

Statement by the **Republic of Austria**  
At the **62<sup>nd</sup> IAEA General Conference**

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Delivered by Ambassador Christine Stix-Hackl, Permanent Representative

Mr. President,

I apologize for Austria taking the floor once again, as our Foreign Minister has already had the honour to pronounce the EU statement, with which we obviously fully associate ourselves. Nevertheless, towards the end of a very rich debate, we would like to make a few brief comments in a purely national capacity on some of the issues raised in those deliberations.

Since the adoption of the NPT almost exactly fifty years ago, the Agency has been playing a crucial role in verifying its implementation. At the heart of this fundamental treaty lies a careful balance of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament, as two mutually reinforcing objectives, or even two sides of the same coin. Unfortunately, in particular the implementation of the disarmament obligation of the NPT remains unsatisfactory. Regrettably, existing commitments have not been fulfilled and are being called into question by the words and actions of some States. In this situation, it is more urgent than ever to strengthen the international nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation regime with the NPT as its cornerstone. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons (TPNW), which my country ratified on May 8, does exactly this. In particular, the new treaty strengthens and complements the NPT in at least two ways. It provides a legal pathway for the full implementation of Article VI of the NPT. In addition, the TPNW strengthens the IAEA safeguards system based on the NPT. It reaffirms the safeguards standard enshrined in NPT Article III, obliges States which already have a higher standard in place to maintain it, and encourages all States to further raise their level of commitment in terms of safeguards. So I welcome that already 60 States have signed and 15 States have ratified the TPNW and call on all other States to do so as well.

Finally, with regard to nuclear power, Austria's position opposing nuclear power on a global scale is unchanged. In our analysis, in particular the risk of possible accidents and their impact on public health and the environment, as well as the unresolved problem of radioactive waste disposal, mean that nuclear power cannot be considered as a viable option to combat climate change or meeting the SDG's. Austria therefore advocates a worldwide phasing out of nuclear power, as well as the promotion of the use of renewable energy and the enhancement of global energy efficiency and savings. States which nonetheless choose to use nuclear power must implement and continuously improve the highest levels of nuclear safety, security and safeguards, in particular through thoroughly and seriously implementing the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety. I see a crucial role of the Agency in assisting States in this endeavour. In conclusion, let me assure you that Austria will as in the past lend its full support to the Agency whose outstanding work we greatly appreciate.

To prove that point, it gives me great pleasure to announce that, as in previous years, Austria will continue its full financial contribution to the Technical Cooperation Programme of the Agency in 2019.

I thank you Mr. President.