

**Statement on behalf of the Euratom Community**  
delivered by  
**Mr Patrizio Fondi, Ambassador,**  
**European Union Delegation to the United Arab Emirate**  
on the occasion of the  
**IAEA International Ministerial Conference on**  
**Nuclear Power in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**  
**Abu Dhabi, 30 October - 1 November 2017**

Mr Chairman, Honourable Ministers, dear representatives of member countries, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my honour to represent the Euratom Community at this important event and to have the opportunity to briefly highlight our policy priorities and actions in the fields which are crucial for the continued civil use of nuclear power.

In the European Union, the choice of whether or not to use nuclear energy and to what extent is up to each member state. Nevertheless, the European Union, and – within it – the Euratom Community, plays an important role in the fields of nuclear safety, safeguards, nuclear security, nuclear non-power applications as well as fission and fusion research.

In October 2014, the European Council agreed on a **2030 climate and energy policy framework** for the EU, setting an ambitious domestic target of an at least 40% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions for 2030. Last year, the European Commission prepared a set of legislative proposals called the '**Clean Energy for All Europeans**' with a view to implement these policy objectives. These proposals are currently under discussion.

As a low-carbon energy source, nuclear energy – both fission and fusion – has a role to play, alongside renewable sources, which are

mostly intermittent. The EU is consolidating the enabling environment for the transition to a low-carbon economy through a wide range of interacting policies and instruments reflected under the **Energy Union strategy**.

Let me now focus on some aspects, which are critical for the future role of nuclear energy. First and foremost, there are **safety considerations**, which influence its public and political acceptability. For the Euratom Community, the continuous improvement of nuclear safety, based on new insights and experience, is an essential principle to ensure that we meet the highest standards. This principle is reflected in our **amended Nuclear Safety Directive** which came into full effect last August.

The Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety, adopted in 2015 at the Diplomatic conference of the Contracting Parties to the Nuclear Safety Convention, enshrines the same principle. I am pleased that the Contracting Parties reaffirmed, at their 7<sup>th</sup> review meeting this year, that the principles contained in the Vienna Declaration should continue to be reflected in their actions to strengthen nuclear safety.

A first important action following the entry into force of the Safety Directive is the **topical peer review on ageing management** of nuclear installations. It was launched in February 2017 by the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group with the full endorsement of the European Commission.

Regardless of the future development of nuclear power, **safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel** is a major challenge to be addressed by industry and regulators in the coming decades. The international community should take decisions now on how to ensure the long term management of spent fuel and radioactive waste in order to avoid the transfer of undue burdens to our future generations. Finland is the first country where the construction of a deep geological facility has begun and is expected

to be in operation by 2022. France and Sweden are expected to follow by 2030. We should all learn from the experience of these countries.

**Financial and economic challenges** are also critical for the continued safe use of nuclear power. The European Commission addressed these challenges in its last Nuclear Illustrative Programme, which was issued in May 2017. The programme contributes to a transparent and forward-looking debate, which should include all stakeholders, especially civil society, in the discussion on the role of nuclear energy development trends and the related investments for the period up to 2050. The total estimated cost of investments in the complete lifecycle of nuclear power plants for this period is between 650 and 750 billion euros.

Further to the Nuclear Illustrative Programme, the Commission will take initiatives to improve **industrial standardisation** and **better regulation**, including licensing, with a view to create an enabling environment and support the European nuclear supply chain.

Among different types of reactors under development, **small modular reactors** offer promising perspectives to ensure both high nuclear safety and production sustainability. Euratom's fission research programme has already funded research related to this reactor design and further support can be considered in future programmes.

Looking further into the future and beyond fission-based technology, I would like to underline that the European Union is fully committed towards **fusion energy** as the most promising clean energy source for generations to come. We are proud to have assumed a leading role in the ITER project. Last June, the European Commission adopted a revised schedule and budget estimates for European participation in the project. The new project baseline plans the first experiments for 2025 and full power operation by 2035.

Thank you for your attention.