



European Union

**Statement on the occasion of the 64th
General Conference of the IAEA**

Vienna, 21 September 2020

Mr. President,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, the Republic of Moldova. We would like to congratulate Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi for his first ordinary session of the General Conference as Director General.
2. Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of this 64th General Conference.
3. At the outset, the European Union would like to commend Director General Grossi for leading the Secretariat's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. We highly appreciate the quick action taken by the Agency in ensuring the continuation of its activities under these prevailing circumstances, including the worldwide implementation of the IAEA's safeguards mandate. The Agency has implemented necessary measures in a timely manner to protect its staff while providing an uninterrupted assistance to and building capacities of Member States, including through the provision of detection equipment and diagnostic kits, as well as guidance and training. We welcome and encourage the IAEA's continuous coordination with WHO and FAO, as well as its active involvement in the COVID-19 UN Crisis Management Team. We also appreciate the extra-budgetary and in-kind contributions by Member States, including from the EU, in this regard.
4. The EU attaches great importance to the IAEA's core mandate in the fields of non-proliferation, nuclear energy, nuclear safety, nuclear security and technical cooperation.
5. The EU considers the empowerment of women and gender mainstreaming to be important objectives. We welcome the Director General's commitment in this regard and encourage the IAEA to further increase the representation of women

* 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 is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

in all professional categories and management positions within the Secretariat, and to continue to strengthen systematic mainstreaming of gender equality aspects into the Agency's programmes and projects. In this regard, we hope that the new Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme will contribute to the emergence of a new generation of female leaders in nuclear sciences, technologies and non-proliferation around the world.

6. The EU fully supports and encourages the Secretariat's efforts to ensure cross-functional cooperation in all IAEA activities. We consider that good coordination and cooperation between the various Agency Departments is crucial to the efficient and results-based delivery of programmes.
7. The EU and its Member States also emphasise the importance of predictable, sustainable, and affordable budgets for the Agency as a whole. While it remains vital that the Agency has the resources to meet the needs of Member States, this must be balanced through the continued identification of efficiencies to ensure the affordability of national contributions.

Mr. President,

8. The EU is fully committed to nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. The EU reiterates its firm support for the full, complete, and effective implementation of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) as the cornerstone of the international non-proliferation regime and the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, and vital for further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We continue to support the universalisation of the NPT and call upon States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States.
9. We would like to underline the importance of the IAEA safeguards in the implementation of the NPT as well as the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council in cases of non-compliance. The EU further recognises the serious proliferation challenges, which continue to be a threat to international peace and security, and the need to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to them.

Mr. President,

10. The EU reaffirms its resolute commitment to and continued support for the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. We deeply regret the withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the re-imposed sanctions, and we call on all countries to refrain from taking actions that impede the implementation of the agreement. The EU continues to uphold its JCPOA commitments, including on sanctions lifting. The EU remains gravely concerned about Iran's continued accumulation of low enriched uranium now more than tenfold in excess of the JCPOA limit and the fact that its maximum enrichment level is above the limit set by the JCPOA. We also remain very concerned about the continued enrichment in Fordow and the expansion of Iran's centrifuge R&D activities as these activities significantly increase Iran's enrichment capacity. All aforementioned activities are inconsistent with the JCPOA and have severe proliferation implications. We strongly urge Iran to refrain from any further actions that are inconsistent with its JCPOA commitments and return to full JCPOA implementation without delay. We support the efforts of JCPOA participants in addressing these issues within the JCPOA, including by the Joint Commission. The EU welcomes the Director General's updates on the implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement and the Additional Protocol in Iran, and the efforts undertaken to clarify all open questions.

11. The EU remains concerned by the continued development of the DPRK's nuclear programme and urges the DPRK to embark on a credible path towards a complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation, and to take concrete steps in this direction. Until then, the EU will continue to strictly enforce existing sanctions. We encourage the DPRK to engage in meaningful discussions with all relevant parties as the international community works towards lasting peace and security on the Korean Peninsula. The EU urges the DPRK to comply with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and return to the NPT and to IAEA Safeguards at an early date and to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test Ban Treaty (CTBTO). The EU expects that this General Conference send clear messages in this regard in its resolution to be adopted on the DPRK. The EU continues to attach the highest importance to maintaining an essential role for the IAEA in

verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme and welcomes and supports the Secretariat's intensified efforts to enhance its readiness to do so.

12. Recalling the resolution of the Board of Governors of 9 June 2011, which concluded that the Syrian Arab Republic is in non-compliance with its Safeguards Agreement, the EU urges the Syrian Arab Republic to cooperate promptly and transparently with the Agency to resolve all outstanding issues including through concluding and implementing an Additional Protocol as soon as possible.

