



European Union

EU Statement at the General Debate

**69th General Conference
International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**

Vienna, 15-19 September 2025

President,

I have the honour to speak on behalf of 26 European Union Member States. [alignment clause.]

We congratulate you, President, on your election and assure you of our full support and cooperation.

The EU attaches great importance to the technical and independent mandate of the IAEA which is captured in the motto “Atoms for Peace and Development”.

We are meeting at a time of multiple crises and serious challenges. We can only overcome them together, by upholding and protecting the rules-based international order, with the UN at its core, and by respecting our obligations and commitments.

It is now more than three and a half years since the start of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine and the illegal seizure of Ukraine’s Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant (ZNPP). These are not only violations of the UN Charter and international law, but also violate the very principles of the IAEA Statute. The EU continues to condemn Russia’s war of aggression in the strongest possible terms.

We are grateful to the IAEA for providing crucial assistance to Ukraine, which we strongly support. We commend the courage and professionalism of the IAEA staff operating under unprecedented challenges, providing valuable the first-hand impartial information on the situation regarding all Ukraine’s nuclear facilities. The EU welcomes the recent Memorandum of Understanding signed by the IAEA and Ukraine at the Recovery Conference in Rome. This establishes an important framework for cooperation to support the reconstruction of the country’s energy sector, which has been severely affected by Russia’s aggression.

The EU condemns Russia's continued military strikes on Ukraine's energy infrastructure. Russia's military activities endanger nuclear safety and security. The Agency's recent mission to electrical substations in August provided evidence of vulnerabilities in Ukraine's electricity grid and damage caused by Russia's attacks. These military activities raise the risk of a complete loss of off-site power to all NPPs. The seven indispensable pillars of nuclear safety and security for nuclear facilities during armed conflict are not fulfilled and are compromised. The EU reiterates that they must be respected.

The EU remains deeply concerned by the precarious nuclear safety and security situation at the ZNPP, as repeatedly highlighted by the IAEA Director General. Six of the seven pillars continue to be compromised fully or partially. We insist that under such circumstances all ZNPP reactors remain in cold shutdown. The IAEA must be granted unrestricted and timely access to all requested locations, information and personnel at the ZNPP.

Once again, the EU urges Russia to immediately, unconditionally and completely withdraw all its military and other forces, equipment and other unauthorised personnel from the ZNPP and the entire territory of Ukraine, and return full control to Ukraine's competent sovereign authorities. Russia's plan to connect the ZNPP to the Russian grid is another unlawful attempt to alter internationally recognised status of the ZNPP as Ukraine's facility. Russia must comply with international law and heed the IAEA General Conference and Board of Governors resolutions. The EU will continue to support Ukraine to defend its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity within its internationally recognised borders. The EU supports a full and unconditional ceasefire and remains steadfast in supporting a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in Ukraine.

We are concerned over the potential implications of armed attacks against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes and note the relevant IAEA General Conference resolutions in that regard, in accordance with international law, including the UN Charter.

We take note of the announcement that an agreement has been reached in Cairo between Iran and the IAEA on the technical measures to resume inspections of the Iranian nuclear sites and thank Egypt's facilitation. The EU also takes positive note of the Director General's statement that this is a step in the right direction, and that this agreement will neither amend nor modify Iran's NPT Safeguards Agreement. We look forward to further reporting and call for the immediate implementation of the agreement through practical actions.

The EU remains strongly committed to peace, security and stability in the Middle East and the Gulf. We have always been clear that Iran must never be allowed to acquire a nuclear weapon and that it must comply with its legally binding nuclear safeguards obligations under the NPT. The EU is gravely concerned by Iran's serious curtailing of its cooperation with the IAEA since June 2025. On 2 July 2025, an Iranian law

suspending IAEA inspector access was brought into force. Since 13 June 2025, the Agency has had no access to any of the safeguarded nuclear facilities in Iran, except for the Bushehr Nuclear Power Plant, nor has it received any of the legally required reports from Iran on its nuclear programme. The Director General has reported that the IAEA has now lost continuity of knowledge in relation to the current inventories of nuclear material in Iran, including highly enriched uranium. Iran must urgently allow the Agency to restart its safeguards activities in accordance with the NPT Safeguards Agreement. As the Director General clearly states in his report, Iran's implementation of its Safeguards Agreement cannot be suspended under any circumstances. As the Director General also stressed, while national law may create obligations domestically, it cannot do so for the IAEA.

We call on Iran to remedy its non-compliance by taking all steps deemed necessary by the Agency and the Board, and we fully support the Director General's ongoing efforts in this regard. Without the full implementation of safeguards in Iran being resumed, the Agency will not be in a position to provide any conclusion or assurance regarding Iran's nuclear programme.

The EU and its Member States remain committed to finding a lasting diplomatic solution to the Iranian nuclear issue. As our diplomatic efforts continue, we call on Iran to urgently return to the negotiating table and to refrain from any initiative that may hinder a negotiated solution. We also call on Iran to immediately return to the full implementation of its CSA obligations and full cooperation with the Agency.

We are at a critical juncture. It has been almost two weeks since the notification to the Security Council triggering snapback, which initiated a 30-day window before the re-imposition of previously suspended resolutions. The EU has been clear to Iran and the International Community that we remain committed to diplomacy. Iran should take concrete steps to demonstrate it is serious about finding a diplomatic solution and to engage meaningfully with the E3's resolution 2231 extension offer.

