

Speech given by

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Mr. Chairman,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to begin by thanking our Russian hosts and the IAEA for holding this conference at such an historic and fascinating location.

The theme of our conference, “Nuclear Power in the 21st Century” probably means something different for Germany than for many other countries around the room. Following the nuclear disaster in Fukushima, Germany decided to phase out nuclear power by 2022. This decision is one element of a fundamental and ambitious transformation of our energy system, and our reforms are attracting a great deal of attention all around the world.

At the same time Germany respects the sovereign right of every country to choose its own energy mix, whether with or without nuclear energy.

And, Germany will continue to be involved in nuclear power for decades. Although Germany has decided against using nuclear energy to generate electricity, we will still have nuclear power plants in Germany for nearly another decade, until 2022. These will then have to be decommissioned and dismantled.

And treatment and disposal of the waste will take several more decades.

Tomorrow the German parliament will adopt a law on this – a bill supported by all parties will set up a Federal-state commission to clarify basic questions of the treatment and disposal of highly radioactive waste. It will also prepare the procedure to identify a final storage site for this waste in Germany.

At the same time, we are aware of the cross-border relevance of the safety of nuclear power plants abroad.

In view of this, Germany will continue to play an active part in international co-operation for the highest possible level of safety in the use of nuclear energy: bilaterally, in the EU, and internationally, for example in the IAEA. We will continue to support the application and development of international safety standards. No matter where they are built, new reactors

should meet these high standards and be subject to controls by independent regulatory authorities. Reactors already in operation should be retrofitted as required. We have a common interest in establishing and strengthening an international culture of safe nuclear energy use.

The mutual risk assessment of nuclear facilities – known as the “EU stress test” – which was undertaken by the states of the European Union and some of its neighbours from summer 2011, was an important step forward in this regard. The “peer review” method and the greatest possible transparency are particularly suitable ways of boosting the necessary trust in countries using nuclear power and in the operators of nuclear facilities.

When it comes to the use of nuclear technology in medicine, industry and research, we in Germany will certainly keep working hard to maintain a leading position. Innovative high-tech components and materials for nuclear applications are developed and produced in Germany. And we have one of the most modern research reactors. Radiopharmacy and semiconductor industry are other fields for nuclear applications. All these fields are not affected by the decisions on the phase-out, and a high-tech country like Germany will continue to need them.

And we will remain an active and capable partner in international co-operation.

At last year’s Nuclear Security Summit in Seoul, the heads of state and government agreed that the safety of nuclear power plants is closely related to the security of these facilities and the radioactive substances in them. Nuclear security and measures against nuclear smuggling are key preconditions for effective non-proliferation.

In this spirit, Germany has already spent a considerable amount of money in Russia since 2002 on bilateral and multilateral projects in the context of the G8 Global Partnership, in order both to dispose properly of decommissioned nuclear submarines, and to modernise the physical protection of nuclear facilities.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to summarise:

Germany will continue to handle questions of the safe use and decommissioning of nuclear power plants, as well as of the disposal of nuclear waste in our own country, for decades to come. At the same time, we wish to press ahead with the international development of the safety of nuclear power plants around the world – in our own interest.

In view of this, I was very happy to accept the invitation to this important conference, and I wish all the participants every success.

Thank you.