

**Statement on behalf of the EURATOM Community**

delivered on 20 September 2018 by

**Mr Didier Lenoir, Ambassador of the European Union to the International Organisations in Vienna**

on the occasion of the

**62<sup>nd</sup> General Conference of the IAEA, Vienna**

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by congratulating you, Madam President, on your election as President of this General Conference.

We welcome the comprehensive role that the International Atomic Energy Agency plays in promoting the peaceful use of nuclear energy and other radiation technologies. The cooperation between the IAEA and the EURATOM Community is long and well-established.

I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the European Union's policy priorities and actions.

**Nuclear Safety**

Our approach to nuclear safety in the European Union is anchored on the principles of meeting the highest standards and aiming for continuous improvement. The EU has given legal force to the objectives of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety through its amended Nuclear Safety Directive that entered into force last year.

A key element of the amended directive is the introduction of a safety objective to prevent accidents and avoid significant radioactive releases that needs to be fulfilled by all operators. This objective is in line with the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety, which calls for the timely implementation of reasonably practicable safety improvements in existing nuclear installations.

All Member States have notified the transposition of the new requirements into their national laws. The Commission is currently in the process of assessing that all EU Member States have fully and correctly applied the new obligations in their national legislation.

The amended directives also embedded Topical Peer Reviews in EURATOM law. A first European Topical Peer Review, foreseen under the amended Nuclear Safety Directive, has been carried out and the final report will be published shortly. It focusses on the ageing management of key structures and components in nuclear power plants and research reactors. There are important lessons to be learnt and follow-up action is necessary. The European Commission in cooperation with ENSREG will ensure the implementation and follow up of recommendations from the Topical Peer Review.

EU stress tests have been carried out in Belarus on the Ostrovets Nuclear Power Plant currently under construction. The report has been published on the ENSREG website. The Commission welcomes the good and close collaboration between the Belarus regulator and ENSREG. All parties worked together constructively during this peer review with the commitment to increase transparency and improve nuclear safety. The Commission calls on the Belarusian authorities to swiftly present a National Action Plan and ensure timely implementation of all safety improvement measures in accordance with their safety significance. It will be essential for the credibility of the exercise that the National Action Plan addresses all recommendations identified during the EU stress test and that its implementation is peer review by ENSREG, as was the case for all other EU stress tests.

A key action for ensuring and improving nuclear safety, and a lesson from the recent Ruthenium release, is the need to carefully analyse any incident, as insignificant as its effects may be. Only by understanding the roots and causes of any accidental releases, and by learning the lessons and strengthen regulatory frameworks accordingly, will future accidents be prevented and public trust in the nuclear safety system sustained. We call upon the IAEA in its role as depository to the early notification Convention to draw lessons from past and potential events and take appropriate measures to ensure this.

Strong and independent nuclear regulatory authorities are a prerequisite for nuclear safety. The European Commission is supporting the IAEA in the implementation of peer review programmes in the EU Member States. The IAEA's review services provided under the Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) and the Integrated Review service for Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management, Decommissioning and Remediation (ARTEMIS) help the transfer of knowledge among regulators and strengthen oversight.

EURATOM is committed to strengthening cooperation with the IAEA and looking forward to its active participation in the International Conference on Challenges Faced by

Technical and Scientific Support Organizations (TSOs) in Enhancing Nuclear Safety and Security.

*Spent fuel, radioactive waste and decommissioning*

The long term safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel, including decommissioning and financial aspects of the back-end of the fuel cycle, require our increasingly close attention. The European Union has given legal force to the requirements included in the Joint Convention, to which the EURATOM Community is a Contracting Party.

Supporting Member States, the European Commission is working in close collaboration with the IAEA and contributing to both the IRRS and ARTEMIS peer reviews that are used by EU Member States to fulfil legal requirements.

The European Commission, working with the IAEA and other partners, is supporting the implementation of the strategic master plan for environmental remediation in Central Asia and call Member States to join the programme. A donors' conference will be organised in London on 8 November 2018.

**Iran**

The European Commission attaches a great importance to the full and proper implementation of the JCPOA. We deeply regret the withdrawal of the US from this nuclear deal.

I would also like to mention the ongoing support to the implementation of its Annex 3 on civil nuclear cooperation which makes an important contribution to building long term confidence and increases transparency in the exclusively peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme.

Confidence in the peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme is reinforced by its proactive co-operation with the IAEA in providing accesses under the Additional Protocol. The European Commission's support to Iran is however not only a matter of confidence. It is based and will continue to be based on evidence that Iran continues to respect its obligations under the JCPOA.

