

Ladies and gentlemen,

Thank you very much for the opportunity to address this distinguished assembly today.

The topic that we are addressing, namely nuclear power and its role in our energy mix, is one of the primary questions also in Slovenia, as well as in the EU. We are all aware today that nuclear power is at the cornerstone of the dilemma of high safety standards on one hand, while on the other hand it's an energy source which can significantly contribute to our fight against climate change.

In Slovenia, we have good experiences with our nuclear power plant. It has demonstrated the highest level of safety standards and it is a reliable source of our national electricity supply. It represents one third of our electricity production and it remains an important source of low-carbon electricity and essential part of our energy mix.

Nuclear power plant in Slovenia has a special feature, as it is operated in partnership between Slovenia and Croatia, where both states are beneficiaries of half of its electricity production. It started operation in January 1984. Current lifetime is envisaged until 2023, however, the discussion on prolongation of operation for 20 more years is underway as it has proved its reliability and value.

Currently a new Energy concept in Slovenia is being prepared, where a continuation of nuclear production is not excluded in the future. This strategic document is drafted in parallel with the developing European climate and energy policy, where one of the main aims is to decarbonise our economies with a gradual phase-out of fossil fuels and increased investments in low and zero carbon solutions.

However, there is one issue I would like to point out in conclusion. The need for safe and responsible management of radioactive waste is a key predisposition for any nuclear programme to be successful. It is our responsibility to find acceptable and safe solutions for present and future generations. Our nuclear power plant is governed by the intergovernmental agreement and we are currently in the process of finding an appropriate and acceptable solution to this issue for both countries.

I believe it is vital to share our experiences and opinions while deciding on our energy future. It is my honour to be part of this debate today. Present and future decisions on the use of nuclear energy affect us all and I would like to thank you for organising this highly valuable debate today.

I wish us all a successful event.