



European Union

Statement on the occasion of the IAEA Board of Governors

Vienna, 14-18 September 2020

Agenda item 7: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications

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 European Union would like to thank the Director General for his report contained in document GOV/2020/28-GC(64)/5 on "Strengthening the Agency's Activities related to Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications".*
3. The Agency's work on nuclear science, technology and applications underpins the inalienable right of all States Parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT. The Agency's activities assist Member States and foster international cooperation in further development of the application of radiation and nuclear technologies to significantly contribute to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. Nuclear technologies can also be of great help to fight global warming, mitigate its consequences and monitor its impact. The EU remains committed to ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Madam Chair,

4. The EU commends again the work of the IAEA in responding to the Covid-19 outbreak to provide timely assistance and building capacities of Member States in their efforts to tackle the pandemic, including through the provision of detection equipment and diagnostic kits together with guidance and trainings. We also welcome the crucial role played by the IAEA Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VETLAB) Network to support

[§] 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.

Member States in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the Caribbean and would welcome its extension to laboratories in Europe and in the rest of the world.

5. We commend efforts to increase cooperation with the WHO to help tackling disease epidemics worldwide, as well as other issues such as malnutrition. We renew our encouragement to the Secretariat to continue to strengthen its cooperation and partnership with other relevant organisations, such as the World Meteorological Organisation to address climate change issues.
6. The EU and its Member States commend the important role played by the Agency to help meeting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by supporting the development of nuclear science and applications the highest achievable safety, security and non-proliferation conditions.
7. We welcome the designation of 10 new Collaborating Centres, bringing their total number to 43. Collaborating Centres, technical workshops and online tools constitute major vehicles to ensure continued training and dissemination of knowledge.
8. In that spirit, we commend again the achievements of the joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture in promoting the cost-effective integration of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) into area-wide integrated pest management campaigns, and more specifically its contribution to the African Union's Pan African Tsetse and Trypanosomiasis Eradication Campaign.
9. We welcome the development of SIT packages for the management of disease-transmitting mosquitoes, which are the main vectors of malaria, dengue, Zika virus, chikungunya and yellow fever. Research conducted at the Insect Pest Control Laboratory in Seibersdorf, help to progress towards the development of efficient methods, paving the way to a large-scale use of SIT in populated areas, to fight the spreading of diseases, which remain an extremely severe threat to the health of millions of people worldwide.
10. We welcome the efforts of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division to address lingering food insecurity and the need for increased agricultural productivity and sustainability through the development and use of nuclear science and technology, and acknowledge the value of activities such as coordinated research projects, trainings and laboratory networks in this respect.
11. The EU and its Member States welcome the progress of the implementation of the Renovation of the Agency's Nuclear Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf (ReNuAL project), with the achievements of various milestones over the last year, such as the start of operation of the Yukiya Amano Laboratories and new Insect Pest Control Laboratory. We note that the overall extra budgetary funding raised for the two phases (ReNuAL and ReNuAL+) now reaches €39 million, with the current target budget of ReNuAL/ReNuAL+ of €57.8 million having been exceeded by €470 000. We commend the Secretariat for its innovative resource mobilisation strategy, which enabled reaching out to non-traditional entities.
12. Several departments of the IAEA are working on the subject of small and medium size or modular reactors (SMRs) to explore how SMRs can be used for producing electric and non-electric applications, such as heating and water desalination. Such technologies are being considered by many newcomer countries in the development of nuclear power programmes. International collaboration and exchange of information on such programmes should aim to ensure that their development is accompanied by the highest standards of safety and security as well as a strong regulatory framework, and that it is economically and environmentally viable. We attach importance to the IAEA's work on the legal and institutional aspects of transportable nuclear power plants, including filling the gaps identified in international nuclear law.

Madam Chair,

13. In December 2019, EU Council conclusions on climate change acknowledged “the need to ensure energy security and to respect the right of the Member States to decide on their energy mix and to choose the most appropriate technologies” and that “some Member States have indicated that they use nuclear energy as part of their national energy mix”. It is in this context that a number of EU Member States participated in the IAEA’s “International Conference on Climate Change and the Role of Nuclear Power” held in October 2019 in Vienna.
14. Making a knowledgeable commitment to a nuclear power programme requires the development, implementation and continuous improvement of an appropriate infrastructure, and a regulatory and legislative framework in line with international legal instruments is essential. Such choice also implies, among others, adequate financing, public acceptance and ways to ensure the highest possible standards of safety and security. We welcome the Agency's assistance to the Member States through information, peer reviews and tools to assess all the topics covering the entire lifecycle of a nuclear power programme. We welcome the dedicated attention given to long-term operation, ageing management, obsolescence management, decommissioning, environmental remediation, spent fuel and radioactive waste management.
15. The EU and its Member States take note of the Agency's proactive response to growing Member States interest in decommissioning and environmental remediation by providing assistance in developing decommissioning plans for nuclear power plants and research reactors, and dissemination of lessons learned from the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant Accident and welcome the significant support provided by the IAEA in the field of radioactive waste and spent fuel management, including through ARTEMIS missions.

Madam Chair,

16. The operation of research reactors is not only of high importance for the capacity building and research linked with nuclear programmes but contributes also to research in the fields of human health, food or agriculture. In this regard, we commend the continuing development of the ICERR scheme and the designation of two additional research centres as ICERRs, including the Institute for Nuclear Research in Pitești, in Romania.
17. The EU welcomes the growing attention given to concerns in human resource development and the activities performed to support nuclear knowledge management, in particular through the establishment of educational networks at regional and inter-regional level. Equally, we welcome the activities of the IAEA in these fields in collaboration with European and relevant international actors, such as the European Commission and the OECD/NEA.

Finally, Madam Chair,

18. The EU is favourable to making visible the links between this report and the GC resolution and encourages the Secretariat to reintroduce, in future years, the correspondence between reported activities and paragraphs from the GC resolution in footnotes.
19. With these comments, we support the recommended Board action set forth in GOV/2020/28-GC(64)/5 and its Annexes.

Thank you, Madam Chair.