



## **Statement on behalf of Euratom**

delivered by

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International Organisations in Vienna***

on the occasion of the

**66<sup>th</sup> General Conference of the IAEA, Vienna**

Mr President, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Euratom, the European Atomic Energy Community.

Let me first congratulate you, Mister President, on your election as the President of this General Conference.

The collaboration of the Euratom Community and the European Commission with the IAEA is long and well established. The signature during this week of the new Memorandum of Understanding on nuclear safety cooperation paves the way to continued and reinforced collaboration and we are looking forward to it.

At the outset, I would also like to express our recognition of the efforts of the IAEA Secretariat for its continuous and intensive involvement in monitoring the safety and security of nuclear installation in war-torn Ukraine, in the most challenging of circumstances.

The nuclear safety and security situation in Ukraine has become a deep concern for the EU, the IAEA and all our partners.

I would like to refer to the EU statement in this regard, which condemns in the strongest possible terms, the Russian Federation's aggression against Ukraine. Beyond the immense human suffering and destruction, it poses serious and direct threats to the safety and security of Ukrainian nuclear facilities, and has impeded the Agency from fully and safely conducting safeguards verification activities in Ukraine.

The European Commission has been following the nuclear safety situation in Ukraine very closely from the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine's territory. The European Commission has put together a specific task force of services working on scenario based risk assessment, emergency preparedness, and immediate aid to Ukraine. Its members work closely with the nuclear safety regulators of Euratom members as well as of Ukraine, and with the IAEA.

The Russian Federation's irresponsible and dangerous behaviour, in particular at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant (NPP) and recently at the South Ukraine NPP, continues to violate all internationally agreed nuclear safety and security provisions, underlining the need of enforcement mechanisms of international law and conventions. The EU underlines the importance of respecting existing rules of international humanitarian law and renewing

efforts aimed at the prompt reinforcing of the international framework relating to the protection of nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes, including in the situations of armed conflicts.

The European Commission has acted swiftly and has, among other, mobilised EUR 13 million to restore the Ukrainian capacities and capabilities at the exclusion zone and beyond under the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation. An additional EUR 3.4 million will be provided for IAEA's assistance to Ukraine.

Nuclear Safety continues to be of critical importance for the European Union, Euratom and its Member States, working together to ensure the highest standards of nuclear safety and their continuous improvement.

The Nuclear Safety Directive remains the cornerstone of the European approach to nuclear safety. In the ten years or so since it came into force there has been a broad implementation of its requirements. All Euratom Member States have now been subject to an international peer review of their national framework and regulatory authority, under the IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) with a high level of implementation of the recommendations noted during follow-up missions. All those Member States with nuclear installations participated in the first Topical Peer Review on Ageing Management, under the supervision of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG). Member States with relevant findings are currently implementing their action plans. The second Topical Peer Review on Fire Protection is currently under preparation and will take place in 2023-24.

The EU also seeks to encourage the highest levels of nuclear safety outside the EU and accordingly associates neighbouring and other countries to activities such as nuclear safety stress tests and topical peer reviews, both of which are carried out in conjunction with the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group. Support has been provided to several participating countries in these peer reviews to prepare the necessary follow-up actions and we will continue to engage other non-EU countries in these nuclear safety assessments and reviews.

I praise the cooperation carried out in the Regulatory Cooperation Forum and the environmental remediation of former uranium legacy sites in Central Asia, delivering concrete results that benefit people and the environment. In addition, safe management of radioactive sources and clearance criteria in view of the coming large decommissioning programmes will be supported with an additional EUR 3.2 million contribution from the EU.

We continue, also in joint efforts with the IAEA, in developing innovative applications of nuclear science to address societal challenges. This includes the medical field where we are implementing in the EU the SAMIRA Action Plan to ensure safe and high quality diagnosis and treatment. In addition, we work on security instability, infectious diseases, global warming, water and ocean management challenges and food security issues, among other. The Practical Arrangements signed between the IAEA and the European Commission in 2017 are a platform of collaboration to share resources and knowledge, and are being expanded to include a broader scope.

