

Statement

on the safety of nuclear installations in Ukraine following the military aggression by Russia

27th February 2022

On 27 February 2022, ENSREG held an extraordinary meeting via videoconference with the participation of the IAEA, WENRA and the Ukrainian nuclear regulator (SNRIU) to address the nuclear safety of the Ukrainian nuclear installations in view of the Russian Federation's military aggression against Ukraine. ENSREG recalls that "the European Council condemns in the strongest possible terms the Russian Federation's unprovoked and unjustified military aggression against Ukraine. By its illegal military actions, Russia is grossly violating international law and the principles of the UN Charter and undermining European and global security and stability".

ENSREG stresses that the IAEA General Conference adopted a decision in 2009 stating that "any armed attack on and threat against nuclear facilities devoted to peaceful purposes constitutes a violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter, international law and the Statute of the Agency". ENSREG appeals for maximum restraint, to avoid any action which may put the country's nuclear facilities at risk.

ENSREG urges the Russian Federation to immediately cease unlawful activities in order to restore SNRIU's control over all nuclear facilities and materials within Ukraine's internationally recognised borders, in line with the internationally recognised safety standards and security guidance. ENSREG expresses its great concern at the deployment of weapons and armaments, or conducting missile strikes directly from the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone.

There have been increased radiation levels in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone reported by SNRIU over the past few days. While these are likely to be attributed to military activities in the area and there is so far no information about damage to the facilities at the Chernobyl site, ENSREG remains very concerned about the risks posed by potential damage to the storage and disposal facilities in the Exclusion Zone as well as the New Safe Confinement of the Shelter Object that could significantly affect the local population, and neighbouring countries.

Foreign military forces must leave the site and permit the unhindered regular access of knowledgeable staff of the licensee and the national regulator, in order to ensure the continuing safe operation of the site. There are similar great concerns regarding all other nuclear sites and facilities. ENSREG demands that the SNRIU and its staff can exercise its regulatory responsibilities for nuclear safety on all nuclear sites in the country and that operational staff of nuclear facilities can carry out their work without undue pressure.

ENSREG will continue to coordinate closely on all these matters with the IAEA, given its concerns over nuclear safety and the potential impact on populations across the region.

ENSREG praises the Ukrainian regulator SNRIU and its staff for their commitment in continuing, to the best of their ability in this grave situation, to supervise and provide timely reports on the state of nuclear safety and of the radiological situation of the nuclear installations in the country, to the extent SNRIU can exert its regulatory control.

ENSREG will continue to closely monitor the situation and will convene further meetings if the situation so requires.