13. It remains a strategic priority of the EU to support peace and stability in the entire Middle East. The EU remains committed to the implementation of the Resolution on the Middle East adopted at the 1995 NPT Review Conference. The EU continues to strongly support the Action Plan on the Middle East agreed at the 2010 NPT Review Conference and reaffirms its full support for the establishment of a Zone free of nuclear and all other weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems in the Middle East, as agreed by NPT States Parties. The EU is of the view that such Zones should be established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among all the States of the region concerned. We believe that the path for action as set out in the 2010 Action Plan remains the most promising basis on which to proceed. The EU is funding a UNIDIR project to record and examine efforts to establish a Zone between 1995 and 2015, and to compile ideas for the way forward.

Mr. President,

14. The EU thanks the Deputy Director General for Safeguards and in particular the Agency's nuclear inspectors, for ensuring continued implementation of safeguards in the difficult times of Covid-19. The health and safety of inspectors was and must remain a priority in the decision making process. While welcoming the achievements so far, we encourage the Agency to monitor the evolving situation closely and ensure strategic outlook in order to maintain preparedness. We also underline the efforts and hard work of EU Member States and EURATOM to ensure inspection activities despite all the restrictions.

15. Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements together with the Additional Protocol constitute the current verification standard and the EU continues to call for their universalisation without delay. We particularly welcome the entry-into-force of a Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement and an Additional Protocol for Benin, and of an Additional Protocol for Ethiopia. In this respect, the EU welcomes the fact that 136 States have the Additional Protocol in force and also notes that another 14 States have signed an Additional Protocol but have yet to bring it into force. The EU furthermore urges the remaining 31 States which have not yet amended the Small Quantities Protocol (SQP), to accelerate their efforts in this respect or apply the CSA in full, especially those States that are already in the process of building a Nuclear Power Plant or a research reactor.
16. The EU strongly supports the continued improvement of effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards implementation through implementation of State-level Approaches (SLAs). A consistent and universal application of the SLAs strengthens global non-proliferation efforts.
17. For the EU, the close cooperation between Euratom and the IAEA is conducive to effective and efficient safeguards in the EU as well as beyond. The EU is actively supporting the Agency's safeguards system through the EC Safeguards Support Programme, the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation and through Member States' Support Programmes.

Mr. President,

18. The EU and its Member States attach utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety. Euratom has over the past decades established and further developed an advanced, legally-binding and enforceable nuclear legal and regulatory framework applicable in all EU Member States. The EU has been supporting the development of science-based expertise in nuclear safety and continues to provide its expertise via so-called stress tests in a number of neighbouring countries and calls upon those countries to properly implement the findings and recommendations of these assessments in a full and timely manner. Following the first Topical Peer Review on Ageing

Management of Nuclear Power Plants and Research Reactors, the report and the respective action plans on the implementation of the challenges and country specific findings have been published. We invite the IAEA to make use of the outcomes of this topical peer review, as appropriate. Furthermore, we stand ready to share our experience at the topical session dedicated to ageing management to be held during the 8th CNS Review Meeting.

19. We re-affirm our support to the implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), 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, which remains a priority for the EU. We encourage all CNS Contracting parties, especially embarking countries, to address their nuclear safety issues independently of the postponement of the 8th CNS Review Meeting. We also support the implementation of the Joint Convention and we invite all Member States to demonstrate their commitment to develop and implement disposal as a safe solution for radioactive waste management.

20. We encourage all IAEA Member States, especially those that have not done so recently as well as embarking countries, to request peer review missions relevant to their programmes, timely implement recommendations and invite follow-up missions, and publish full mission's reports. We also encourage all IAEA Member States to develop, maintain and improve their nuclear and radiation safety infrastructure and related scientific research and technical capabilities, including knowledge building. National legislations relevant to nuclear safety should take due consideration of international legal instruments pertaining to nuclear safety. In addition, the process of planning and construction of nuclear facilities should be underpinned, inter alia, by dialogue with neighbouring countries and effective and transparent public communication. In this regard, we encourage the continued use of existing international mechanisms enabling timely access to information and public participation.

21. For the last three years, the EU and its Member States remain concerned by radiological releases in the atmosphere and call on all IAEA Member States to

provide for and exchange information through bilateral channels as well as the IAEA Incident and Emergency Centre or through other existing relevant networks. Such a proactive approach would allow satisfying the concerns of the international community and improve the scientific assessment and understanding of this type of event.

