

**Statement by Rolandas Kriščiūnas, Vice-Minister of Foreign Affairs of the
Republic of Lithuania**

at the IAEA Ministerial Conference “Nuclear Power in the 21st Century”
St. Petersburg, 27 June 2013

Dear Director General, dear President of the Conference,
Ladies and gentlemen,

It is, indeed, a pleasure and a privilege to address such an honourable audience here in St. Petersburg today.

Lithuania sees this conference as a timely and important initiative contributing to the ongoing discussions around the world about the future of nuclear energy.

In the context of growing energy demand nuclear power is and will remain an important part of world energy mix.

I do not doubt this.

Nuclear power is, also, a climate friendly source of energy, which does not contribute to world CO₂ emissions.

Saying this, I should stress the obvious – there can be no nuclear energy without nuclear safety. Reaching a new level of nuclear safety and security and gaining acceptance from public, in our view, is the only feasible way to overcome any existing doubts related to nuclear energy development.

Today I will focus on three aspects which, in our view, could be taken as prerequisites for successful future nuclear energy development.

Firstly, the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is and should remain the key institution to monitor nuclear safety worldwide**. Lithuania fully supports and appreciates efforts of the Agency and Director General Mr. Yukiya Amano. The Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, endorsed by the 55th IAEA General Conference, has defined a number of actions required to enhance nuclear safety worldwide. Joint efforts of Agency and its member states produced concrete results – currently actions are being undertaken to increase transparency, enhance effectiveness of peer review missions, to strengthen regulatory bodies, to review safety standards and international emergency preparedness framework. Our societies have full right to play an active role; therefore, increasing public awareness about new safety measures and results of IAEA missions is also very important achievement. Having achieved all this, we should still further strive strengthen the Agency’s role on nuclear safety.

Secondly, **international nuclear safety standards should become universal and be applied without compromises**. Currently, an implementation of existing International Atomic Energy Agency’s nuclear safety standards is based on the goodwill of countries. International conventions in this area, such as Nuclear Safety Convention, Joint Convention on Radioactive Waste Management Safety and Nuclear Fuel Management Safety and UN Espoo Convention rely more on recommendations, proposals and encouragement of cooperation rather than on strict legal imperatives.

We all should evaluate possibilities not only to strengthen existing nuclear safety standards, principles and conventions but, more importantly, should strive to agree on stricter and legally binding implementation of such regulation. It is our common

interest to have safe environment and ensure diversification of energy sources through peaceful development of nuclear energy. Otherwise, there could be no win-win situation – if nuclear energy loses the credibility, we all will lose nuclear alternative for energy supply.

Dialogue between neighbouring countries on application of international conventions and safety standards in this regard is especially important. Lithuania, from its own experience, can stress that dialogue between neighbouring countries is not without complications, unfortunately, it is a long and bumpy road to go.

We do have a case of breach of Espoo Convention by our neighbour – Belarus; the situation with the project in neighbouring Kaliningrad region, in its essence, is not much better. We are convinced that Espoo Convention should not be treated as a pure formality and remain hopeful that our neighbours will share this view.

My third point concerns comprehensive nuclear safety assessment or stress tests recently carried out by all EU member states. It was a very important step towards confidence in a high level of nuclear safety. EU neighbouring countries were also invited to participate in this activity. **Regular worldwide nuclear safety assessments according to the same agreed methodology** should become a reality, not only a desire.

Finally, taking the occasion, I would like to point out that in a few days **Lithuanian Presidency of the Council of the European Union** begins. During the Presidency Lithuania will pay special attention to energy security and safe nuclear energy development. Lithuania would like to contribute to the Asia-Europe cooperation by continuing the discussions on nuclear safety within Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) which have been given a good start by Singapore. Therefore, the **second ASEM seminar on nuclear safety “International Instruments for Ensuring Nuclear Safety” will take place in Vilnius on 4-5 November 2013.**

Thank you for your kind attention.