



European Union

**EU Statement on
65th General Conference**

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

Vienna, 20-24 September 2021

Mr. President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey[§], the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Iceland*, Ukraine and the Republic of Moldova.

Let me congratulate you, Mr. President, on your election as President of this 65th General Conference and pay tribute to the IAEA Director General and his staff for their work in these difficult times.

The EU attaches great importance to the IAEA's core mandate in the fields of nuclear safeguards, safety, security, nuclear energy and technical cooperation.

We emphasise the importance of a predictable, sustainable, and affordable budget for the Agency as a whole, enabling it to meet the needs of Member States, without over-reliance on voluntary funding.

The EU encourages the Secretariat to continue to promote a modern and future-oriented human resource policy, to increase the representation of women in all professional categories and management positions to achieve parity at all levels, and systematically mainstream gender aspects into the Agency's programmes and projects. We welcome Director General's initiatives in this regard as well as the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, to which the EU and its Member States have contributed financially.

[§] 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 is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Mr. President,

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, the essential foundation for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament, in accordance with Article VI of the NPT, and for further development of the applications of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. We continue to support the universalisation of the NPT and call upon the States that have not yet done so to join the NPT as non-nuclear weapon States.

We would like to underline the importance of IAEA safeguards in the implementation of the non-proliferation obligations under the NPT as well as the primary responsibility of the UN Security Council to address cases of non-compliance. Proliferation crises continue to be a threat to international and regional peace and security, and we need to find peaceful and diplomatic solutions to them.

Mr. President,

The EU reaffirms at this critical point in time its resolute commitment to and continued support for the full and effective implementation of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The EU acknowledges the issues connected to the unilateral withdrawal of the United States from the JCPOA and the reimposition of sanctions by it. Alongside the verified full implementation by Iran of its nuclear-related commitments, the lifting of nuclear-related sanctions is an essential part of the agreement. The EU continues to uphold its JCPOA commitments, including on sanctions lifting.

The EU expresses its grave concern at Iran's continued actions inconsistent with the JCPOA and with severe and, in the case of R&D activities, irreversible proliferation implications. We strongly urge Iran to reverse all activities inconsistent with the JCPOA and return, without delay, to its full implementation, including of all transparency measures. The EU urges Iran to cooperate in full with the IAEA without any further delay nor any conditionality to resolve all pending safeguards issues.

The EU supports the intensive diplomatic efforts within the JCPOA Joint Commission and the contacts of the EU High Representative as JCPOA Coordinator with all relevant partners. It is now more important than ever to resume the negotiations in view of a possible return of the US to the JCPOA,

and the perspective of Iran's return to full JCPOA implementation as soon as possible. Therefore, the EU calls on Iran to return to negotiations in Vienna without further delay with a view to their expeditious conclusion.

The EU remains deeply concerned by the continued development of the DPRK's nuclear programme, as indicated in the IAEA Director General's latest report. The EU urges the DPRK to embark on a credible path towards complete, verifiable and irreversible denuclearisation and take concrete steps in this direction. Until then, the EU will continue to strictly enforce existing sanctions and calls on all other countries to do the same. We urge the DPRK to engage in meaningful discussions with all relevant parties, 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 (CTBT). The EU expects that the General Conference, in its Resolution, sends a firm message to the DPRK and reaffirms an essential role of the IAEA in verifying the DPRK's nuclear programme.

In light of the continued non-compliance of the Syrian Arab Republic 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.

The EU 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, agreed at the 1995 NPT Review Conference. 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 NPT Review Conference Action Plan remains the most promising basis on which to proceed. The EU is currently funding a UNIDIR project to examine past efforts and to compile ideas for the way forward.

Mr. President,

We commend the Agency for ensuring the continued implementation of safeguards despite the restrictions posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. For its part, the EU has launched a series of diplomatic activities to promote the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system ahead of the NPT Review Conference. We remain of the view that Comprehensive Safeguards

Agreements (CSA) together with the Additional Protocol (AP) constitute the current verification standard under the NPT and we call for their universalisation without delay. We welcome the entry into force of a CSA and the AP with Eritrea as well as the APs to be concluded with Zimbabwe and with Sierra Leone. The EU furthermore urges the remaining States, which have not yet amended their Small Quantities Protocols (SQPs), 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.

The EU strongly supports the continued improvement of effectiveness and efficiency of safeguards implementation through further development and implementation of State-level Approaches (SLAs). A consistent and universal application of the SLAs strengthens global non-proliferation efforts.

Close cooperation between EURATOM and the IAEA is conducive to effective and efficient safeguards in the EU and beyond. The EU is actively supporting the Agency's safeguards system through the EC Safeguards Support Programme and through Member States' Support Programmes.

We also welcome the launch of COMPASS, the IAEA Comprehensive Capacity-Building Initiative for State Systems of Accounting for and Control (SSACs) and State or regional authorities responsible for safeguards implementation (SRAs).

