

Slovenian Statement at the Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century

Washington, 26–28 October 2022.

Mr President,
Excellences,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nuclear energy remains an important source of energy in providing energy security for our citizens and plays an important role in our efforts towards gradual and irreversible transition to decarbonisation and independency on fossil fuels. Slovenia's future energy provision will continue to seek a diversified energy production, including further wide investments in the renewable energy production.

As one of the thirty-two states with a fully-fledged civilian nuclear programme, Slovenia has always relied on the important work of the IAEA pertaining to nuclear safety and security.

Slovenia is proud to be contributing to the important work of the Agency through its activities as a member of the Board of Governors and will certainly continue to do so in the future.

Nuclear energy represents an important part of Slovenia's national energy mix. The Krško NPP (Nuclear Power Plant), with its Westinghouse reactor, produced 37% of the total energy produced last year in Slovenia.

The Krško NPP went into commercial operation in 1983. In 2022, it remains the largest producer of electrical energy in Slovenia and is expected to retain this status in the years to come. Slovenia has invested heavily in ensuring safe and sound long-term operation of the NPP. In this regard, the environmental impact assessment, including cross border assessment and the third periodic safety review, are ongoing.

In terms of safety of spent fuel management, a spent fuel dry storage is under construction at the Krško NPP. The construction is expected to be completed by the end of the year and the first transfer of spent fuel is scheduled by the end of 2023. With regard to the repository for low- and intermediate level waste (LILW), the necessary permits were obtained and construction is envisaged to start in 2023.

The latest IRRS (Integrated Regulatory Review Service) and ARTEMIS (Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation) missions to Slovenia were successfully carried out in April and May 2022, respectively. Among other things, the IRRS mission concluded that Slovenia is constantly strengthening and improving nuclear and radiation safety, and I can confirm that we will certainly continue to do so.

Speaking of nuclear safety, my country is deeply concerned with Russia's war on Ukraine, which has had significant ramifications for global nuclear safety and security. Slovenia condemns in the strongest possible terms the unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. We fully support DG Grossi's efforts to establish a nuclear safety and security protection zone around Zaporizhzhia NPP.

Mr President,

The Republic of Slovenia adopted the Comprehensive National Energy Climate Plan, which defines the use of nuclear energy for the production of electricity. In the Plan the goal until 2030 is defined as the continuation of the use of nuclear energy and the preservation of excellence in the operation of nuclear facilities in Slovenia.

In the chapter on the state of the policy, the preparation of guidelines for deciding on the future use of nuclear energy and the possible construction of a new nuclear power plant is additionally defined as a challenge.

As a key goal in the chapter on energy security, a comprehensive examination of the feasibility of long-term use of nuclear energy is defined, on the basis of which it will be possible to make a decision regarding the construction of a new nuclear power plant by 2027.

It is important to mention that the decision on the construction of the second unit of the nuclear plant is expected to depend on the outcome of a referendum.

We expect that the spatial development strategy of Slovenia until 2050 will include a comprehensive examination of the feasibility of long-term use of nuclear energy with an examination of the possibility for spatial planning for the siting of new facilities for use of the nuclear power, including small modular reactors.

Mr President,

We should not forget about future generations of nuclear experts who would ensure safe and reliable operation of existing and future nuclear installations. It is important that they receive impeccable education and that everyone has an equal opportunity to receive it. In support of gender equality and gender balance in the nuclear field, Slovenia has donated to the IAEA Marie Skłodowska Curie Fellowship Programme.

Slovenia is also proud to have been able to financially support the renovation of the Seibersdorf Laboratories.

Thank you for your attention.