



European Union
EU Statement on
Agenda item 2: Nuclear and Radiation Safety
Board of Governors
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)
Vienna, 13-17 September 2021

Madam Chair,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the EU and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: The Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Iceland+, Norway+, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Armenia.

The EU thanks the Director General for the report on “Nuclear and Radiation Safety” as contained in document GOV/2021/32-GC(65)/7.

Madam Chair,

As stressed on many occasions, the EU and its Member States attach vital importance to nuclear safety and its continuous improvement. Promoting an effective safety culture and implementation and continuously implementing high nuclear safety and radiation protection standards remain at the core of our values in peaceful uses of nuclear energy. We fully support the Agency’s activities in nuclear safety and commend its efforts in finding alternative ways and methods to deliver on its mandate during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The EU will continue to provide support for the improvement of nuclear safety worldwide. In this context, we are pleased to inform of the adoption of the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation (EINS). With a budget of € 300 million for 2021-2027, it has three specific objectives: nuclear safety and radiation protection standards and culture; management of spent fuel and radioactive waste; and establishment of efficient and effective safeguards in third countries.

* 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 and Norway are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

Madam Chair,

We appreciate the Agency's continued commitment and attention to ensuring that Safety Standards remain fully applicable and up-to-date. With this in mind, the introduction of measures to optimize and streamline the publication process to ensure timeliness and quality, especially in light of the expected increase in standards in the coming years, is a long-awaited step. The ongoing gap analysis to consider whether further strengthening of the standards is required is also a welcome step.

We take positive note of the increased number of requests from Member States to host the Agency's peer review and advisory services. Also several EU Member States are planning to host IRRS, ARTEMIS or other safety peer review missions to fulfil their EU obligations and practically demonstrate their commitment to safety. We encourage all Member States, especially those that have not done so recently and embarking countries, to request such missions, to timely implement recommendations and to publish mission reports to the full extent for the sake of transparency. Notwithstanding remaining travel restrictions due to the Covid-19 pandemic, effective solutions need to be found to carry out these services in a timely manner, while ensuring their quality and sustainability. We acknowledge the efforts made within the Peer Review and Advisory Services Committee (PRASC) and encourage the Secretariat to continue improving the coordination and integration of its peer review missions, including the combined and back-to-back IRRS-ARTEMIS missions in order to avoid duplications and to improve efficiency.

We reaffirm our strong commitment to all relevant international nuclear safety conventions, in particular the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management (JC). Following the decision to merge the 8th and 9th CNS review cycles and to postpone the 7th Review Meeting of the Joint Convention, we would like to underline the need for all Contracting Parties to continue to fulfil their legal obligations and consistently address nuclear safety issues despite the postponement. The growing number of Contracting Parties is a welcome trend. We encourage all others that have not yet done so to follow suit and call upon the Agency to continue outreach activities to promote the universalisation and implementation of these instruments.

Madam Chair,

We thank the Agency for making robust regulatory infrastructure and decision-making processes a priority and request the Secretariat to continue to put an appropriate emphasis on these areas.

Effective emergency preparedness and response (EPR) arrangements and capabilities should be a priority for every Member State. We reiterate our commitment to upholding the principles of transparency and responsibility to citizens when dealing with incidents, emergency scenarios or events that could raise public concern. In this regard, we welcome the recent report of the Director General on Communicating on events including those with

little or no impact on nuclear or radiation safety. We encourage all Member States to make use of the Agency's channels and existing operating arrangements to share notifications and monitoring data, including in a business as usual context, and to report in a timely and transparent manner on all relevant activities undertaken. It is crucial that information on all relevant events, including those that have an actual, potential or perceived transboundary radiological significance, is shared and communicated with a view to satisfying concerns, especially those from the public. We commend the Agency for continuing to implement an active exercise programme to test EPR at international level and welcome the organisation of another full-scale ConvEx-3 exercise later this year.

Our experience shows that development of decommissioning strategies and plans, including accurate cost estimates and work on final disposal solutions must be an essential part and addressed early on in any nuclear power or radiation technology programme. We therefore urge Member States to take appropriate steps, in a timely manner, to avoid imposing an undue burden on future generations by seeking and applying safe, environmentally acceptable and long-term management solutions for radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel. Important milestones have been reached across the EU Member States with regard to deep geological disposal facilities, however a lot remains to be done. We stand ready to share our experience and lessons learned and call upon the Agency to continue advancing discussions on deep geological disposals and related safety aspects. Regarding ageing management and long-term operation (LTO), we welcome the Secretariat's intensified efforts to tackle these issues and wish to recall the need to continue systematically addressing both physical ageing as well as human resource-policies and knowledge transfer between generations. We encourage the Agency to continue enhancing these activities and provide assistance to Member States in this regard.

The EU and its Member States support the effective application of the Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and the two Supplementary Guidances and the related formalized process for the exchange of information. We welcome the political commitments by an increasing number of Member States to the Supplementary Guidances.

Madam Chair,

We appreciate the IAEA's efforts to further focus on the interface between nuclear safety and nuclear security, while recognizing the existing differences. We expect that the Agency will continue addressing the existing safety-security interface challenges in a coherent, coordinated and integrated manner, and look forward to the publication of the joint International Nuclear Safety Group (INSAG) & Advisory Committee on Nuclear Security (AdSec) report.

We continue to closely monitor developments related to the safety of advanced nuclear technologies, such as Small and Medium Sized or Modular Reactors (SMRs). Increasing interest, including in the review of applicability of the Agency's safety standards to SMRs designs, underlines the need to foster international cooperation on these novel

technologies. We acknowledge the launch of the Agency-wide platform on SMRs to ensure a cross departmental approach and to provide integrated support to Member States on all aspects of their development, deployment and oversight. We look forward to receiving more information on the platform from the Secretariat, including on the operation and regulatory issues.

Lastly, the EU emphasises the importance of gender equality in all aspects of the Agency's work. This issue should remain a priority at the highest level in the Agency and its Member States. We are convinced that safety benefits from a diverse workforce.

With these comments, the EU takes note of the report on "Nuclear and Radiation Safety" as contained in GOV/2021/32-GC(65)/7.

Thank you, Madam Chair.