Since the 1970s and in line with the safeguards agreements between the IAEA, Euratom and its Member States, Euratom acts as a constitutive, regional partner to the wider IAEA system associated to the UN. Through the years, new challenges, such as the decommissioning of nuclear installations and the advent of geological repositories, have been successfully

addressed through this close cooperation. This year we celebrate the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the collaborative New Partnership Approach agreed in 1992 to promote safeguards effectiveness and efficiency in implementing the comprehensive safeguards agreement between the IAEA, Euratom and its non-nuclear weapon Member States.

Central to this fruitful collaboration are the development of common safeguards equipment and the performance of joint inspections with the IAEA, following the one job-one person principle. Another important aspect is the implementation of the 'Safeguards-by-Design' concept for incorporating safeguards considerations early in the planning and design stages of projects for complex installations, including new builds, major modifications and decommissioning.

In this context, the European Commission organised a side event on 'Safeguarding in a regional arrangement' at the 10th NPT Review Conference, in recognition that bilateral and regional safeguards play an important role in the further promotion of transparency and mutual confidence between States, and support the non-proliferation objectives of the Treaty.

Euratom is also committed to continue its 40-years long support to IAEA safeguards through the dedicated European Commission Support Programme, which addresses a broad spectrum of IAEA research, development and training needs.

The cooperation in nuclear safeguards has even increased with the joint implementation of an EU project that will deliver a nuclear safeguards laboratory to the Nuclear Safety Center of the Islamic Republic of Iran as agreed in the Annex 3 of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

We welcome the successful conclusion of the first review Conference of the Parties to the A/CPPNM as an important milestone to strengthen global nuclear security. The outcome document adopted by joint consensus will foster implementation of the amended Convention and promote its universalisation.

The next A/CPPNM review conference will be convened no later than six years, to further strengthen the global nuclear security architecture, thanks to the requests by a majority of the Parties, including the EU Member States and EURATOM.

The long-term safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, including decommissioning and financial aspects of the back-end of the fuel cycle, continue to require our close attention. Euratom has given legal force by a directive to the requirements included in the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste Management, to which it is a contracting party.

In December 2020, the European Commission and the IAEA extended the cooperation agreement in this area, particularly in the framework of Integrated Review Service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation (ARTEMIS). Since their inception in 2017, fifteen ARTEMIS missions have been conducted in fourteen EU Member States with nine more scheduled during the next year.

I welcome in this regard the cooperation between the European Commission, the IAEA and the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency in harmonising the radioactive waste and spent fuel inventory reporting requirements for their Member States as well as the concepts and methods to describe and compare nuclear sites' decommissioning projects. This will help

increase transparency and consistency of national financing schemes and cost estimations and thus strengthening the public trust in the back-end of the nuclear fuel cycle. Particular attention needs to be paid by all Member States to taking timely steps towards identifying and implementing safe and sustainable solutions for high-level waste management.

The Euratom Research and Training (R&T) Programme 2021-2025 is central to the European Union's efforts to promote excellence in nuclear research and innovation in fission and fusion, helping ensuring the highest standards of safety and increasing energy security.

The EUR 1.4 billion Programme covers direct and indirect actions, fusion and fission research. The 2021-2022 Euratom Work Programme (indirect actions) has launched, amongst others, the EUROfusion European Partnership in fusion energy research and the PIANOFORTE Partnership on radiation protection.

One of the areas drawing attention under the current Work Programme is radiation protection and medical applications of ionising radiation. This call directly supports the priorities of the EU's Beating Cancer and the SAMIRA Action Plans.

The Euratom 2021-22 Work Programme (EUR 126 million) also included a call for proposals to support the highest standards for the safety of power plants, research reactors, materials and fuels. Research activities also include radioactive waste management and decommissioning, such as the European Joint Programme on Radioactive Waste Management – EURAD.