The framework for the EU-Iran cooperation is set-out in the outcomes of the high-level seminars on international nuclear co-operation and governance. The first two took place in 2017 in Brussels and in Isfahan and we are now looking forward to the 3<sup>rd</sup> one which

will take place end November in Brussels. These seminars provide the basis for mutual engagement, which takes different forms. Under the Instrument for Nuclear Safety projects support the Regulatory Authority and the Operator, including through the feasibility Study for the Nuclear Safety Centre and stress tests at Bushehr. In June 2017, Iran attended in Brussels for the first time the ENSREG Conference of nuclear regulatory bodies. In July, Iran participated in the EU/Iran Joint workshop on nuclear liability and insurance. In the area of science, technology, research and innovation, the EU has organised conferences and visits to EU facilities for Iranian scientists. The overall ongoing EU intervention in the implementation of civil nuclear cooperation in Iran currently amounts up to €10 million, while more activities are in the planning.

The European Commission is supporting Iran's efforts for swift accession to those international nuclear governance conventions to which Iran is not yet a party.

### **Nuclear Security**

The European Commission is giving particular attention to the first review conference of State Parties under the amended CPPNM planned to be convened in 2021. Close co-operation in preparing the review conference will be key for this instrument to play its role in tackling the challenges linked to the ongoing rise in security threats. The European Commission will, in close cooperation with EU Member States, examine how better information exchange can strengthen security at nuclear facilities, including measures to enhance the application of the amended CPPNM.

The European Commission has continued its support and collaboration with the IAEA in the field of detection of nuclear materials, nuclear forensics and training for front-line officers. The EU CBRN Centres of Excellence continue working on regional basis.

The EU is committed to the minimisation of high-enriched Uranium (HEU) in civil uses. To that end, significant quantities of HEU have been shipped to the US for downblending. The medical radioisotope processing facility in Petten (The Netherlands) was converted from high-enriched to low-enriched Uranium. Other facilities are following.

### **Safeguards**

The European Commission cooperates closely with the IAEA in implementing nuclear safeguards in the European Union and welcomes the IAEA's successful completion of the updating of the State Level Approaches applied in the European Union. It also cooperates with the IAEA outside Europe.

The EURATOM Community provides expert and technical support to the IAEA safeguards through the European Commission Cooperative Support Programme (EC-SP) targeting IAEA safeguards R&D needs.

We look forward to contributing actively to the 2018 IAEA Safeguards Symposium.

### **Nuclear Non-power Applications**

Allow me now to address also the application of nuclear technologies in the non-power areas. The EU continues to support the advancement of nuclear and radiation sciences and technology in different fields, including medicine, industry and research.

In March of this year, the European Commission organised an international conference on the challenges faced in these fields. We were honoured to have Mr. Amano giving a key note speech. The conference, together with the on-going study on the subject, will underpin the development of an action plan, the EU Strategic Agenda for Medical, Industrial and Research Applications of nuclear and radiation technology (SAMIRA).

Our technical collaboration with the IAEA in nuclear non-power applications has developed rapidly over the last year on the basis of the Practical Arrangement signed in early 2017 by the Joint Research Centre.

### **Research and training**

The general objective of the EURATOM Research and Training Programme is to pursue nuclear research, training and knowledge management activities with an emphasis on continuous improvement of nuclear safety, security, radiation protection and fusion energy research. The European Fusion Roadmap remains the basis for EURATOM research activities. It was revised and adopted in July 2018 by EUROfusion to bring it in line with the new ITER baseline endorsed by EU.

The European Commission has published in June 2018 its perspective for funding research and innovation 2021-2027 in the EU .Within the overall budgetary envelope €2.4 billion are allocated to the EURATOM Research and Training Programme for nuclear fusion and nuclear fission, safety and radiation protection, and for direct actions undertaken by the Joint Research Centre.

## **ITER**

Fusion energy research is part of the energy policy agenda of the European Union. The EU together with France continues to assume a leading role in the ITER project. The European Commission has recently adopted the proposal for the European contribution (€6.07 billion) to the project for the period 2021 to 2027. We expect all our partner countries to endorse the baseline so as to reach First Plasma by 2025.

Madam President, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nuclear safety, security, and safeguards are a concern for the whole international community.

Let us take full advantage of the IAEA's over 60 years' accumulated experience and its continuous contribution to developing nuclear power in a safe and sustainable manner.

Thank you for your attention.