



# European Union

## EU Statement on

### **Agenda item 4: Strengthening the Agency's activities related to nuclear science, technology and applications**

#### **IAEA Board of Governors**

**Vienna, 13-17 September 2021**

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 European Union would like to thank the Director General for his report contained in document GOV/2021/27-GC(65)/3 on "Strengthening the Agency's Activities related to Nuclear Science, Technology and Applications".*
3. The Agency's work on nuclear science, technology and applications underpins the inalienable right of all States Parties to the NPT to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes without discrimination, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT. The Agency's activities assist Member States and foster international cooperation in further development of the application of radiation and nuclear technologies to significantly contribute to peace, health and prosperity throughout the world. Nuclear technologies can also be of great help to fight global warming, mitigate its consequences and monitor its impact. The EU remains committed to ensuring the responsible, safe and secure development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy.
4. The EU welcomes the Agency's Zoonotic Disease Integrated Action (ZODIAC) initiative to support Member States in addressing emergence and re-emergence of zoonotic diseases through nuclear science and technology. We encourage the Secretariat to continue its efforts to ensure coordination of this initiative with other international organisations in particular the WHO. Synergies and complementarities should be sought also with other initiatives such as PREZODE, intended to prevent emerging zoonotic risks and pandemics, the EU project EKLIPSE as well as the EU Knowledge Centre for Biodiversity that will inform policy makers of biodiversity and ecosystems. We note the

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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.

development of a network of ZODIAC national coordinators and laboratories and look forward to opportunities to contribute to the further deployment of the initiative.

5. The EU notes the important role of the IAEA Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory (VETLAB) Network in the regions that it covers, and would welcome its extension to other regions, including Europe.
6. The EU and its Member States commend the Agency's important role in helping to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through nuclear science and applications under the highest possible safety, security and non-proliferation conditions.
7. In that spirit, we commend again the achievements of the Joint FAO/IAEA partnership and welcome the upgrade of the Division to a Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture. We commend the impressive result obtained with the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT), for instance in Senegal with the suppression of approximately 97% of the tsetse fly populations in the country. The EU welcomes the development of SIT packages for the management of disease-transmitting mosquitoes, which are the main vectors of malaria, dengue, Zika virus, chikungunya and yellow fever. We also congratulate the IAEA for the work carried out jointly with the WHO to develop guidance on testing the SIT as a vector control tool for mosquitoes borne diseases.
8. We also very much appreciate the efforts of the Joint FAO/IAEA Centre to address lingering food insecurity and the need for increased agricultural productivity and sustainability through the development and use of nuclear science and technology.
9. The EU and its Member States welcome the launch of the final stage of modernisation of the Seibersdorf laboratories under the ReNuAL 2 project and the intention to build a second new Flexible Modular Laboratory (FML-2). We note the current funding requirement of €13.6 million and that €8.9 million would be urgently needed to procure and launch the construction of the FML-2 building. We commend the Secretariat's innovative resource mobilisation strategy, which enables reaching out to non-traditional donors and call on all Member States in a position to do so to consider contributing to the project.

Madam Chair,

10. In December 2019, EU Council conclusions on climate change acknowledged "the need to ensure energy security and to respect the right of the Member States to decide on their energy mix and to choose the most appropriate technologies" and that "some Member States have indicated that they use nuclear energy as part of their national energy mix".
11. Making a knowledgeable commitment to a nuclear power programme requires the development, implementation and continuous improvement of an appropriate infrastructure, and a regulatory and legislative framework in line with international legal instruments. Such choice also implies, among others, adequate financing, public acceptance and ways to ensure the highest possible standards of safety and security. We welcome the Agency's assistance to Member States in this respect.
12. Several departments of the IAEA are working on the subject of small and medium sized or modular reactors (SMRs). Beyond support related to technology and project management issues, international collaboration and exchange of information on SMRs should aim to ensure that their development is accompanied by high standards of safety and security as well as a strong regulatory framework. We attach importance to the launch of an Agency-wide platform on SMRs as announced by the IAEA Director General in June, and encourage the Secretariat to provide more information to Member States on the platform, including on how it will ensure a cross departmental approach. Within the

EU, the first EU workshop on SMRs, organised by the European Commission, took place on 29 June 2021.

13. The EU appreciates the support provided by the Agency on long-term operation, ageing and obsolescence management, decommissioning, environmental remediation, spent fuel and radioactive waste management. We also welcome the assistance to Member States in developing decommissioning plans for nuclear installations and the dissemination of lessons learned from the Fukushima accident.

Finally, Madam Chair,

14. In the context of an evolving nuclear technology landscape, the EU is well aware of the importance of the related international legal framework. We therefore welcome the organisation of the First International Conference on Nuclear Law, planned for February 2022 in Vienna.

15. Furthermore, the EU appreciates the attention given to human resource development and nuclear knowledge management and to the collaboration with European and international actors, such as the European Commission and the OECD/Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), in this area.

16. With these comments, we support the recommended Board action set forth in *GOV/2021/27-GC(65)/3* and its Annexes.

Thank you, Madam Chair.