



European Union

**Statement on the occasion of the IAEA Technical Assistance and Cooperation
Committee (TACC) meeting
Vienna, 16-17 November 2020
Agenda Item 3: Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) Project**

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: [Turkey[§], the Republic of North Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Liechtenstein*, Norway*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia and San Marino]
2. The on-going Covid-19 pandemic and other outbreaks in recent years illustrate the utmost importance of international efforts to strengthen in a coordinated manner the global capacity to detect, prevent and respond to zoonotic diseases. The IAEA has demonstrated that the use of nuclear and nuclear-derived tools can make a significant contribution and it has the potential to do more. We thus welcome the Director General's initiative to develop the Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC).
3. The EU welcomes the additional information provided with regard to the proposal for a new interregional project on "Supporting National and Regional Capacity in Integrated Action for Control of Zoonotic Diseases" as contained in GOV/2020/37. In this regard, we recall the needs-based and non-discriminatory nature of the TC Programme. We understand that this technical cooperation (TC) project would operationalise the first pillar of the ZODIAC initiative. Its objective would be to provide support to relevant national institutions and laboratories, in order to enable Member States to obtain the necessary nuclear and nuclear-derived tools and capabilities to more effectively detect, trace and respond to emerging zoonotic diseases.
4. The ZODIAC initiative can strengthen collaborative efforts to mitigate health risks at the human-animal-environment interface. Continued coordination should include experts from international organisations such as the World Health Organisation (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) as well as from Member States, including the involvement of National Liaison Officers. In this regard, the EU takes note with interest of the

[§] Candidate Country

* Candidate Countries the Republic of North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.

* Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein are members of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.

proposal to create a technical Working Group that should look at further ways and means to ensure close cooperation with key partners. Furthermore, we encourage the Secretariat to ensure the establishment of a formal coordination mechanism with relevant international organisations, such as the Tripartite, in the delivery of the TC project, thereby avoiding the risk of duplication and ensuring effectiveness and consistency across the existing international initiatives.

5. The EU looks forward to the outcome of the consultations and technical meetings with Member States and all relevant partners on the planning and implementation of those elements of the ZODIAC initiative, which are not included in the TC off-cycle project. We are interested in acquiring further information on the related principles, procedures and modalities. In this regard, we reiterate the call to ensure engagement with and reporting to Member States on the initiative as well as equal access for all interested Member States to ZODIAC.
6. Having studied the report of the Office of Internal Oversight Services on the Evaluation of Technical Cooperation Activities in 2020, the EU invites the Agency to examine whether findings and conclusions deriving from OIOS evaluations can strengthen the ZODIAC initiative.
7. Underlining that the funding of the ZODIAC initiative will rely fully on extra budgetary contributions, the EU would welcome regular updates on the resource mobilization efforts and its long-term financial sustainability. Additionally, we would welcome information on the structure and organisation of the team tasked to oversee the management of the initiative, including the impact on the existing Agency's staff.
8. With these comments, the EU supports the recommended action as contained in GOV/2020/37.

Thank you, Madam Chair.