



European Union

EU Statement on Agenda item 5: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications:

Nuclear Technology Review 2021

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[§], 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 European Union would like to thank the Director General for his report contained in document GOV/2021/2 on the "Nuclear Technology Review 2021".

Madam Chair,

3. Nuclear science and technologies are one of the drivers for improved health and prosperity and improved living standards for people. The EU and its Member States are working with the Agency "to accelerate and enlarge the contribution of atomic energy to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world", in accordance with the statute. As we are preparing for the 2021 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT), the EU recalls that this treaty has established a solid, rigorous and successful framework for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Adherence to and full implementation of that treaty is the bedrock to this success. We commend the contribution the IAEA makes in the context of Article IV of the NPT.
4. The European Union acknowledges the need to ensure energy security at affordable cost and respects the right of Member States to decide on their energy mix and choose the most appropriate technologies to collectively achieve the 2030 climate target. The EU takes note of the preparation by the Secretariat of the 5th International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century, to be held in October 2021, in Washington.
5. When using nuclear technology, the firm compliance with international legal instruments, IAEA safety standards, security guidelines and safeguards requirements is essential. We strongly encourage all Member States to make use of all IAEA peer reviews and advisory services and to publish the findings and to timely implement the recommended actions.

[§] 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.

6. The DG's report states that “major milestones were reached in the operation of SMR technology” and also reports on the progress in the area of non-electric applications of nuclear power. International collaboration and exchange of information on such programmes should aim to ensure that their development is accompanied by the highest standards of safety and security as well as a strong regulatory framework, and that it is economically and environmentally viable. We attach importance to the IAEA’s work on the legal and institutional aspects of transportable nuclear power plants, including filling the gaps identified in international nuclear law.
7. As nuclear power plants and research reactors worldwide are increasingly operating for longer timeframes, timely and adequate implementation of measures related to ageing management and long-term operation, as well as reasonably practicable safety improvements, are of growing importance. We encourage the Agency’s efforts in that field and look forward to continue discussions on these issues including within the Convention on Nuclear Safety framework. In this connection, we appreciate the activities of the Agency, which support continued operation of research reactors.
8. Important decommissioning projects are underway in the EU. The efforts of the Agency to build on existing experience and deepen the understanding of all aspects of decommissioning programmes are extremely valuable. Projects aiming at the deep geological disposal of high level radioactive waste are also progressing in several EU Member States. The EU looks forward to continue discussions on these issues within the Joint Convention framework and we welcome the International Conference on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management in November 2021.

Madam Chair,

9. The EU acknowledges the major contribution of nuclear techniques in the health sector, and the important role of the IAEA in addressing the COVID-19 pandemic, not only in terms of rapid detection and management but also in support of the operation, safety and security of nuclear and radiation facilities and activities. We welcome the efforts made to respond to Member States needs in this context and the activities undertaken to strengthen capacity and science to enhance health systems, including capacities to address infectious diseases. In particular, the EU welcomes the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) project. We look forward to future engagement with and encourage regular reporting to Member States on this initiative, in accordance with resolution GC/(64)/RES/3.
10. We acknowledge the Agency's contribution to facilitate the exchange of experiences on adaptations and challenges met by nuclear technology related activities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU welcomes the information that research reactors producing medical radioisotopes for global supply were declared as “providing essential services” to minimise the effect of restrictions during the pandemic.
11. We appreciate the IAEA’s work related to the applications of accelerators and research reactors in environmental studies and cultural heritage characterisation, among others, which are examples of the societal relevance and impact of nuclear technologies. We welcome advances made in the field of micro dosimetry and nanodosimetry towards the development of shared methodologies. These technologies are indispensable in the fight against cancer and contribute significantly to all stages of cancer patients’ care. We welcome as well the activities contributing to measuring residues in food with nuclear techniques.
12. We stress the importance of the Renovation of the Nuclear Applications Laboratories (ReNuAL) project to assist Member States in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and

technology. We take note that extra-budgetary contributions are needed to finalise the project and encourage Member States in a position to do so to support this effort.

Finally, Madam Chair,

13. The EU strongly supports the Agency's activities in supporting Member States in their efforts to reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals as well as its commitment to contribute to tackling climate change. In that respect, we support IAEA activities to enhance knowledge on mitigation strategies through carbon sequestration, known as blue carbon, as well as the IAEA's planned participation in the COP26 in Glasgow.
14. Looking to the future, we continue our involvement in fusion research, welcome further cooperation with the Agency and look forward to fruitful exchanges at the 28th IAEA Fusion Energy Conference in May 2021.
15. With these comments, we support the recommended Board action set forth in GOV/2021/2.

Thank you, Madam Chair.