Mr. Chairman,

1. I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union and its Member States. The following countries align themselves with this statement: Turkey§, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, Montenegro*, Iceland*, Serbia*, Albania*, Bosnia and Herzegovina*, Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia, Georgia and Andorra.

2. The European Union recognizes the right of States Parties to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty and remains committed to ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy in the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions.

3. The Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons provides a solid framework for promoting confidence and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Its thorough implementation is essential to facilitating the use of nuclear applications in a growing scope of areas. In order to ensure the peaceful uses of nuclear technology worldwide, it is paramount that IAEA safety standards and security guidance are applied to technical co-operation projects that involve the use of nuclear and/or radiological material. Against this background, the European Union and its Member States have used part of their assistance for the past 20 years to ensure the safe, secure, and safeguarded use of nuclear energy.

Mr. Chairman,

4. The European Union and its Member States provide substantial financial support to both the IAEA, and IAEA Member States, in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy and technology, also through technical expertise, and continue to be strong supporters of the IAEA’s Technical Cooperation Programme, including through the TC Fund and the Peaceful Uses Initiative. We fully appreciate the Agency’s role in promoting responsible development of peaceful applications of nuclear technology in the areas of, inter alia, human health, food and agriculture, water resources, environment, preservation of cultural heritage, nuclear and radiation safety, and nuclear energy.

§ Candidate Country
* Candidate Countries Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania as well as potential Candidate Country Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.
+ Iceland is a member of the EFTA and of the European Economic Area.
5. We appreciate the IAEA's role in recent years to respond to emerging threats, like the outbreak of the Zika virus disease in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016, or the Ebola virus outbreak in West Africa. It is important that the Agency continues to develop its capacity in such areas. In this respect, the EU and its Member States support the IAEA's activities at the Agency's Nuclear Sciences and Applications Laboratories at Seibersdorf and the Director General's initiative on the much needed modernisation of the laboratories (ReNuAL and ReNuAL+). The EU and its Member States have contributed more than €4.5 million to the laboratory renovations, in addition to providing in-kind support.

6. We also fully support the IAEA's comprehensive Programme of Action for Cancer Therapy (PACT) and positively note that the IAEA has been actively participating in the global development dialogue on the post-2015 Development Agenda, advocating the importance of nuclear science, technology, innovation and capacity building in the framework of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Mr. Chairman,

7. The European Union underscores that, in accordance with Article IV of the NPT, each country is free to decide whether or not to include nuclear power as part of its own energy mix. If countries opt for nuclear power, it is essential that it is used safely and securely. The EU attaches utmost importance to the worldwide implementation and continuous improvement of nuclear safety. The amended Euratom Directive on Nuclear Safety, among others, sets the objectives of preventing accidents and, should they occur, mitigating the consequences and avoiding early and large radioactive releases. This objective is also part of the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety adopted on 09 February 2015 at the CNS Diplomatic Conference by the Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS). The EU and its Member States emphasize the importance of implementing the report on "Building on the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety". The 7th review meeting of the CNS in March/April 2017 concluded successfully with Contracting Parties agreeing action points for the summary report, such as making a reference to the Vienna Declaration on Nuclear Safety in INFCIRC/ 572/Rev.5.

8. Following the 2011 Fukushima accident, risk and safety assessments ("stress tests") of all EU nuclear power plants were carried out to re-assess their overall safety and robustness against extreme natural events. The results confirmed that EU Member States were complying with high standards of nuclear safety, but also recommended that tangible safety improvements should be implemented. To that effect, many safety enhancements have been carried out in accordance with national action plans developed by national nuclear safety regulators, and jointly reviewed by them. The high priority of nuclear safety for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy is fully reflected in the relevant Euratom legal regime through the revision of the Nuclear Safety Directive and the Basic Safety Standards, and the provisions under chapter 3 of the Euratom Treaty.

9. In support of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the European Union has allocated €225 million for the period 2014-2020 to promote nuclear safety, safety of radioactive waste and spent nuclear fuel management, radiation protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards in third countries. Funds are channelled through a dedicated financial instrument, the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, dealing with nuclear safety and safeguards for nuclear material.
10. While recognising that nuclear security remains the responsibility of States, the European Union and its Member States believe that strengthening nuclear security through international cooperation is essential for ensuring the protection of people and the environment and that nuclear security remains a crucial element underpinning technical cooperation projects in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy including Physical Protection of materials and facilities, Cyber and information security, and security of materials out of regulatory control, in line with the 2016 IAEA General Conference Resolution on Nuclear Security (GC(60)/RES/10), and the Ministerial Declaration for the 2016 International Conference on Nuclear Security.

11. The European Union strongly supports the central role of the IAEA in the global nuclear security architecture as widely recognized by international initiatives which have contributed to strengthening nuclear security. In this regard, the entry into force of the Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, to which all EU Member States, as well as the Euratom Community, are Parties, is a milestone. The EU also reaffirms the importance of the Code of Conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources and its supplementary guidance.

12. With regard to nuclear and radiological security, significant progress has been made in the last decade in the EU through the implementation of an EU-internal plan on chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear security. The CBRN Centres of Excellence (CoE) initiative provides a platform for voluntary regional cooperation with currently 56 partner countries on all CBRN-related hazard issues with a budget of €156 million for the period 2014-2020.

13. Together with the bilateral contributions from its Member States, the European Union is the second largest donor to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund. The total EU financial contribution to the Fund, based on six successive Council Joint Actions/Decisions has reached more than €50 million for the period 2009-2019. EU funding to the IAEA has helped the Agency to assist countries to upgrade and ensure the physical protection of selected facilities, improve their national regulatory infrastructure concerning physical protection and the safety and security of radioactive material and to enact the necessary legislation.

14. The EU continues to promote multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. For this purpose, the European Union has been contributing to the establishment and the secure management of a Low Enriched Uranium (LEU) Bank under the control of the IAEA. The over €4 million contribution will help to ensure that nuclear fuel is supplied in a secure and safe manner. It will also help the IAEA guarantee the security and safety of LEU transport from procurement to supply, and during storage at the Bank's site. Under the Instrument for Stability, the European Commission provided €20 million for the purpose of acquiring the LEU once the project is fully operational.
Mr. Chairman,

15. The EU believes that strengthening the international nuclear non-proliferation regime constitutes an important element in the further development of nuclear applications for peaceful purposes. The EU thus calls on all NPT States Parties to be united in ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy, under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions, by countries who wish to start or develop capacities in this field.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.