Mr. President,

22. The EU stresses the need to continue strengthening nuclear security worldwide in order to ensure continued access to the many benefits of peaceful uses of nuclear technology. To that end, we highlight the importance of the universalisation of the adherence by Member States to the amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A-CPPNM) and of the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) and call upon all Member States to fully implement these treaties. We are fully committed to engage actively and work with other Parties and the Secretariat in the preparation of the forthcoming 2021 Review Conference of the Parties to the Amended CPPNM.
23. We also underline the importance of UN Security Council Resolutions 1540 and 2325. In the context of the EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction, we are actively supporting international initiatives, which contribute to strengthening nuclear security. For the period 2014-2020, the EU has dedicated more than € 145million to the EU's regional Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Centres of Excellence initiative.
24. The EU and its Member States welcome the outcomes of the 2020 International Conference on Nuclear Security, including the related Ministerial Declaration reflecting the political will of Member States and adding further value and political guidance to the process of strengthening nuclear security globally.
25. The EU strongly supports the IAEA's central role in improving the global nuclear security framework by strengthening international cooperation and providing technical assistance to Member States. We call on Member States to make full

use of the IAEA's nuclear security advisory services. Together with the bilateral contributions from its Member States, the European Union remains a major donor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund with nearly €50 million committed for the period of 2009–2020 through the seven successive EU Council Decisions in support of IAEA's nuclear security activities. Another multi-annual contribution agreement is currently being discussed. This funding has helped the Agency to assist countries to upgrade and ensure the physical protection of selected facilities, to improve their national regulatory infrastructure and thus enhance the use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We encourage further Member States to join us in supporting this important work by contributing to the Nuclear Security Fund.

Mr. President,

26. The EU and its Member States reaffirm our longstanding and strong support for the IAEA's Technical Cooperation (TC) Programme, including through the TC Fund and other supplementary mechanisms. The European Union supports the IAEA and IAEA Member States in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, both financially, being the second largest contributor to the TC Programme with an average contribution of €20 million annually, and also through technical expertise and know-how. We fully appreciate the Agency's role in promoting safe, secure and sustainable use of nuclear technologies for peaceful purposes. We underline the importance of a results-based delivery of the TC projects in a transparent and non-discriminatory manner to ensure tangible socio-economic impact, address Member States priorities as well as their efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change. In this regard, we commend the participation of Director General Grossi in the COP25-Chile, in Madrid, and welcome the organisation of this year's Scientific Forum on "Nuclear Power and the Clean Energy Transition".

Mr. President,

27. The EU remains firmly committed to the benefits of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle while ensuring that high standards of safety and guidance on security as well as safeguards are implemented in a graded approach to protect people and the environment. We have supported the establishment of the IAEA

Low Enriched Uranium Bank contributing around € 25 million, of which € 20 million for acquiring the LEU and around € 4.4 million for nuclear safety and security related measures. We noted with satisfaction that the IAEA LEU Bank became operational in October 2019, with the successful delivery of the LEU by France and Kazakhstan and appreciate the efficient management of the IAEA staff involved in the project. The EU looks forward to a successful operation of the LEU bank for the benefit of all IAEA Member States.

28. The EU notes that projections for global installed nuclear power capacity indicate an increase by 25% by 2030 in the high case and a decrease by 8% in the low case, with different regional developments. We acknowledge that all countries have their sovereign right to decide whether or not to include nuclear power as part of their own energy mix and that Member States pursue different approaches to address energy security and climate change. In this regard, we note the outcomes of the International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power held in Vienna in 2019.

29. The IAEA's Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf (NA Laboratories) contribute essential work in this respect. We underline the importance of their modernisation and welcome the progress made under the ReNuAL and ReNuAL+ projects in responding to growing Member States' needs and assisting their efforts to achieve the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The EU strongly supports the Agency's activities to develop radiation and nuclear technologies and their application for the achievement of the SDGs.

30. The assistance to Member States to combat zoonotic disease outbreaks needs to continue. The IAEA's considerable experience from previous outbreaks such as SARS and Ebola has contributed significantly to enhancing assistance to Member States' efforts to address the current Covid-19 pandemic and tackling the threat it poses to human health and well-being. Against this background, we take note with interest of the ZODIAC initiative by the Director General regarding the establishment of a system to counter any further transboundary zoonotic diseases by using nuclear and nuclear derived techniques, in cooperation with the WHO, the FAO and other relevant international organisations. We hope that the project

will serve as a coordinated approach providing a unified platform to support global response to future pandemics.

31. We support the Agency's efforts in raising awareness on all aspects of peaceful uses of nuclear science and technologies. We positively note the IAEA's continuous engagement in the global dialogue on the 2030 Agenda, the SDGs, and the role it plays in climate change adaptation and mitigation. The EU strongly supports the activities of the Agency in this regard.

Finally Mr. President,

32. The EU looks forward to a successful General Conference and would like to assure you of its full support.

I thank you.