Mr. President,

The EU and its Member States attach utmost importance to nuclear safety and its continuous improvement. Over the past decades, we have established and further developed an advanced, legally-binding nuclear safety framework applicable in all EU Member States. We have also provided financial and human resources to help improve nuclear safety in countries outside the EU. The EU's most recent external assistance programme for 2021-2027, the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation (EINS), with a budget of €300 million, will continue to promote the establishment of effective and efficient nuclear safety standards worldwide. The development of science-based expertise and technical assistance via so-called stress tests in a number of neighbouring countries also continues. Following the first EU Topical Peer Review in 2017, the preparations for the second one in 2023-24 are well under way, with the focus on Fire Protection at Nuclear Installations. We continue to stand ready to share our experience from these

exercises with the Agency, all interested Member States as well as within the framework of all relevant international nuclear safety conventions.

We reaffirm our strong political commitment and support to the implementation of the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste Management (JC), which remain a priority for the EU. We regret that the Review Meetings under both conventions had to be postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic and reiterate the need for all Contracting Parties to consistently address their nuclear safety issues independently of these postponements. We welcome the growing number of Contracting Parties and encourage Member States that have not yet done so to follow suit.

We welcome the increasing number of requests to host the Agency's peer review and advisory services from countries using or planning to use nuclear energy. In the coming years, many EU Member States plan to host an IRRS and/or ARTEMIS missions, thus fulfilling their EU obligations to carry out regular periodic safety reviews. We encourage also other Member States, especially those that have not done so recently and embarking countries, to request the Agency's safety review missions, timely implement recommendations and publish mission's reports in favour of transparency. Despite the current difficulties to perform the Agency's missions due to the pandemic-related travel restrictions, effective solutions need to be found without compromising the quality as well as sustainability of these services.

We continue to closely monitor developments related to advanced nuclear technologies, such as Small and Medium Sized or Modular Reactors (SMRs). We underline the need to foster international cooperation on all aspects of their development, deployment and oversight, especially the applicability of the Agency's safety standards to SMRs.

The EU and its Member States reiterate the importance of managing spent fuel and high level waste, avoiding any undue delay in the deployment of technical solutions and disposal in order to ensure their safe long term management.

The EU and its Member States remain concerned by reoccurring radiological releases in the atmosphere and call on all IAEA Member States to uphold the principles of transparency and responsibility to citizens and share information through bilateral channels and the IAEA or other existing relevant networks. Such an approach would satisfy the concerns of the international community

and improve the scientific assessment and understanding of this type of events.

Mr. President,

The EU stresses the need to continue strengthening nuclear security worldwide in order to prevent nuclear terrorism and facilitate peaceful uses of nuclear technology. To that end, we highlight the importance of the universalisation of 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 States to fully implement their provisions. We welcome the work carried out by the Secretariat in preparation of the Conference of the Parties to the A-CPPNM in March 2022.

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. Timely, reliable and sufficient resources are essential for the Agency to implement its nuclear security activities, including from the Nuclear Security Fund and Regular Budget. Together with the contributions from its Member States, the EU remains a major donor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund with nearly €60 million committed for the period of 2005–2023 in support of IAEA's nuclear security activities. We encourage further donor coordination and an efficient use of the existing funds.

The EU and its Member States reaffirm the importance 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.

We also underline the importance of full implementation 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 many international initiatives, which contribute to strengthening global nuclear security. For the period 2014-2020, the EU dedicated €160 million to the regional Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence.

Mr. President,

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their longstanding commitment to and strong support for the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme (TCP), including through the TC Fund and other supplementary mechanisms. We support the Agency and Member States in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, both financially, being the second largest contributor to the programme with an average annual contribution of €20 million, and also through the provision of technical expertise and know-how. During the global pandemic, the Agency's technical assistance has once again proven to be a valuable instrument capable of effectively and swiftly responding to the needs of Member States, including during emergencies. We consider it important that the TCP remains balanced, Member States-driven and that it is implemented on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis. We also underline the importance of results-based delivery of the TC projects to ensure tangible socio-economic impact, and to respond to Member States policies in order to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement commitments on climate change.

Mr. President,

The EU fully recognises the benefits of multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle while ensuring that high standards of safety and security as well as safeguards are implemented. The EU has contributed to the establishment of the IAEA Low Enriched Uranium Bank with nearly €25 million.

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.

We acknowledge the role played by nuclear technologies in relation to the global efforts to limit climate change as well as mitigate its negative effects. In this regard, we also acknowledge the Agency's contribution to climate change discussions including within the context of the upcoming COP26 meeting in Glasgow.

The IAEA's Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf (NA Laboratories) carry out important work. The EU fully recognize the need for

up-to-date and fit-for-purpose nuclear laboratories designed to support the needs of Member States for years to come and strongly supports the Agency's activities to develop nuclear technologies and their applications for the achievement of the SDGs. We call on all countries in a position do so to contribute to the modernisation of the NA laboratories and look forward to the completion of the ReNuAL 2 project by 2023.

We welcome the organisation of this year's Scientific Forum on "Preparing for Zoonotic Outbreaks: the Role of Nuclear Science". The IAEA's assistance to Member States to combat the most recent zoonotic disease outbreak was most welcome and needs to continue. We look forward to the implementation of the ZODIAC initiative to reinforce Member States capabilities to counter further transboundary zoonotic diseases by using nuclear and nuclear derived techniques, in a coordinated multilateral approach with FAO, WHO and other relevant international organisations.

Finally, Mr. President,

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

I thank you.