

GREECE

STATEMENT by Dr. Christos Housiadas/

Chairman of the Greek Atomic Energy Commission

On the occasion of the Fukushima Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Safety

Koriyama, Fukushima Prefecture, Japan, December 14th to 17th, 2012

Mr. President, Excellences, distinguished delegates,

On behalf of the Greek Government I would like to convey to the Government of Japan our congratulations for the organization of this important conference. Also, we would like to compliment the IAEA for co-sponsoring the conference.

We wish to express our appreciation to the organizers and the staff of the MOFA for the competence and dedication shown.

My government, on behalf of the people of Greece, also wishes to express solidarity and compassion to the people of Japan, for the triple disaster that struck Japan in March 2011.

Mr. President,

My country is a non-nuclear country and nuclear power is not a national option. As the Safety Authority for Greece, we can reaffirm our government's stance, in line with the EU's position, that the nuclear option is a national sovereign choice, as is the composition of each country's energy mix. However, further to that, Greece supports the view that priority must be placed on the development of safe and sustainable sources of energy, without necessarily further expanding nuclear energy.

With respect to nuclear safety, Greece reiterates its interest and support to the international efforts and programmes on nuclear safety and security. Greece attaches particular importance to a high level of nuclear safety and security worldwide.

At national level, aiming at the continuous improvement of the radiation protection and nuclear safety system, Greece, requested an international peer review of the national regulatory framework, including the Greek Atomic Energy Commission as the competent regulatory authority. The review, in the form of an IRRS (Integrated Regulatory Review Service) mission was performed last May (2012). At the time the request was made (in 2009), such reviews were a practice basically for nuclear countries. We believe that this request confirms the commitment of Greece to safety

and transparency. Moreover, we are somehow proud that, despite the difficult period for our country, we fulfilled very early a conventional obligation of the Euratom Directive on Nuclear Safety and that we are maybe the first non-nuclear EU country that undergoes this review.

Clearly, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident did not have any radiological risk for my country. However, as was the case in many other countries, communication during the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident proved to be a challenge in Greece. The Fukushima nuclear accident, for a non-affected country such as Greece, acted as a radiological preparedness learning case, which tested the readiness to perform environmental radioactivity measurements or controls throughout the country and the authority's own capabilities in emergency communication. The importance of several communication crisis management aspects emerged, in particular transparency. In parallel, the need to promote the public awareness in our country regarding nuclear safety issues was highlighted.

Mr. President,

The Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident deteriorated the degree of confidence to nuclear safety and raised legitimate concerns and doubts. It showed that severe accidents were not left behind, neither were they as rare as believed by nuclear engineering.

Considering the transboundary consequences of nuclear accidents, Greece fully supported the decision taken by the European Council for a comprehensive risk and safety re-assessment of the European nuclear power plants (the 'stress tests'). In particular, Greece fully supported the view of inviting to the stress tests the third, non-EU, neighboring countries, which operate, or plan to operate nuclear power plants. Greece, also, participated to the peer review phase of the stress test exercise. Greece believes that peer review is a valuable tool that enhances compliance with the highest international safety standards, promotes transparency and consolidates the global nuclear safety regime.

Mr. President,

I would like to close my statement by praising the Government of Japan for its hard, continuous efforts to remediate the on-site and off-site consequences of the accident and its demonstrated commitment to share experience and knowledge with the international community.

We welcome this conference, the dialogue it promotes and the opportunity it provides for strengthening the nuclear safety regime and enhancing openness and transparency.

Thank you for your attention.