Preparatory Committee for the 2020 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)

2nd Session

(23 April to 4 May 2018)

Statement by

Mr Tobias Krause

Head of the UN Section, Deputy Permanent Representative

Delegation of the European Union to the UN and other International Organisations, Vienna

on behalf of the European Union

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EU Statement on Cluster III issues

Mr. Chairman,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union.

The Candidate Countries the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Serbia* and Albania*, the country of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidate Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova and Georgia align themselves with this statement.

The EU will play a constructive and active role during this review cycle to follow-up to the obligations and commitments assumed under the NPT or undertaken during the previous Review Conferences. In our General Statement, we have outlined the EU’s balanced approach in support of the NPT and its three pillars which are equally important and mutually reinforcing and contribute to international peace, security and stability. We recall that all States Parties have committed to pursuing policies that are fully compatible with the Treaty and the objective of achieving a world without nuclear weapons. All States Parties have also committed to applying the principles of irreversibility, verifiability and transparency in relation to the implementation of their Treaty obligations.

The EU recognizes the inalienable right of States Parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with Article IV of the Treaty, and remains committed to ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy to support the achievement of the UN

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* The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions.

The EU recalls that the NPT has established a solid, rigorous and effective framework for the use of nuclear energy in support of development world-wide. Its thorough implementation is essential to facilitate the use of nuclear applications in a growing number of fields. The effective application of IAEA safety standards and security guidance in the delivery of technical co-operation projects that involve the peaceful uses of nuclear and/or radiological material is necessary to ensure they are used safely and remain secure. This contributes to building the public trust and confidence needed to widen the use of nuclear energy applications worldwide. Against this background, the EU and its Member States have mobilised significant funds over the past 20 years to ensure the safe and secure use of nuclear energy for sustainable development.

The EU and its Member States look forward to the upcoming IAEA Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Science and Technology to be held this November in Vienna. We will strongly support the Co-Chairs and the IAEA Secretariat in the preparation of this event, which aims to highlight the possible contribution of nuclear technologies and their applications to attaining the SDGs, identify new and emerging nuclear technologies relevant to meet current and future challenges and become an important building block in the context of the current NPT review cycle.

Through dedicated financial instruments, the EU works directly with countries in the European neighbourhood and beyond and supports the work of the IAEA. Our funding amounts to an average of €15 million annually in the field of nuclear safety, security, nuclear safeguards and research.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU and its Member States continue to be strong supporters of the IAEA's Technical Cooperation Programme, including through the TC Fund and extrabudgetary contributions such as the Peaceful Uses Initiative. We fully appreciate the Agency's role in promoting the responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology in areas such as human health, food and agriculture, water resources, environment, preservation of cultural heritage, nuclear and radiation safety, and nuclear energy and see this as one of the cornerstones of the IAEA mandate. We strongly support the activities of the Agency to develop radiation and nuclear related science and technologies and to promote their application in the service of the SDGs.
We positively note the Agency's contribution to the achievement of the SDGs in energy, food and agriculture, industry, water and healthcare, as well as in other areas. We acknowledge the role which the IAEA plays in the fight against cancer through the application of nuclear techniques, by providing Member States with assistance in applying a comprehensive approach which covers areas such as diagnosis, radiation oncology and radiotherapy; and quality assurance.

We appreciate the role played by the IAEA in recent years in the international response to emerging threats, like the outbreak of the Zika virus disease in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016, or the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa. It is important that the Agency continues to develop its capacity in such areas. In this respect, the EU and its Member States fully support the IAEA's activities at the Seibersdorf Nuclear Sciences and Applications Laboratories and we see the Director General's initiative on the much needed modernisation of the laboratories (ReNuAL and ReNuAL+) as a key priority. We have contributed more than €5.7 million to the laboratory renovations, in addition to providing in-kind support.

The EU strongly believes that continuous improvement in the implementation of nuclear safety, security and safeguards when developing technical co-operation projects should be constantly sought. One example, among others, showcasing positive international co-operation on Pillar II and III topics is the management of radioactive sources that heavily affect the well-being of the population. The proper handling of radioactive sources and their final safe and secure disposal, as well as international cooperation and experience sharing on alternative technologies to high-activity sealed radioactive sources, benefits human health, and reduces the threat of the malign use of such dangerous material. Achieving and maintaining a solid national nuclear security regime based on IAEA recommendations and guidance, and applying them to TC projects that utilise nuclear or radioactive material, is in the interest of all countries.

Mr. Chairman,

The EU attaches utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety expressed also through its strongest support for the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS). An important outcome of the 7th CNS Review meeting relates to the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety adopted in 2015, which focuses on the implementation of the CNS objective to prevent accidents and mitigate radiological releases. This was made mandatory for EU Member States through the amended Council Directive on Nuclear Safety of 2014. In this regard, the EU and
its Member States fully support the IAEA efforts to make further progress in enshrining principles of the Vienna Declaration in all relevant safety guides and related activities.

In support of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the EU has allocated €225 million over the period 2014-2020 to promote nuclear safety, safety of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel management, radiation protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards in third countries. Funds are channelled through dedicated financial instruments dealing with nuclear safety and safeguards for nuclear material.

The IAEA plays a central role in the global nuclear security architecture, and provides assistance to IAEA Member States in their efforts to ensure the security of nuclear and other radioactive materials and facilities. The EU and its Member States are collectively among the largest donors to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund. While recognising that nuclear security remains the responsibility of each State, the EU and its Member States believe that strengthening nuclear security through international cooperation is essential to prevent unauthorised access to nuclear and radioactive material. Nuclear security remains a crucial element underpinning technical cooperation projects in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including physical protection of materials and facilities, cyber and information security, and security of materials out of regulatory control, in line with the 2017 IAEA General Conference Resolution on Nuclear Security (GC(61)/RES/9), and the Ministerial Declaration for the 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security.

The EU continues to promote multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle which facilitates access to nuclear fuel for many countries. For this purpose, the EU has contributed with around €25 million to the establishment and the secure management of a Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank under the control of the IAEA. We welcome the inauguration of the LEU bank in 2017 and the progress achieved to start the purchase of the LEU.

The EU believes that one important element of nuclear security is preventing nuclear material falling into the wrong hands. The EU encourages all States to minimise Highly Enriched Uranium (HEU) use in civilian applications, where technically and economically feasible. In this vein, the EU welcomes international collaboration to minimise usage of HEU.

Mr. Chairman,
The EU believes that strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime constitutes an important element in the further development of nuclear applications for peaceful purposes. The EU thus calls on all NPT States Parties to be united in ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions, by countries that wish to start or develop capacities in this field.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.