



## European Union

**Statement on the occasion of the IAEA Board of Governors  
Vienna, 15-20 June 2020  
Agenda Item 10: The IAEA and the Covid-19 Pandemic**

Note: text in italics will not be read out.

Madam Chair,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The following countries align themselves with this statement: [Turkey<sup>§</sup>, 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 EU wishes to thank Director General Grossi for his reports contained in documents GOV/INF/2020/06, GOV/INF/2020/07 and GOV/INF/2020/08.*
3. The EU would like to commend the leadership of Director General Grossi in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic. We highly appreciate the quick actions taken by the Agency in ensuring its business continuation under these prevailing circumstances. The Agency has timely implemented necessary measures to protect its staff while providing assistance and building capacities of Member States in their efforts to tackle the effects of the pandemic, including through the provision of detection equipment and diagnostic kits, as well as guidance and training. We welcome the IAEA's coordination with WHO and FAO as well as its active involvement in the COVID-19 UN Crisis Management Team. We also appreciate the extra-budgetary and in-kind contributions by Member States, including from the EU, in this regard.
4. We underline the importance of the modernisation of the IAEA nuclear application laboratories under the ReNuAL project in tackling the threat that zoonotic diseases pose to human health and well-being. The IAEA's considerable experience in previous outbreaks such as SARS and EBOLA enables Member States' capacities for early detection and monitoring the coronavirus outbreak.
5. *The assistance to Member States to combat future zoonotic disease outbreaks needs to continue. Against this background we take note with interest of the ZODIAC initiative by the Director General regarding the establishment of a system to counter any further transboundary zoonotic diseases by using nuclear and*

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<sup>§</sup> 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.

*nuclear derived techniques and look forward to receive more information on the matter. We hope that the project will serve as a coordinated approach providing a unified platform to support global response to future pandemics.*

6. We equally thank DDG Safeguards and in particular the nuclear inspectors, for their efforts to continue the implementation of safeguards in these difficult times. The health and safety of inspectors was and must remain a priority in the decision making process. While welcoming the achievements so far, we encourage the Agency to monitor the evolving situation closely and ensure strategic outlook in order to maintain preparedness. We also underline the efforts and hard work of EU Member States and EURATOM to ensure inspections activities despite all the restrictions.
7. We welcome early actions taken by the Member States designated to ensure safety, security and continuity of business, and adapting them as the pandemic progressed. The establishment of the dedicated Covid-19 NPP Operational Experience Network to facilitate knowledge exchange and collection of relevant good practices between the Agency and all relevant stakeholders and international organisations, is yet another example of the Agency's effective response.
8. *We also commend the Secretariat for ensuring full operation of the IAEA's Incident and Emergency System and the IEC's continuous readiness to respond to nuclear and radiological emergencies.*
9. The EU is thankful to the Agency's efforts aimed to support mitigation of a significant disruption of medical radioisotopes during the crisis. This is a major challenge and we need to work together to ensure the continuity of those essential services vital for health care.
10. *We express our appreciation to the organisation of all technical briefings and presentations as well as the excellent preparations for the virtual meetings.*
11. With these comments, the EU takes note of the reports *as contained in documents GOV/INF/2020/06, GOV/INF/2020/07 and GOV/INF/2020/08.*

Thank you, Madam Chair.