

IAEA Nuclear Power in the XXI century
Conference Statement
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Mr President, Excellences, Ladies and Gentlemen, speaking on behalf of the European Commission I want to first express my appreciation to the IAEA and the Russian Federation for organising this conference in this magnificent city.

Introduction:

In the aftermath of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident, the European Council **gave a mandate to** the Commission and the European National regulators “to carry out comprehensive safety assessments of nuclear power plants”, “extend those tests to neighbouring countries and **to review the existing legal and regulatory framework** for the safety of nuclear installations” and propose any necessary improvements.

The EU stress tests have been carried out in 2011 and 2012. They showed a high level of safety of the EU nuclear power plants and did not require any urgent action to close down a NPP. At the same time they produced a wide spectrum of recommendations that was consolidated by EU Member States in national action plans for their implementation.

In the whole process, EU neighbouring countries operating, owning or planning nuclear power plants have been associated to different degrees. Switzerland and Ukraine participated fully.

The European Commission has just two weeks ago adopted a draft proposal to amend the existing EU Safety Directive on the basis of **various sources of expertise**, in particular the technical progress achieved by the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Western European Nuclear Regulators Association, as well as the lessons learned from the Stress Tests and the Fukushima nuclear accident investigations. It also **takes into account the views expressed by stakeholders**, in particular the national regulators reunited in ENSREG, experts on radiation protection, industry and civil society.

Main areas of proposed amendment:

a) Safety objectives for nuclear installations (Art. 8a-8c)

The proposal introduces ambitious EU-wide nuclear safety objectives for all types of nuclear installations which reflect the progress achieved at the level of WENRA. The main objective is to avoid as much as possible the release of radioactivity outside the containment of nuclear power plants in case of incidents or accidents. This is specifically reinforced for new nuclear power plants, where the use of “best available technologies” is the guarantee to achieve this result.

These objectives set up a flexible and dynamic process by specifying "what" should be done but not "how" it should be done. In addition, more specific provisions on how to achieve these objectives are laid down in the proposal to allow for a consistent and verifiable implementation.

b) European system of topical peer reviews (Article 8e)

The proposal reinforces the EU wide safety monitoring and exchange of experiences by establishing a European system of topical peer reviews of nuclear installations building on the successful stress tests concept. It is based on nuclear safety topics selected by the Member States jointly, and in close coordination with the Commission.

It involves – after the selection of one or more topics – in a first step a national assessment and in a second step a peer review of the outcomes. These peer reviews will be an effective mechanism to verify the level of compliance with the new safety objectives in each Member State and to ensure a consistent transposition of those objectives into concrete technical improvements in the EU installations.

c) EU-wide harmonised nuclear safety guidelines (Art. 8f)

The proposal establishes a mechanism for developing EU-wide harmonised nuclear safety guidelines. The guidelines are to be developed by Member States with the support of the competent regulatory authorities and based on the results of the European topical peer reviews.

d) Independence and role of national regulatory authorities (Art. 5)

The proposal enhances the effective independence of the national regulatory authorities, ensuring that:

- they are free from undue influence in their decision making, and
- political, economic or societal interests do not override safety issues.

e) Transparency (Art. 8)

The proposal enhances transparency on nuclear safety matters: a transparency strategy must be developed both by the competent regulatory authority and the licence.

f) On-site emergency preparedness and response (Art. 8d)

The proposal includes new provisions regarding on-site emergency preparedness and response as the current Directive does not provide for such measures.

Next steps in the legislative process:

The proposed Directive has currently the status of a **draft proposal**. The Commission will **formally adopt the legislative proposal** to the EU Member States after the summer break. EU Member States will have to decide on this proposal and transform it into a law.

Cooperation with the IAEA and other countries

The European Commission is also actively working with the IAEA to deepen our partnership on all safety and waste related aspects.

Let me conclude that we are willing and interested to offering the EU experience and safety framework for inspiration and as a model for other countries, in particular those embarking on the path of developing this energy source. Following the same nuclear safety objective but having national flexibility on how to achieve it may be an attractive concept for global solutions.