



Statement on behalf of Euratom

delivered by

**H. E. Ambassador Carl Hallergard,
Delegation of the European Union to the International
Organisations in Vienna**

on the occasion of the
69th General Conference of the IAEA, Vienna

President, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and
Gentlemen,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of Euratom, the European Atomic Energy Community, in addition to the EU statement which was delivered on 15 September

Let me first congratulate you, Mr/Mme President, on your election as the President of the 69th General Conference.

I would also like to warmly welcome the **Maldives** as new Member States of the IAEA.

We would also like to thank the IAEA and the DG Grossi for their tireless efforts and their crucial role to ensure a safe and secure use of nuclear energy and technology for peaceful uses, and to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons.

In the current geopolitical context, promoting safe and secure use of nuclear installations lies at the heart of our cooperation within and with the IAEA. Nuclear safety, security, and safeguards are pre-requisites for the peaceful use of nuclear energy. In this respect, Euratom emphasizes the critical importance of **upholding the existing international legal framework** composed of the UN Charter, humanitarian law, international

conventions as well as IAEA and UN General Assembly resolutions. Current crises show that more efforts are needed to **enforce the provisions** of international law.

Euratom advocates for the **global adoption of the highest international standards in nuclear safety**. This includes compliance with the Convention on Nuclear Safety and the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. It is essential that more countries become parties to these instruments and rigorously apply their provisions. To advance these goals, Euratom leverages **nuclear cooperation agreements**, its **Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation**, and bilateral partnerships with countries and international organisations.

Euratom also strongly supports the conclusions of Additional Protocols to strengthen nuclear safeguards and ensure transparency in the peaceful use of nuclear energy, since they are crucial tools that improve the IAEA's ability to derive safeguards conclusions about the absence of undeclared nuclear materials and activities.

Nuclear safety in Ukraine unfortunately continues to be put at a grave risk by the Russian Federation's irresponsible and dangerous behaviour flagrantly violating international law and safety standards.

Since its illegal seizure in early 2022 by the Russian Federation, the conditions at the **Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant** have continued to deteriorate and remain in violation of the IAEA's Seven Indispensable Pillars and Five Concrete Principles. Under these, all reactors must remain in cold shutdown, as instructed by Ukraine's nuclear safety regulator and recommended by the IAEA. Furthermore, Russian Federation's destructive attacks on **Ukraine's energy infrastructure**, particularly on **electrical substations**, increase the risk of a nuclear accident and present

nuclear safety and security risks to the broader region. In February this year, a military drone strike seriously damaged **Chornobyl's New Safe Confinement**, a structure that took decades of international collaboration to build and stands as a significant technological accomplishment.

Ukraine is not alone to address these challenges. **Euratom continues to provide necessary support to Ukraine**, in enhancing nuclear safety, security and safeguards, emergency preparedness and response capabilities and restoring damaged infrastructure. Earlier this year, in February 2025, the European Commission announced an **additional allocation of nearly €37 million for Ukraine's nuclear safety** from the European Instrument for International Nuclear Safety Cooperation. Part of it will contribute to the repair of the Chornobyl New Safe Confinement.

Euratom will also strongly support Ukraine in its **recovery, reconstruction and modernisation efforts** in its path to **EU accession**. In this regard, we welcome the **Memorandum of Understanding between the IAEA and the Government of Ukraine** which will ensure that the IAEA continues to play an essential role in Ukraine's recovery and energy resilience.

Euratom supports Iran to advance nuclear safety and to further enhance safeguards capabilities related to IAEA verification and monitoring activities in Iran. We will continue to contribute to all diplomatic efforts to reduce tensions and to bring about a lasting solution to the Iranian nuclear issue, which can only be achieved through negotiations.

Investments are also needed within the EU. This year, pursuant to the Euratom Treaty requirement, the European Commission presented the draft 8th Nuclear Illustrative Programme and analysed the EU's nuclear energy sector trends and perspectives in the context of our decarbonisation agenda, geopolitical dynamics, and increased emphasis on competitiveness, affordability, security of supply, and innovation. The programme

highlighted that the nuclear sector in the EU will require investments of around €241 billion until 2050, both for extending the lifetime of existing reactors and the construction of new large-scale reactors. It also emphasized on the need for additional investments for Small Modular Reactors (SMRs), Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs) and microreactors, as well as in fusion for securing our longer-term agenda.

