***Delegation from Represented by***

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***Position Paper for the International Atomic Energy Agency***

*The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia* (Macedonia) is a young and small country; nonetheless Macedonia stresses the importance of the following issues: I. Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East; II. Improving Science and Technology Activities through Technical Cooperation; and III. Nuclear Waste Management. Since its foundation in 1991, it has been the highest priority to Macedonia to find its role in the international community as it strives to become a member of the *European Union* (EU) and the *North Atlantic Treaty Organization* (NATO).

**I. Application of IAEA Safeguards in the Middle East**

Considering the Middle East as a hot spot for political crisis and war, the peaceful use of nuclear material is of utmost importance to Macedonia as a non-nuclear-weapon state (NNWS) situated near the Middle East. Macedonia welcomes the adoption of General Conference resolution 59/15 (2015) and the progress that has been made in the Middle East such as the *Joint Comprehensive Plan of Actions* (JCOPA). **Nationally,** Macedonia has developed and enforced a vast range of measures to strengthen the nuclear safety regulatory framework. Macedonia aims to prevent the misuse of nuclear material through measures for physical protection of nuclear and radioactive materials and combating illicit trafficking. **Regionally,** Macedonia acknowledges the collaboration between the *European Atomic Energy Community* (EURATOM) and the IAEA and its designated states to ensure the consistent implementation of IAEA safeguards. **Internationally,** Macedonia is party to all crucial instruments concerning non-proliferation and IAEA safeguards such as but not limited to the *Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons* (NPT) and the *Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty* (CTBT). These documents symbolize cornerstones of the non-lethal use of nuclear material. In addition to being party to the NPT, Macedonia has contracted an Additional Protocol with the IAEA. Furthermore, Macedonia enhanced cooperation on non-proliferation through partnerships and networks, such as the *Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council*. Macedonia sees the establishment of a Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone (NWFZ) in the Middle East as the highest priority for the future. Therefore, in the **short-term** Macedonia calls upon all IAEA member states in the Middle East to ratify the treaties against the proliferation of nuclear weapons especially the NPT and to adapt Additional Protocols to assert the will to establish a NWFZ. Furthermore, IAEA safeguards as a cornerstone for a NWFZ need to be implemented and guaranteed in the Middle East. Macedonia encourages the IAEA Member States to conclude individual agreements such as the JCOPA with Middle Eastern states to ensure the peaceful use of nuclear material. The IAEA should monitor the compliance of the agreements. In the **medium-term**, Macedonia urges the states of the Middle East to find a suitable solution for all in the region. This should include necessities and wishes of every Middle Eastern state. The focus has to lie on dialogue between the nations. Therefore, Macedonia recommends the establishment of a conference where delegates of NWFZs can give reports concerning the implementation and benefits of NWFZs and act as contact persons for delegates of the Middle East. The conference should be held on neutral ground; Macedonia proposes the IAEA Headquarters in Vienna. Affirming the attempt of Middle Eastern Member States to establish a NWFZ, Macedonia encourages the Middle Eastern states to make a new attempt after the proposed conference and dialogues in the **long-term**. **Finally**, the peaceful use of nuclear material will be guaranteed by the application of IAEA safeguards.

