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Declaration

May 25, 2011, Vienna

Ministers and Heads of Delegations of Austria, Greece, Ireland, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta and Portugal, responding to the challenges posed by another severe nuclear accident, met in Vienna today, in order to enhance co-operation and contribute further to the discussions as regards environment, combating climate change as well as developing safe and sustainable energy systems without necessarily relying on nuclear power.

Ministers and Heads of Delegations reiterated their utmost sympathy for the plight of the Japanese people as well as their solidarity. They underlined their readiness to learn jointly from this event.

The disastrous earthquake and tsunami on March 11, 2011, and the subsequent events in the Fukushima Dai-ichi nuclear power plant which has now been classified as a level 7 accident on the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale (INES), once more demonstrated that the risks of nuclear power outweigh any potential benefit.

The principal issues discussed at the meeting were environmental aspects of nuclear power, climate change policies, the potential for phasing out nuclear power, nuclear safety, nuclear security and safeguards; the expectations regarding the stress tests for nuclear power plants; the need for more and better information to be provided to countries neighbouring nuclear states; issues of transparency and participation regarding nuclear plans and projects; but in particular alternatives to nuclear power and the need to ensure the development and provision of safe and sustainable energy supplies and services.

In their discussions, Ministers and Head of Delegations

- Emphasised their view that nuclear power is not compatible with the concept of sustainable development and underlined their conviction that nuclear power does not provide a viable option to combat climate change.

- Reiterated that the very significant safety, security, environmental and proliferation risks associated with the nuclear power option remain, and need to be further addressed by the international community, including co-operation between nuclear and non-nuclear states in assessing the risks, exchanging information on their management, and enhancing preparedness for responding to nuclear emergencies.
- Stressed the need to fully draw the lessons from the events in Japan, and that such lessons are promptly acted upon, in particular for the European energy policy, to ensure that the highest standards for nuclear safety are implemented - including the closure of installations which cannot be upgraded within a reasonable time frame and that renewable energy and energy conservation play a major role.
- Welcomed that comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessments (stress tests) will be performed within the European Union, and supported the EU's invitation to its neighbouring states and worldwide to do likewise.
- Appreciated that external and internal initiating events, even if extremely unlikely, as well as a combination of these are considered and that the potential interaction of several installations at the same site is duly taken into account.
- Requested that the design basis is radically reassessed and that safety margins are clearly identified.
- Requested that the process agreed for these stress tests be applied to future plants as soon as their design becomes available.
- Acknowledged that the assessments will be performed by the licensees under the supervision of independent national authorities, that the assessment will be reviewed by the pertinent national authorities and that the national reports will undergo a peer review, and requested that the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group's (ENSREG) "principles for openness and transparency" will be applied fully.
- Underlined that the implementation of the stress tests, the assessment of the results as well as recommendations for consequential measures to be taken shall be published and discussed with the broad participation of stakeholders, including independent experts, non governmental organisations, etc., in a comprehensive and transparent way.

- Called upon all governments to make stress tests for all nuclear plants mandatory.
- Called upon regulators as well as operators to prepare and perform these stress tests rigorously and without delay as well as to take appropriate action in the light of their results, including safety upgrades and shut-down.
- Called upon all governments to ensure transparency and accountability in their decisions and that all aspects of nuclear power, including its risks, are clearly articulated to their citizens, in order to enable a balanced and informed debate to take place.
- Emphasised that the transboundary nature of the risks associated with nuclear power should be considered in the context of States' collective responsibility for the health and environment of their citizens which demands that the interests and concerns of other States, notably neighbouring States, are taken into account by nuclear states in relation to all nuclear projects and installations.
- Emphasized that effective and efficient environmental liability regimes should be in place, including nuclear liability, which should ensure maximum protection of those injured or damaged.
- Called on the EU to consider ways to improve coordination between its Member States and its neighbours in order to ensure prompt and effective emergency response strategies and to consider the establishment of a joint severe accident management mechanism.
- Underlined that nuclear and non-nuclear states should make full use of the pertinent provisions of European as well as international law regarding public participation and consultations with countries which are likely to be exposed to adverse transboundary impacts of nuclear installations or projects. Furthermore, nuclear countries were invited to jointly work on the improvement of such provisions.
- Agreed to cooperate at regional and international level in order to secure the highest common safety standards for nuclear installations with due regard to the interests of all states.

- Called on the EU to continue their work in the field of nuclear safety and to promote transparency, inter alia by encouraging ENSREG to identify effective measures to support these goals.
- Reemphasised their commitment to articulate their shared concerns regarding nuclear power and – once again - called upon nuclear countries to take decisive action in addressing the critical issues arising from the operation of nuclear facilities namely, safety and security concerns, pollution risks, radioactive discharges, nuclear liability, waste and proliferation risks.
- Called on the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to enhance its supporting role for national regulatory functions, including emergency preparedness, safety, facility and material security, and safeguards.
- Underlined their conviction that an increase in energy saving and efficiency combined with a switch to renewable sources of energy and to develop other environmentally sound non-nuclear low greenhouse gas technologies, is the sustainable way to meet the climate and energy challenges we face.
- Agreed that a key challenge for reaching climate targets is to change the way in which energy is produced and used; noted that there are multiple co-benefits from sustainable energy policies for climate change, air pollution and many other environmental and development goals. Identified the need to intensify work in two broad areas:
 - promoting the transition from nuclear and fossil to renewable sources of energy; and
 - improving energy efficiency and thereby reducing energy requirements while increasing energy services, in particular through technological and institutional innovation.
- Welcomed the outcome of the Vienna meeting and agreed to present the outcome at the next meeting of the EU Environment Council in June 2011.
- Agreed that a further meeting of Ministers and those of other interested States will take place in Athens in fall 2011.