



# European Union

## EU Statement on

### Agenda item 3: The IAEA and the COVID-19 pandemic

#### IAEA Board of Governors

Vienna, 1-5 March 2021

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: [Turkey<sup>§</sup>, the Republic of North Macedonia\*, Montenegro\*, Iceland\*, Serbia\*, Albania\*, Bosnia and Herzegovina\*, Liechtenstein\*, Norway\*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and San Marino.]
2. The EU wishes to thank Director General Grossi for his reports contained in documents GOV/INF/2021/04, GOV/INF/2021/05 and GOV/INF/2021/06.
3. The EU would like to commend the Director General for the IAEA's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. We highly appreciate the actions taken by the Agency in ensuring its business continuity under the prevailing circumstances. The Agency has taken timely measures to protect its staff while continuing to provide significant assistance and building capacities of Member States in their efforts to tackle the effects of the pandemic, including through the provision of detection equipment and diagnostic kits, as well as guidance and training. We welcome the IAEA's increasing coordination efforts with WHO and FAO as well as its active involvement in the COVID-19 UN Crisis Management Team. We also appreciate the extra-budgetary and in-kind contributions by Member States, including from the EU, and encourage all donors to consider further support.
4. The EU acknowledges the major contribution which nuclear and nuclear-derived techniques are making in the health sector. We welcome the efforts to respond to Member States' needs to enhance their capacities to address infectious diseases. In particular, the EU welcomes the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) project and looks forward to further discussions and regular reporting to Member States on this initiative, in accordance with IAEA General Conference resolution GC/(64)/RES/3.

---

<sup>§</sup> Candidate Country

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

5. We thank DDG Safeguards and in particular the nuclear inspectors, for the continued implementation of safeguards in these difficult times. The health and safety of inspectors was and must remain a priority in the decision making process. We also underline the efforts and hard work of EU Member States and EURATOM to ensure inspections activities despite all the restrictions. We take note with appreciation that the Agency currently assesses that it will be able to draw soundly-based safeguards conclusions for all States for 2020.
6. We note with satisfaction that the IAEA has been able to continue many of its guidance and standard setting activities in support of the operation, safety and security of nuclear and radiation facilities and activities. At the same time, we encourage early resumption of the postponed peer review and other missions when the circumstances so allow and their conduct in virtual or hybrid format, if and wherever possible, according to the nature of the services.
7. We welcome early actions taken by the IAEA Member States designated to ensure safety, security and continuity of business, and adapting them as the pandemic progressed. The COVID-19 NPP Operational Experience (OPEX) Network to facilitate knowledge exchange and collection of relevant good practices between the Agency and all relevant stakeholders and international organisations, has proven to be a very valuable tool with 27 reports from 10 Member States and five international organisations,
8. We also commend the Secretariat for ensuring full operation of the Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) and the Incident and Emergency Centre to respond to nuclear and radiological emergencies.
9. The EU is thankful to the Agency's efforts aimed to support mitigation of a significant disruption of medical radioisotopes during the crisis. This is a major challenge and we need to work together to ensure the continuity of those essential services vital for health care.
10. With these comments, the EU takes note of the reports as contained in documents GOV/INF/2021/04, GOV/INF/2021/05 and GOV/INF/2021/06.

Thank you, Madam Chair.