The EU condemns the DPRK's unlawful and destabilising actions that undermine regional and international peace and security. Our concerns are amplified by the DPRK's ongoing nuclear activities, including indications related to expanding plutonium production and uranium enrichment capacities, as well as the DPRK's repeated ballistic missile launches, conducted in violation of UN Security Council resolutions. We urge the DPRK to return to compliance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the IAEA Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement, and to bring into force an Additional Protocol. The DPRK cannot and will never have the status of a nuclear weapon State in accordance with the Non-Proliferation Treaty.

We remain alarmed about the statements made by Russian officials considering the DPRK's denuclearisation as a "closed issue", which is inconsistent with Russia's NPT obligations as well as UN Security Council resolutions that Russia itself voted for. The EU urges the DPRK to engage in meaningful dialogue with all relevant parties to build a basis for sustainable peace and security and to take steps aimed at pursuing the

complete, verifiable, irreversible denuclearisation of the Korean Peninsula. This includes the Agency's return to the DPRK. We condemn in the strongest possible terms the expanding military cooperation between the DPRK and Russia.

We support the Director General's engagement with Syria. We welcome the process of clarification of the outstanding safeguards issues, through Agency visits and access to the sites related to the Deir Ezzor site. The recent contacts between Syria and the IAEA are further steps in the right direction. We agree with the Director General on the importance of continuing and reinforcing cooperation between Syria and the Agency to address unresolved safeguards issues.

President,

The EU remains a strong supporter of the IAEA's work across its full range of responsibilities, in strengthening the international nuclear safety and security frameworks, and implementing nuclear safeguards. We welcome the IAEA's efforts to respond to Member States' requests and address the challenges raised by the nuclear safety and security interface. We call on the Agency to continue fostering complementarity between safety and security in relevant areas, such as transport and training.

Ahead of the 2026 NPT Review Conference, the EU reiterates its firm support for the full, complete, and effective implementation of the NPT across its three pillars and continues to call for its universalisation.

The EU strongly supports the strengthening of the IAEA safeguards system. Comprehensive Safeguards Agreements, together with Additional Protocols, represent the current verification standard under Article III of the NPT. We call for their universalisation without delay. The EU also urges all remaining States, which have yet to do so, to amend or rescind their original standard Small Quantities Protocol and apply the Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement in full. In that regard, we note with concern that the Agency could no longer draw any safeguards conclusions for those States due to the limitations therein.

We attach utmost importance to nuclear safety and its continuous improvement during the entire fuel cycle, and call on all States to work in close partnership with the IAEA on this matter. IAEA peer review services are instrumental for the implementation of EURATOM's legally binding and enforceable safety framework. The EU will also continue to provide significant support to the IAEA's crucial work to support nuclear safety in other countries. We strive for the highest possible levels of nuclear and radiation safety, mindful of the IAEA safety standards.

We encourage all IAEA Member States to promote a strong nuclear safety culture. We strongly support the international nuclear safety instruments (conventions and code of conducts) and their universalisation and effective implementation. We call on Member States Parties to the conventions to fully engage in the review processes. We appreciate the Agency's continued commitment to maintaining fully applicable and up-

to-date Safety Standards and the recently adopted systematic approach to their development.

Given the development of new technologies, such as Small Modular Reactors (SMR), the EU remains committed to strive for the highest level of nuclear safety. The European Commission established in 2024 the “European Industrial Alliance on Small Modular Reactors (SMR)”, which has recently endorsed its Strategic Action Plan with Horizon 2030.

The EU and its Member States reiterate their highest commitment to maintaining and strengthening effective and comprehensive nuclear security. We underline the importance of universalisation of relevant international instruments, in particular the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM) and its Amendment (A/CPPNM) and the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT), to which we encourage all States that have not done so to accede. We encourage all MS to promote strong security culture and support Agency’s commitment to maintain up-to-date Security Guidance. The IAEA requires timely, reliable, and adequate resources to carry out its nuclear security activities, including from the Nuclear Security Fund and the regular budget. The EU and its Member States are major contributors to the Nuclear Security Fund and encourage all IAEA Member States to support it.

President,

The EU and its Member States support the Agency’s activities in the peaceful uses of nuclear science and technology to implement the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development and the Paris Climate Agreements whose historic 10th Anniversary is taking place this year. We acknowledge the need to ensure energy security and respect the right of Member States to decide on their energy mix and chose the most appropriate technologies to collectively achieve our climate target. We recognise that nuclear technologies can be of great help to mitigate the consequences of global warming and monitor its impact.

In line with the objectives of the Summit of the Future, we welcome the IAEA’s contributions to improving human health and nutrition, agriculture, food safety and security as well as water management; to combating climate change and its effects; and to preserving natural and cultural heritage through the peaceful use of nuclear science and technology. We welcome the Director General’s continued work on flagship initiatives, namely Rays of Hope, ZODIAC, Atoms4Food and NUTEC Plastics, and look forward to this year’s Scientific Forum on “Atoms4Water”.

The EU and its Member States reaffirm their longstanding commitment to the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation Programme and its need-based, result-driven, and non-discriminatory nature. We attach great importance to international cooperation between Member States and thank the IAEA for the framework it provides in this area.

We appreciate the IAEA's strong commitment to gender equality. We were delighted to hear from the Director General that the Agency has reached gender parity in professional categories and higher levels early this year and encourage the Secretariat to continue its efforts to mainstream a gender perspective in programmes and projects. The EU commends the success of the Lise Meitner Programme and is proud to be the largest donor to the IAEA's Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellowship Programme, supporting an inclusive workforce of both men and women who contribute to and drive global scientific and technological innovation.

In conclusion, let me express our appreciation for the work of Director General Grossi and all staff at the IAEA. Your mission is more essential than ever. You can count on our full support.

Thank you, President.