**II. Improving Science and Technology Activities through Technical Cooperation**

Every day around 13 people are diagnosed with cancer in Macedonia. Hence, it is vital to improve science and technological activities through Technical Cooperation (TC) to enhance progress in the fields of medicine, specifically radiation technology, and food production. **Nationally**, Macedonia has established the *Directorate of* *Radiation Safety* (DRS)in order to build national capacities for nuclear safety and effective radiation protection. Furthermore, under the guidance of the IAEA the project *Establishing Nuclear Medicine to Improve Health Care of Patients Affected by Chronic Diseases* (MAK6013) aims to establish an institute of nuclear medicine in the city of Stip. There have also been *Country Programme Frameworks* (CPF) in the fields of agriculture and food security, especially on the selection of wheat species in Macedonia. **Regionally**, Macedonia hosted the initial workshop for South Eastern European states in 2013 under the framework of the TC Project *Enhancing Nuclear Power Infrastructures for Countries Considering, Developing or Expanding Nuclear Programmes* (RER/2/007). In the following years, Macedonia has also been a part of the workshop *Enhancing Energy Planning, Nuclear Power Infrastructures and Nuclear Safety Oversight for Countries Considering Nuclear Power Programmes* (RER/2/011). **Internationally**, Macedonia has signed the *Revised Supplementary Agreement* (RSA) in 2000. Hence, it has established a CPF in cooperation with the IAEA. Moreover, Macedonia supports the Technical Cooperation Fund (TCF) with contributions. Additionally, Macedonia supports the goal of *Medium Term Strategy 2018-2023* of the IAEA to ensure access to nuclear science and technology through the intense exchange of information and knowledge. Macedonia draws special attention to the importance of education of national personnel. In the **short-term**, Macedonia encourages the *World Nuclear University* (WNU) to establish a *Workshop of Technical Cooperation,* which will educate in a two week intensive programme young professionals, who may likely take a lead role in the implementation of the CPFs in their respective countries in the six main fields of TC. Especially less technologized countries will benefit from the educational measures by the WNU. Furthermore, partnerships among less technologized and high-technologized countries can be established during the workshop. In the **medium-term** the professionals educated by the WNU should then implement the goals of the CPFs in their countries. Furthermore, Macedonia recommends a knowledge exchange platform where trained professionals from the IAEA and the WNU are available for advice in the fields of improving scientific and technological activities. The platform should be supervised by the IAEA and financed by the TCF and donations from partners in the private sector. In the **long-term**, through the proposed workshop and platform IAEA Member States should be able to establish new institutes such as radiotherapy departments and educate their scientists according to the given international standards by themselves. **Finally**, nuclear science and technology will be accessible in all IAEA Member States due to the proposed measures of TC.

**III. Nuclear Waste Management**

Macedonia is currently a country without nuclear power plants. However, it has established a new *National Energy Strategy* to meet the electrical energy demand in 2030. This strategy holds two options: Macedonia could either build two new lignite thermal plants or could construct one nuclear power plant. Only the latter option would cover the complete energy demands of Macedonia. This option will similarly ensure state sovereignty and reduce costs, as no import of energy would be necessary. However, nuclear power plants bear the problem of spent nuclear fuel (SNF) management. Hence, the question of nuclear waste management is vital for the Energy Strategy of Macedonia. **Nationally**, the national legislation concerning nuclear safety and radiation protection has been harmonized with EU legislation in order to be in line with the *International Basic Safety Standards*. **Regionally**, representatives of Macedonia have attended workshops with delegates of South Eastern European states on the topic of nuclear power as a part of the respective national energy mix. **Internationally**, Macedonia faces the conflict that the use of nuclear power plants is at odds with Article 103 “Environment and nuclear safety” of the *Agreement for Stabilization and Association* (ASA) between the European Commission and Macedonia. Furthermore, it is a party to the *Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management* (JC). Since Macedonia is considering building a nuclear power plant, it wishes to contribute in finding a solution. Thus, Macedonia proposes the following: In the **short-term**, an international conference should be launched by the IAEA in which Member States with nuclear power plants can share the benefits and threats of nuclear power plants and the burden of nuclear waste management with Member States which are interested in the construction of nuclear power plants. In order to store nuclear waste Macedonia suggests in the **short-term** to expand the search of the *Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development’s* (OECD) for suitable repositories to a global effort through the help of IAEA professionals in the area of nuclear physics and geology. In the **medium-term**, when suitable locations have been found, legal frameworks for shared repositories are needed in order to establish a cooperation with equal costs and responsibilities between the countries using the repository. This should be done through a cooperation of the IAEA, state actors and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) such as the *Association for Regional and International Underground Storage* (Arius). In the **long-term**,the established repositories should be put into operation after meeting the international safety standards. The sharing states must ensure regular safety controls monitored by the IAEA. **Finally**, through the proposed measures the Member States will be able to safely store and dispose the nuclear waste that they have produced.