. It is also essential that the protective measures during the early phase of a nuclear accident and radiological emergencies of transboundary radiological significance are consistent and coordinated between the countries that might be affected. We therefore support regional efforts and work on improved cross-border approaches to coordinate protective measures carried out in the framework of HERCA and WENRA, arrangements under the Nordic Flag Book, as well as relevant IAEA initiatives.
16. Finally, the EU commends efforts made by EU Member States and the IAEA to increase workforce diversity and inclusion as well as gender parity.
17. With these comments, the EU takes note of the Director General's report on "Nuclear and Radiation Safety" as contained in GOV/2019/27 – GC(63)/4.
18. Thank you, Madame Chair.