



European Union

EU Statement at General Debate

**67th Session of the General Conference
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

Vienna, 25-29 September 2023

Madam President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Albania*, Ukraine, Republic of Moldova, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Georgia, Iceland*, Liechtenstein*, and San Marino.

Let me congratulate you, Madam President, on your election and assure you of the EU's full support and cooperation in achieving a successful General Conference.

We congratulate Director General Grossi on his reappointment and look forward to working closely with him during his second term. The EU attaches great importance to the IAEA's technical, independent and impartial role in all areas of its mandate "Atoms for Peace and Development" and remains committed to strong EU-IAEA cooperation.

In these difficult times, we must protect the rules-based international order, with the UN at its core.

Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, its continued armed attacks on the Ukrainian territory and illegal seizure of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) are flagrant violations of international law, including the UN Charter, and violate the very principles of the IAEA Statute. They increase risks to nuclear safety, security and the continued implementation of safeguards and require an appropriate response from the General Conference.

The EU condemns Russia's war of aggression in the strongest possible terms. We strongly support Ukraine and thank the Director General and Agency staff for their active and dedicated work in difficult circumstances. The IAEA Support and Assistance Missions on the ground are crucial to help prevent a nuclear accident that could have severe consequences. We are deeply concerned that the Director General's seven

* Candidate Countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

* Iceland and Liechtenstein are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

indispensable pillars for ensuring nuclear safety and security during an armed conflict continue to be compromised as a result of Russia's war of aggression and that Russia is preventing the IAEA from comprehensively assessing the situation at the ZNPP against the five principles established by the Director General which must be respected. We urge Russia to heed the Board's resolutions, immediately and completely withdraw all its armed forces, military equipment and other personnel from Ukraine, including from the ZNPP, and fully respect Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders.

As a key security priority, the EU will continue to invest diplomatically and politically to ensure that Iran does not acquire a nuclear weapon. To this end, the EU remains committed to the JCPOA¹. We regret that Iran has not taken the necessary steps to return to its nuclear-related commitments under the JCPOA. The risk of a nuclear proliferation crisis in the region has further increased as a result of Iran's escalating nuclear trajectory. Concrete and sustained moves of nuclear de-escalation are needed to help restore trust. The EU calls on all States to support the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015).

The EU calls on Iran to work with the Agency in earnest and a sustained way towards the fulfilment of the commitments contained in the March 2023 Joint Statement. Iran must cooperate in full with the IAEA without further delay to resolve all pending safeguards issues, in accordance with its legally binding obligations under its NPT² Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement. We strongly condemn the disproportionate unilateral measure of Iran to withdraw the designation of further experienced Agency inspectors. This profoundly regrettable decision affects in a direct and severe way the ability of the Agency to conduct effectively its verification activities in Iran. We are also concerned of the impact of this decision on the monitoring of the JCPOA. The EU urges Iran to reverse course on these inspector de-designations.

The EU remains gravely concerned about the continued development by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) of its nuclear and ballistic missile programmes in clear violation of relevant UN Security Council resolutions. The EU urges the DPRK to engage in meaningful discussions with all relevant parties to build a basis for sustainable peace and security, and to take steps aimed at pursuing complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. We insist that the DPRK return to compliance with the NPT and the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, bring into force the Additional Protocol, and urge it to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty. The DPRK cannot and will never have the status of a nuclear weapon State under the NPT or any other special status.

The EU reiterates its firm support for the full, complete, and effective implementation of the NPT and its three pillars and continues to call for its universalisation.

¹ Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA)

² Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT)

The EU supports the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system and remains of the view that Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, together with Additional Protocols, constitute the current verification standard under the NPT. We call for their universalisation without delay.

The EU also urges all States, which have not yet done so, to amend or rescind their original standard Small Quantities Protocol (SQP) and apply the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement in full, especially those States that are building nuclear facilities. We note with concern the Agency's assessment that, it may no longer be able to draw safeguards conclusions for States with the original SQP due to the limitations therein.

We attach utmost importance to nuclear safety, and its continuous improvement. Over the past decades, we have established and further developed an advanced, legally-binding and enforceable nuclear safety framework applicable in all EURATOM Member States. We continue to provide financial and human resources to help improve nuclear safety worldwide, including through the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC), with a budget of €300 million. We encourage all IAEA Member States to promote a strong nuclear safety culture and stress that the highest standards for nuclear safety that can be reasonably achieved should be implemented and continuously improved.

Furthermore, the EU stresses the need for sustained efforts to strengthen global nuclear security. We encourage IAEA Member States to work together for a successful international ministerial conference (ICONS) in May 2024. As one of the largest donors to the Nuclear Security Fund (NSF), we recognise the IAEA's central role in facilitating international cooperation and assisting Member States to build their capacities against nuclear security threats and risks.

We strongly support the international nuclear safety and security conventions,³ and their implementation and universalisation. A robust international nuclear safety and security architecture is of utmost importance. We appreciate the Agency's continued commitment to maintaining fully applicable and up-to-date Safety Standards and Security Guidance and considering the nuclear safety and security implications of situations involving armed attacks.

Madam President,

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their longstanding commitment to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme and support the Agency's activities in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology in order to reach the Sustainable Development Goals including in the context of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. All countries have the sovereign right to decide whether or not to include nuclear power as part of their own energy mix to collectively

³ Such as the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS), the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste Management (JC), and the Amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT)

achieve the 2030 climate target and the Paris Agreement commitments. The EU acknowledges the role played by nuclear technologies in relation to the global efforts to limit climate change and mitigate its negative effects. In this regard, we welcome the organisation of this year's Scientific Forum on "Nuclear Innovations for Net Zero".

The EU also welcomes important initiatives such as Rays of Hope, and NUTEC Plastics and looks forward to hearing more about the most recent initiative announced by the Director General, "Atoms4Food".

We appreciate the IAEA's strong commitment to gender equality and encourage the Secretariat to continue its efforts to achieve gender parity and mainstream gender in programmes and projects. The EU is proud to be the largest donor to the IAEA's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme.

We are concerned about the serious liquidity challenge the Agency is facing due to delays in receiving assessed contributions to the Regular Budget. We encourage all Member States to do their utmost to ensure sustainable and predictable funding so that the Agency can continue its crucial work.

Thank you, Madam President.