In this context, Euratom continues to ensure the **highest standards of nuclear safety** in collaboration with the Nuclear Safety Regulatory Authorities of its Member States as well as other partner countries. In view of increased risk of nuclear or radiological accident in the EU neighbourhood, Euratom is also taking steps to improve its **emergency preparedness and response**. The cooperation with the IAEA is key in this regard and is therefore being strengthened as agreed in 2024 between Euratom and the Agency. Besides ensuring better interconnection of the European Radiological Data Exchange Platform (**EURDEP**) and **IRMIS systems**, the European Commission is reassessing the Euratom Member States' response capabilities. The **European Community Urgent Radiological Information Exchange (ECURIE) system** is expanding to the EU neighbourhood with Ukraine's accession expected by the end of 2025. Euratom continues to collaborate with the IAEA on various testing exercises, including the latest global nuclear emergency exercise that took place in Romania on 24-25 June this year.

Promoting continuous safety improvements, the **second European topical peer review on fire protection at nuclear installations** has been successfully concluded with publication of the final reports. 18 EU and 4 non-EU countries critically assessed their own fire protection strategies, and peer reviewers identified both good practices and challenges that will be subject to follow-up actions. The European Commission and the **European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG)** also continue to closely monitor the implementation of **post-Fukushima stress tests actions** in EU countries where only very few longer-term actions remain to be finalised.

Third countries are also using the ENSREG methodology to assess safety margins of their nuclear installations in case of beyond-design-basis events. At the end of 2024, ENSREG concluded the **stress test peer review exercise for Türkiye's first nuclear power plant**. It will continue now with the re-assessment of **Armenia's progress** in implementing peer review stress tests recommendations.

The nuclear safety objective cannot be achieved without strong commitment to relieve future generations from any undue burden **of safe radioactive waste and spent fuel management**. While radioactive waste and spent fuel are managed safely in the EU, and some countries such as Finland, France and Sweden **are progressing substantially in constructing deep geological repositories**. The world's first permanent deep geological repository for spent fuel in Onkalo in Finland will be operational in 2026.

Euratom has launched the **EURAD-2: European Joint Project on radioactive waste management**, a joint R&D project to develop safe, responsible and publicly acceptable solutions for the management of radioactive waste in Europe. The European Commission is also carrying out a **study on multinational approaches** to disposal solutions to pool resources and manage costs.

*The **nuclear decommissioning assistance programs** for Slovakia and Lithuania have progressed to a stage where **valuable knowledge can be shared** about the effective approaches applied to ensure the safe and efficient completion of the projects. A lot of knowledge on safety and regulatory requirements has also been built within the Bulgarian decommissioning program, but additional efforts and action are needed to accelerate progress and achieve the goals of the project.*

After the **completion of first cycle of the IAEA IRRS and ARTEMIS missions**, Euratom continues to support these reviews and provide competent experts from national regulatory authorities. We are also cooperating with the IAEA for greater effectiveness of these missions in the future.

Within Euratom, a very important development this year concerns **nuclear safeguards**, which remain an essential pillar of global non-proliferation. A **new Euratom Safeguards Regulation**, which entered into force in July, updating the fundamental reporting rules for users of nuclear material in the EU within the frame of the 'Euratom safeguards' system. The new Regulation provides for an **up-to-date legal framework at the EU level in light of the developments in the nuclear sector and in information technology**. These updates include, among others, provisions on **safeguards-by-design** for certain complex installations, including new builds, major modifications and decommissioning, as well as on technical information for new types of installations expected to become operational in the near future, such as deep geological repositories, encapsulation plants and novel types of reactors.

Nuclear safeguards in the EU are implemented in **collaboration between the European Commission and the IAEA**, in view of the **Euratom exclusive competence** in this policy area. Central to this constructive collaboration are the performance of joint inspections and the development and use of common instruments and tools, as agreed under the **New Partnership Approach**.

