

Statement by ROMANIA
at the 68th session of the General Conference of
the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
Vienna, 16-20 September 2024

President,

Director General,

Distinguished Delegates,

Romania fully aligns with the statement of the European Union. I would also like to take this opportunity to add a few remarks in my national capacity.

I would also like to extend my country's appreciation to the Director General Rafael Grossi and the IAEA Secretariat for their continuous efforts to uphold nuclear safety and security and promote the peaceful use of nuclear technologies despite the current challenges.

The context in which we meet today continues to be marked by Russia's unjustifiable and illegal war against Ukraine. We strongly condemn, as we have done already countless times, Russia's actions, in violation of international law. We also remain deeply concerned of the situation at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). Russia's massive attacks on Ukraine's energy infrastructure have further worsened the already dangerous situation, affecting two additional nuclear plants producing electricity, at Rivne and South Ukraine.

We reiterate our call to Russia to stop its illegal war and occupation, immediately and unconditionally withdraw all its forces and military equipment from within Ukraine's internationally recognized borders, and immediately hand over the control of Zaporizhzhia NPP to the competent Ukrainian authorities.

President,

Since its entry into force, the NPT has been the cornerstone of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime as a key instrument to the maintenance of international peace and security. Romania continues to reaffirm its commitment to the fundamental principles of the NPT and commends the Agency's efforts in its verification activities.

We continue to promote and call for the entry into force and universalization of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), as well as for the immediate start of negotiations on a Fissile Material Cut-off Treaty (FMCT).

We reiterate our continued support to the IAEA's safeguards system, a fundamental instrument for ensuring global non-proliferation. Furthermore, Romania strongly supports the universalization of the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements along with the Additional Protocols, which together constitute the current verification standard. We encourage all states to become parties to the relevant treaties and conventions aimed at creating a strong nuclear safety and security architecture.

President,

Romania is committed to maintaining the highest standards of nuclear safety and security. At our request, a full-scope Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission was successfully conducted in October-November 2023, concluding that Romania has a

comprehensive regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety covering all facilities and activities.

Furthermore, we are pleased to announce that we have concluded the establishment of a Emergency, Information and Training Center. We are grateful to Norway for the support received in this important project. With the aim to serve as a regional training hub, the Centre will also help strengthen capabilities in South-East Europe.

In 2025, Romania will host a ConvEx-3 exercise, the Agency's highest level and most complex emergency exercise designed to evaluate the implementation of international emergency response arrangements and capabilities for severe nuclear emergencies, building on successful experience gained in organizing a series of national exercises *Valahia 2023* and *CyberSpring 2024*, with valuable contributions and expertise of the IAEA.

As a member of the IAEA Network for Nuclear Security Training and Support Centres, Romania has continued to develop its National Centre for Nuclear Security Training, standing ready to cooperate with and assist countries in the region. Moreover, "Horia Hulubei" National Institute for Research&Development in Physics and Nuclear Engineering (IFIN-HH) provides valuable inputs on nuclear forensics both nationally and internationally. Its laboratory is ready to assist regional and international partners in responding to cases of unauthorized use of nuclear or other radioactive materials.

We are grateful for the bilateral cooperation with the specialized offices of the US National Nuclear Security Administration to strengthen national capacities and identify areas of continued collaboration on nuclear security.

President,

Romania recognizes the role of nuclear energy in combating climate change. With ambitious decarbonization targets, Romania is investing in increasing its capacity to generate energy from nuclear sources by 2030s.

Nuclearelectrica plays a key part in supporting these objectives and is undergoing a series of strategic projects, including the refurbishment of Unit 1 and the completion of Units 3 and 4 from Cernavodă NPP, the development of small modular reactors, as well as harvesting nuclear isotopes for medical purposes and establishing the Tritium Removal Plant.

Romania is one of the first countries in Europe that has the potential to deploy small modular reactors in Europe and become a catalyst for SMRs in the region, a base for supporting the production and assembly of components, a hub for preparation and training of future operators and specialists.

We are committed to ensuring nuclear safety and security during the design, development and deployment phases and are supporting the Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative (NHSI), launched by the IAEA Director General.

Excellence is preceded by preparedness. To this end, the training of a new generation of specialists in the development of the nuclear field is of particular importance for Romania, involving not only graduates of faculties in the field of nuclear physics and engineering, but also from other related fields, necessary in the development of the infrastructure for nuclear installations.

President,

Romania has last served on the Board of Governors for the period 2008-2010. Since then we have had notable achievements in the peaceful use of nuclear energy. Our collaboration with the IAEA and its Member States is extensive and we are proud to be moving towards the

development and integration of new technologies in creating a more sustainable future using nuclear energy. Our expertise is widely recognized and we are advancing towards becoming a regional hub of excellence in this field.

With an extensive track-record and having actively contributed to the scientific and technical cooperation in the nuclear field, we have committed to put forward Romania's candidacy to serve on the Board of Governors for the period 2025-2027. Romania looks forward to being a Board member again, having the opportunity to contribute to the fulfillment of IAEA's important mission.

Romania will continue to support the Agency's mission in the peaceful uses of nuclear technology, contributing to international peace and security and the UN Sustainable Development Goals. We would also like to reaffirm Romania's appreciation for and longstanding commitment to the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme, including through national voluntary contributions.

Thank you.