



European Union

EU Statement

International Conference on Nuclear Security (ICONS)

Vienna, 20-24 May 2024

Excellencies,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The candidate countries North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina¹ and Georgia, as well as the EFTA countries Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway, members of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

We thank the Co-Chairs for their leadership and the IAEA Secretariat for laying the groundwork for this important conference.

In the absence of a new Ministerial Declaration, we stress that the commitments agreed at the 2020 ICONS remain valid and must be implemented, in addition to addressing new challenges.

The EU and its Member States remain committed to promoting the highest possible level of nuclear security worldwide.

The international security environment has undergone profound changes since the last ICONS. Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine is causing unprecedented nuclear security threats, with daily breaches of the IAEA seven indispensable pillars for nuclear safety and security in armed conflict and potentially serious consequences. We reiterate our concern for the potential risks related to the physical integrity of Ukraine's nuclear facilities, radioactive sources out of regulatory control, illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials and technologies, as well as acts of sabotage at nuclear sites that stem from Russia's full-scale invasion against Ukraine. The seven pillars and five principles must be respected. We also recall all relevant IAEA Board and General Conference resolutions and decision, including on armed attack or threat of attack against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes.

¹ North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

The EU looks forward to the IAEA technical document on challenges in the application of the IAEA nuclear safety standards and nuclear security guidance, and a further discussion on how related issues and challenges might be addressed.

We strongly support the work of the IAEA Director General and the IAEA Support and Assistance Missions which have been established at all Ukraine's nuclear power plants with EU funding. The EU will continue to provide financial and material support to Ukraine bilaterally and through the IAEA. The estimated damage at the Chornobyl site alone, including to the EU-funded laboratory that was looted by the Russian troops, amounts to 80 million EUR.

Once again, the EU urges the Russian Federation to end its illegal seizure of Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and withdraw from the entire territory of Ukraine within its internationally recognized borders so that the competent national authorities of Ukraine can promptly regain full control. In this vein, we support the work carried out under Ukraine's Peace Formula on radiation and nuclear safety. We welcome the recent workshop on nuclear safety and security in Prague as a valuable contribution to the continuing discussion.

In addition to the physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities against theft and sabotage, we encourage all States to take further measures to prevent cyber attacks, mitigate their consequences and address new challenges and opportunities arising from the use of artificial intelligence.

The broad interest in non-power nuclear applications contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals, the future deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs) and the increase in the transport of nuclear and other radioactive material further underline the need for all States to take effective measures to ensure the security of radioactive sources and nuclear material.

In this context, the EU and its Member States stress the importance of all States joining and implementing relevant international instruments such as the Amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (A/CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT). We continue to attach importance to UN Security Council Resolution 1540 and its follow-up resolutions as they set out legally-binding obligations on all States to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction to non-State actors. We encourage all countries to subscribe to the IAEA Code of Conduct on the Safety and Security of Radioactive Sources and its supplementary Guidance documents.

International cooperation is essential to enhance the ability to prevent, detect and respond to acts of nuclear terrorism and other non-State actor threats. We strongly support the IAEA's central role in facilitating cooperation and assisting

countries to strengthen their national nuclear security regimes. We encourage Member States to take advantage of the advisory services offered by the IAEA and of its assistance in developing Integrated Nuclear Security Support Plans. We welcome further voluntary information sharing through the IAEA Incident and Trafficking Database, INTERPOL and other appropriate channels.

Excellencies,

To enhance global nuclear security, the EU and its Member States are providing significant support to interested States. Since the last ICONS, three new EU Council Decisions have been adopted to support the IAEA nuclear security activities and a fourth one benefiting the UNODC. The EU-funded activities have helped build capacities in dozens of countries, train thousands of experts, and contribute to hundreds of events including the successful A/CPPNM Review Meeting, the 15th anniversary event of ICSANT, and the International Conference on Computer Security in Vienna.

The European Nuclear Security Training Centre (EUSECTRA), operated by the European Commission Joint Research Centre, has continued to provide technical support to the IAEA and its Member States in the field of nuclear detection and forensics. We look forward to further cooperation and coordination with the new IAEA Nuclear Security Training and Demonstration Centre (NSTDC).

The EU CBRN Centres of Excellence have continued to assist 64 partner countries worldwide, help mitigating risks related to chemical, biological, radiation and nuclear materials, strengthen preparedness, and nurture nuclear security culture and governance at national and regional levels. Over 100 projects have been implemented through this major capacity building initiative, with a budget of over 140 million EUR for 2021-27.

Distinguished Co-Chairs, Excellencies,

The EU is committed to ensuring nuclear safety, security and safeguards in the design, development and deployment of Small Modular Reactors (SMRs). The EU encourages further IAEA work to analyse and complement the existing Nuclear Security Series to address the specific features of SMRs, and to manage the interface between nuclear safety and security.

Achieving gender equality and the full, equal and meaningful participation of women across the nuclear field requires active efforts from all States. The EU, as the largest supporter of the IAEA Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship programme, will continue to devote strong attention to gender issues, including in the nuclear security area.

In conclusion, let me reassure you that the EU and its Member States remain strongly committed to continue supporting the work of the IAEA in sustaining and strengthening nuclear security globally.

Thank you for your attention.