

**Statement by Austria**  
**delivered by H.E. Beate Meinl-Reisinger**  
**Austrian Federal Minister for International and European Affairs**

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Madam / Mr. President,  
Distinguished Director-General, dear Rafael,  
Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen!

Austria is of course fully aligned with the EU statement. Allow me to add a few remarks in our national capacity.

The story of our time is being written at the intersection of fear and hope. Fear that mistrust, conflict and competition will overshadow cooperation. That nuclear risks will continue to increase, that nuclear rhetoric erodes the taboo against the use of nuclear weapons. That arsenals expand, while our non-proliferation regime fades and that we face a renewed nuclear arms race.

But there is also hope. Hope that science, diplomacy and shared responsibility can continue to guide us towards a safer world. That we can unite around our common aspirations and build on our decades of cooperation and the impressive architecture we have built. The IAEA is not only part of this story, it is one of its authors – as are we, its member states.

And let me take this opportunity to thank you, dear Raphael, and your fantastic team at the Agency for your tireless work – the IAEA stands proud as an example of the real practical value that expertise, science and tireless impartial work an international organisation delivers to all of us and all of our citizens.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The challenges before us are many, but one stands out most acutely: Russia's unprovoked.

war of aggression against Ukraine, whose consequences reverberate far beyond the region. We urge Russia to cease all irresponsible activities around the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP) and other nuclear installations. It is imperative that the safety and security of nuclear power plants is not compromised. The use of such facilities for military purposes, including launching artillery or rockets, is utterly unacceptable and must stop immediately. We are deeply grateful for the IAEA's work at ZNPP and beyond. We continue to fully support the active IAEA role to ensure nuclear safety and security in Ukraine.

Beyond Ukraine, we face a plethora of grave challenges to nuclear non-proliferation. We deeply regret that, despite sustained diplomatic efforts, Iran has yet to return to full compliance with its JCPOA commitments. The gaps in knowledge about Iran's nuclear programme continue to grow, as do our concerns regarding the nature of its nuclear programme remain absent. There is no alternative to a diplomatic solution and we urge Tehran to seize the opportunity to promptly return to the negotiating table and to commence full cooperation with the IAEA, including on all outstanding safeguards issues, no later than 27 September.

We also call on the DPRK to halt its provocative nuclear and missile activities, return to diplomacy, and engage in meaningful dialogue aimed at the complete, verifiable, and irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

these developments underscore why progress on nuclear disarmament and a paradigm shift away from nuclear weapons is more urgent than ever. Nuclear risks continue to

increase, as do nuclear arsenals. Nobody is safer with more nuclear weapons in more hands. Nuclear deterrence is a high-risk strategy — one made ever more dangerous by the potential for accidents, miscalculations, irrational behaviour, new technologies and disinformation. We know from an increasing body of scientific evidence that the consequences of nuclear weapons would be even graver, global and more complex than previously understood. Prevention is the only strategy. Yet we see more countries arguing that nuclear weapons are necessary for providing security. This inevitably fuels more proliferation to the detriment of our common security. We must break this dangerous arms race dynamic. Austria – along with the non-nuclear armed majority has been arguing for such a paradigm shift for a long time, including through promoting the Treaty Prohibiting Nuclear Weapons. I call on all states to engage constructively with the profound arguments on which this treaty is based.

Dear colleagues,

Austria is a firm supporter of the inalienable right to develop peaceful uses of nuclear energy. With regard to the use of nuclear power, however, the Austrian position is well known. Austria does not consider nuclear power compatible with the concept of sustainable development. Our position is not rooted in ideology – it is rooted in our serious concern about the growing vulnerability of nuclear power plants to climate change, the unresolved challenge of nuclear waste, and the persistent risk of severe accidents with long-term cross-border consequences to the environment and our health.

We fully respect that each country has the sovereign right to choose its energy mix. At the same time, we urge those opting for nuclear energy to adhere to the highest international standards of safety and security. Austria stands ready to continue constructive engagement with the IAEA, supporting its important work in nuclear safety, security, and the promotion of peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology.

Mr. / Madam President,

As the proud host country, we remain committed to fostering dialogue in Vienna and ensuring the Agency has the resources, expertise, and political support it needs. The IAEA's neutrality and technical authority are vital for maintaining international confidence and addressing today's nuclear challenges.

I therefore warmly welcome you all to Vienna and wish you every success for this General Conference.

Thank you.