



**Statement by H.E. Jan Lipavský
Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic**

at the IAEA International Conference on Nuclear Security ICONS 2024
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Co-Presidents,

Since 2020 the overall security environment has significantly deteriorated. The field of nuclear security is no exception. For the first time in history, a nuclear power plant, Zaporizhzhia, finds itself under occupation by an aggressor country, Russia, with all ensuing risks. We greatly appreciate the efforts by the IAEA to monitor the situation. We deplore, however, that the Agency's monitors do not have full access in and around the plant.

Separately, a whole set of serious nuclear security issues arises at the other three Ukrainian nuclear power plants, such as the possibility of a drone attack or cyber attack.

Czechia remains a dedicated supporter of the Ukrainian Peace Formula and is co-chairing its Working Group 1 on radiation and nuclear safety. Together with Ukraine and our co-chairs, France, Japan, and Sweden, we have organized an expert workshop in Prague on the 15th of April. At the workshop, we received a comprehensive update on the nuclear safety and security situation from Ukrainian officials and experts, with special focus on the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant. Experts discussed how the international community can assist Ukraine in upholding the safety and security of nuclear power plants under its control. We also looked into what steps will have to be taken once Ukraine liberates the Zaporizhzhia power plant. Participants agreed that a detailed roadmap on technical steps for its relaunch should be elaborated.

Turning now to more encouraging developments:

The role of nuclear energy and other applications continues to grow at an accelerated pace. Czechia sees this as an immense opportunity and a way towards clean energy, tackling climate change, and achieving sustainable development for all.

Nevertheless, with the development of new technologies such as advanced reactors, the role of nuclear security must increase accordingly. Effective nuclear security needs to accompany the introduction of new technologies. In this context we already register increased demand on resources. The specific challenge for nuclear security regimes presents the question of qualified staff. We would be interested to hear how others address this issue.

We partner with countries with traditionally highest levels of nuclear security to stay ahead of developments. We also contribute with our expertise and engage in capacity building for others. Notably, we have a long standing partnership with Armenia, related to the power plant in Metzamor.

Peer review is another great way to exchange best practices, build confidence among States and strengthen national nuclear security framework. We recommend everybody to join in. Czechia actively participates in the International Physical Protection Advisory Service and has already hosted three missions. We plan to invite the follow-up IPPAS mission in 2026.

We recognize the importance of maintaining high level of nuclear security and commit ourselves to the revised Joint Statement on Mitigating Insider Threats.

Czechia is a convinced promoter of the universalisation of various instruments, including the Amended Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material. We encourage all remaining States to join.

Finally, we express our support and align ourselves with the Joint Statement of the Co-Presidents and thank them for their tremendous efforts.

Thank you.