

Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Efforts to strengthen nuclear safety

Working paper by the European Union

1. The European Union recognizes the right of States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons to use nuclear energy for peaceful purposes, in accordance with article IV of the Treaty and with due regard to articles I, II and III thereof, and remains committed to ensuring the responsible development of peaceful uses of nuclear energy under the best safety, security and non-proliferation conditions.
2. The accident that occurred on 11 March 2011 in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was a major event in the history of the peaceful use of nuclear energy. It will take several more years for the international community to draw all lessons from the Fukushima Daiichi accident and the efforts of all stakeholders in this regard must be maintained. In this context, education, training and knowledge management are of utmost importance in establishing an adequate nuclear safety infrastructure.
3. The European Union and its member States are dedicated to promoting the continuous improvement of nuclear safety on the basis of common objectives and references, both within the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and at the international level.

Within the European Atomic Energy Community

4. The EURATOM directive establishing a community framework for the nuclear safety of nuclear installations was adopted on 25 June 2009. The objective of the directive is to maintain and promote the continuous improvement of nuclear safety. Member States shall provide for appropriate national arrangements for a high level of nuclear safety within the European Union. This directive contains provisions of utmost importance for nuclear safety, such as the obligation to arrange at least every 10 years for periodic self-assessments of their national framework and competent regulatory authority and to invite international peer reviews in the field of nuclear safety. Two years later, on 19 July 2011, a directive establishing a Community framework for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive



waste was adopted, creating a comprehensive legislative framework for both nuclear installations and radioactive waste and spent fuel management.

5. Furthermore, after the Fukushima Daiichi accident, all nuclear power plants in the European Union underwent comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessments (stress tests) and peer reviews in 2011 and 2012. These stress tests, led by the European Nuclear Safety Regulators' Group concluded that there were no technical reasons requiring the shutdown of any nuclear power plant in Europe, and identified a series of good practices and recommendations to be undertaken by operators of the member States, under the control of national regulators. Moreover, as requested by the European Council, a revision of the directive on nuclear safety is currently being discussed by the European institutions with a view to strengthening the regulatory framework for nuclear safety. The enhancements aim to ensure greater clarity on the measures needed to ensure the independence of the national regulatory authorities, provide for greater transparency on nuclear safety matters, formulate safety objectives for all nuclear installations in the European Union and, finally, reinforce the peer reviews mechanism.

6. It should be noted that directives set common rules and common basic standards. They do not prevent member States from adopting or maintaining more stringent provisions in their domestic laws.

At the international level

7. The European Union fully supports the central role played by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in coordinating international efforts to strengthen nuclear safety. The action plan on nuclear safety, adopted in 2011 by IAEA member States, identifies the fields where national and international efforts regarding nuclear safety are most needed. Progress on its implementation by the secretariat and member States of IAEA has been reached since 2011 and efforts in this regard should be maintained. After 2015, a common and long-term vision of actions needed to strengthen nuclear safety, shared by IAEA member States, should be maintained. To strengthen the coordination of the cooperation between EURATOM and IAEA, a memorandum of understanding on nuclear safety cooperation was signed in September 2013.

8. We underline the importance of continuing international cooperation in order to strengthen nuclear safety, the management of waste in a safe and secure way, radiological protection and civil nuclear liability, and call upon States that have not yet done so to accede to all the relevant conventions as soon as possible and to implement fully the ensuing commitments. In particular, the European Union member States are committed to working towards a global civil nuclear liability regime that addresses the concerns of all States that might be affected by a nuclear accident with a view to providing prompt, adequate and non-discriminatory compensation for nuclear damage. The European Union member States encourage the States that have not done so to give due consideration to the possibility of joining, as appropriate, the relevant international liability instruments.

9. The IAEA comprehensive report on the Fukushima accident, due for completion this year, will be important to further strengthening nuclear safety, and the European Union and its member States have continued to provide both in-kind and financial support to this important work. This report will provide a comprehensive and factual assessment of the accident at Fukushima Daiichi that addresses the causes, consequences and lessons learned.

10. The European Union and its member States encourage all States to seek continuous improvements to nuclear safety on the basis of the state of the art of scientific and technical knowledge to help to achieve the high levels of safety across the globe and as a minimum implement IAEA safety standards. The European Union member States are committed to the implementation of the code of conduct on the safety of research reactors as well as the code of conduct on the safety and security of radioactive sources and encourage all States to do so.

11. The European Union considers as a priority the universalization of the Convention on Nuclear Safety, the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. So far, 65 States have signed and 77, including EURATOM as a regional organization, have ratified the Convention on Nuclear Safety. 42 States have signed and 69, including EURATOM as a regional organization, have ratified the Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management. The European Union calls upon all States that have yet not done so, especially those planning to embark on a nuclear power programme or having recently commissioned a nuclear power plant for the first time, to sign and ratify these conventions without delay. We also encourage all contracting parties to actively engage in review meetings of contracting parties.

12. Strengthening the effectiveness of these Conventions is of utmost importance. In this regard, the European Union and its member States took a leading role in developing proposals to enhance the effectiveness of the Convention on Nuclear Safety during their recent sixth review meeting as a result of the Working Group on Effectiveness and Transparency, including the adoption of measures to enhance the review process and the convening of a diplomatic conference within one year to discuss one amendment to the Convention. The European Union and its member States are committed to increasing active participation of contracting parties in the review process of the Convention, to work towards promoting and implementing non-binding measures adopted by the sixth review meeting, such as the inclusion in the summary of national reports of a description of policies, plans and schedules for inviting international peer review missions and follow-up missions, and to voluntary report in national reports relevant information on the safety of other types of civilian nuclear reactors.

13. The European Union and its member States are currently, together, one of the largest providers of aid and assistance. As an example, it has consistently supported the promotion of nuclear safety worldwide, and has contributed €225 million over the period 2014-2020 through its instrument for nuclear safety cooperation. The projects funded by that instrument aim at supporting the promotion of a high level of nuclear safety, radiation protection and the application of efficient and effective safeguards of nuclear material. The member States have also allocated financial support for activities on nuclear safety to be implemented by IAEA under the Technical Cooperation Programme, which provides assistance to countries to upgrade their nuclear safety infrastructure and respond to emergencies. The European Union would also like to underline that the valuable contribution of various peaceful applications of nuclear energy to promoting the attainment of the Millennium Development Goals also depends on cooperation in the field of nuclear and radiation safety.