The Euratom R&T Programme further continues to provide valuable opportunities for nuclear researchers to participate in the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions under Horizon Europe. This action ensures that the EU will maintain nuclear competencies for present and future generations of nuclear scientists.

The IAEA remains an important Euratom partner in the field of knowledge management, including human resources development. We expect to further strengthen our cooperation in the near future in research areas such as non-power applications of ionising radiation, Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and nuclear decommissioning.

Small modular reactors (SMRs) are seen as a potential new technology, which could help achieve our climate objectives.

SMRs are not seen as competitors of large reactors or of renewable energy, but rather as a complement in the decarbonised electricity generation (hybrid power system). SMRs can contribute to the replacement of retired fossil fuel electricity generation capacity and be used for other synergy applications, such as co-generation (i.e. district and process heating, water desalination and low-carbon hydrogen production).

European stakeholders advocated for the launch of a European SMR Partnership in the form of a collaboration scheme involving industrial stakeholders, research & technological organisations, interested customers (i.e. utilities and even Member States), and European regulators for advancing SMRs in Europe.

The Partnership preparation is currently ongoing since the beginning of 2022 and is led by a Steering Committee assessing the outlook and conditions for SMR technology safe deployment in the EU as regards market integration and deployment; licensing; financing and partnership; supply chain adaptation; and innovation, research and development.

The European Commission supports the actions, aiming to ensure that the deployment of SMRs) is carried out with the highest levels of safety, security and safeguards. To ensure coherence and complementarity of the efforts, close links are also maintained with the new IEA 'Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative (NHSI)'.

The European Commission is also providing financial support to research related to safety and licencing aspects of SMRs via the Euratom Research and Training Programme.

Fusion technology has the potential to become an energy source for the future, particularly important to broaden the sources of energy and increasing energy independence. It is for this reason that the EU has a leading role in the development of fusion technology, and in particular in the ITER project as its host.

Euratom has allocated EUR 5.6 billion (current prices) to ITER for the period 2021 to 2027, which will help the project to continue its progress and gradually enter into its operation phase.

The Euratom Research and Training Work Programme includes further a new Euratom grant of EUR 549 million in support of the EUROfusion Partnership for the years 2021-2025, to ensure the ITER's success and to advance preparations of the first-of-a-kind demonstration fusion power plant. The Partnership will deliver the necessary knowledge for the full exploitation of ITER and will provide the training of a new generation of fusion scientists and engineers.

For Euratom, it is important to focus on the development of a comprehensive and worldwide fusion regulatory framework that should support and frame the construction and operation of the fusion facilities and enhance the development of fusion technology.

Safety requirements should be at the heart of this regulatory task, which should create clarity to ensure the economic viability of the fusion power plants of the future. This is particularly important for the construction of the fusion demonstration power plant (DEMO) envisaged after ITER, which will open the way to the industrial and commercial exploitation of fusion as a new energy source.

Lastly, allow me to refer to the important work that the Euratom Supply Agency has done for more than 60 years now in ensuring the stable supply of nuclear materials for power and non-power uses in the European Union.

The European Commission and the Euratom Supply Agency are working closely with all stakeholders in the European Union as well as global partners to further diversify the sources of supply in all stages of the nuclear fuel cycle and stresses the need to enhance the available production capacities in the EU. We are resolved to tackle the looming supply crisis. The Euratom Supply Agency's work, together with the Commission, will be decisive to that end.

As part of the SAMIRA Action Plan, the Euratom Supply Agency follows up on present and future supply challenges such as high assay materials for research or isotope production and security of supply for power production. Past shortages of medical radioisotopes have shown that supply chains can be vulnerable. In partnership with the industry, the Euratom Supply Agency steers an observatory that helps reduce the risk of adverse events.

Mr President, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nuclear safety, security, and safeguards are a concern for the whole international community, today so more than ever. We will all need to live up to these challenges.

Let us take full advantage of the IAEA's more than 60 years' accumulated experience and its continuous contribution to developing nuclear power in a safe and sustainable manner and of synergies with our policies and activities in this important area.

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