Safeguards-by-design principles have been applied systematically, providing a framework for the joint development of safeguards approaches and infrastructure in a number of projects, most notably in the Encapsulation Plant and Geological Repository (EPGR) project in Finland.

It is also important to mention that this year we celebrate **25 years of the Euratom safeguards on-site laboratories at the**

reprocessing plant of La Hague. In the 25 years of operation, the high-quality and independent measurements performed by the on-site laboratory plays a crucial role in safeguarding nuclear material in Europe.

Euratom scientists and experts are also committed, within the available resources, to continue the more than **40-years long support to IAEA safeguards** through the dedicated **European Commission Support Programme**, which addresses a broad spectrum of IAEA research, development and training needs.

In line with EU decarbonisation, security of supply and competitiveness objectives, Euratom is **facilitating the deployment of innovative nuclear technologies, such as SMRs and fusion** and supporting related research and nuclear skills through the **Euratom Research and Training Programme**.

Driven by the EU industry, the **European Industrial Alliance on SMRs** launched in February 2024 has adopted a **Strategic Action Plan** for the development and deployment of the first SMR projects in Europe by the early 2030s. The plan also covers the development of **common standards and collaborative regulatory approaches in the EU for SMR licensing** to ensure the highest possible levels of nuclear safety, security and safeguards. To ensure coherence and complementarity of EU and global efforts, close links are established with the **new IAEA 'Nuclear Harmonization and Standardization Initiative (NHSI)'**.

Considering it a next-generation clean energy technology, the European Commission is also working on a **first EU Fusion strategy**. The strategy will aim to create an environment that supports the private sector, facilitates research and technology, and to explore options for an **EU fusion specific regulatory framework**. **ITER** is one of the most ambitious international scientific collaborations to demonstrate the scientific and technological feasibility of fusion. The knowledge and industrial

base built through ITER will be essential for the future **development of EU's first demonstration fusion power plant** able to produce large quantities of energy on the grid.

For further progress on fusion, stronger cooperation between publicly funded science and the private sector is key. Therefore, to support the creation of a **Public-Private Partnership (PPP) on Fusion Energy**, the **Go4Fusion** project was launched. The project aims at establishing an industry-led European association, that will lay down a Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda and create a **European Fusion Stakeholder Platform (EFSP)**, representing the EU fusion industry and other fusion-related technology centers. Cooperation with the IAEA will remain of key importance to address technological challenges, develop safety standards, and build the next generation of science and engineering in fusion energy.

Significant amounts of EU and Euratom funding is provided to the IAEA for the implementation of **projects in nuclear safety, technical cooperation and safeguards areas**. These include the Regulatory Cooperation Forum, the 'Cradle to Grave' initiative, nuclear skills development initiatives like the International School of Nuclear and Radiological Leadership for Safety and most recently the Lise Meitner programme.

We also look at further scope for collaboration between Euratom and the IAEA and its Member Countries in **non-power applications** of nuclear energy, with Practical Arrangements covering research and development in many areas, including in the very important area of medical use of nuclear science. With long-standing research on innovative cancer treatments, projects for enhancing security of supply and patient access to new radionuclide technologies, as well as radiation protection of patients, Euratom is contributing to **Europe's Beating Cancer Plan** and the Strategic Agenda for Medical Ionising Radiation Applications (**SAMIRA**) initiative.

Before the end of this year, the European Commission will adopt a **Recommendation on the establishment and use of diagnostic reference levels for the benefit of patients**. It also intends to propose the creation of an EU structure - a **European Radioisotopes Valley** - to secure EU's access to source materials needed to produce medical radioisotopes, optimize industrial-scale production, and boost research and innovation into novel therapies and production technologies.

In the wider context of **security of supply**, the efforts deployed by the **European Commission and the Euratom Supply Agency**, to further diversify the full nuclear life cycle supply chain in close cooperation with international partners have continued.

Mr President, Mr Director-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Euratom stands as a **reliable partner** of the IAEA and its member states, dedicated to a **rules-based order** and our shared goal of **ensuring nuclear safety worldwide**. As we confront global challenges, we **remain united in our mission** to uphold nuclear safety. Euratom strongly believes that **crises are best addressed through multilateralism and diplomacy**. Together, we can build a **safer and more secure future for all**.