

National Statement presented by H.E. Pjer Šimunović, Ambassador of the Republic of Croatia in the United States, IAEA Ministerial Conference - Washington

Ms Chairwoman / Mr Chairman,

Ladies and gentlemen,

My pleasure being here with you today.

I would like to thank the IAEA, the OECD-NEA and the United States Government for organizing this timely and important Conference. Croatian Minister of Economy and Sustainable Development, Davor Filipović, on behalf of whom I am speaking, wishes us all a most successful Conference.

Croatia supports the goal of climate neutrality and the goal of decarbonized EU by 2050. One of the fundamental preconditions for achieving that goal is decarbonization of energy sector and boost of renewable energy potential.

In the context of climate change, we are entering a period in which we have to accelerate the transition to renewable sources, in order to secure energy needs for our households and the economy, while combating global warming.

The Croatian Energy Strategy until 2050 plans strong implementation of renewables. Our goal is to have 1500 MW new renewables in the system by the end of the 2024, and 2500 MW, by the end of 2030.

The war in Ukraine, the unprovoked, brutal Russian aggression, has changed relations in the energy market and raised the importance and visibility of energy security. This presses us to find and adopt short-term and efficient solutions in order to increase security of supply and stabilize energy prices, while not undermining our green goals.

One of solution is the development of new low-carbon technologies, especially those that can ensure emission reduction in the industries needing a longer adjustment period, and without jeopardizing their existence.

Further investments in research and innovation policies can stimulate and accelerate

the transition to a greener economy, which will at the same time, provide citizens and businesses a boost towards sustainable growth and development.

Croatia already adopted Hydrogen strategy for the period until 2050 as an option to boost decarbonization of energy, transport and industry sectors.

Other important solution is the use of nuclear energy.

Croatia supports the use of nuclear energy as one of non-CO2 sources. Although we do not have nuclear power plant on our soil, we are, together with Slovenia, co-founders and co-owners of the Nuclear Power Plant Krško in Slovenia.

That means that Croatia actively deals with all questions regarding nuclear energy. We also supported the French initiative to support nuclear energy as clean energy with so called “low carbon electricity” and, in the long term, the production of “low carbon hydrogen”.

Croatia and Slovenia have mastered the art of managing such a power plant in a seismic and densely populated area. We are supporting Slovenian ideas to build another block of the Nuclear Power Plant Krško.

The Krško Power Plant, using a Westinghouse pressurized water reactor, has operated safely and without disruptions for almost 40 years and is one of the first power plants in the EU that fully implemented a comprehensive security upgrade program. Its operation will be extended for another 20 years.

Bilateral Agreement between Croatia and Slovenia states that the two countries jointly manage and dispose of all radioactive waste. Preparation of the Croatian storage facility for Low and Intermediate Level Waste is on-going as planned. The takeover of this waste will be implemented from 2023 until 2025.

It is also important to highlight that we are also involved in fusion program. Although fusion is far away from regular usage, knowledge that we have regarding nuclear energy will help us to provide even cleaner nuclear energy in the future. We are operationally included in DONES project.

Croatia is active in all necessary steps to provide nuclear energy as a safe and clean solution. We hope that nuclear energy will help us to reach Paris Climate Agreement goals regarding the curbing of global warming.

Croatia is deeply committed to decarbonization of our economies and to the sustainable development. To reduce CO₂ emissions we need to use and explore all available options, and nuclear energy is one which can contribute to our goal and which is worth pursuing.

Thank you.