

Statement by  
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Minister of Economy of the Slovak Republic  
on the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency –  
OECD/NEA

Mister Director General, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Slovak delegation, let me join other delegations in congratulating you, Dr. Lois Echávarri, and your staff for the excellent work done during the last five decades.

Fifty years ago the Agency was created in response to the high expectations that resulted from the discovery of nuclear energy. Through its activities it was to maintain and further develop, through international co-operation, the scientific, technological and legal bases required for the safe, environmentally friendly and economical use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes. During those fifty years the Agency has successfully and rightly earned a respected place in the world community as a centre for research and development in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

On this occasion I would like to make a few remarks on issues that are of great importance for my delegation – in particular on nuclear energy, nuclear safety and nuclear research.

Nuclear energy represents an important contribution in meeting the overall energy needs in the world, and particularly in Slovakia. Nuclear power plants produce more than 50 % of the electricity in my country. According to our country's energy strategy, nuclear energy remains an important source of energy in the long term. The shut down of the second unit of the Bohunice V-1 NPP by the end of this year represents

an increased challenge in the security of our energy supply. This is of particular importance in a time when the world is facing growing energy prices and a lack of fossil fuel. My Government and the energy sector are devoting significant efforts to find an appropriate replacement for the shortfall in electricity production caused by the shut down of this nuclear power plant. The largest energy producer, Slovenské elektrárne, a. s., intends to complete two nuclear units at the Mochovce site. This is a major step towards energy security in my country. In connection with the completion of two units at Mochovce the Nuclear Regulatory Authority approved in August a proposal for modifications at the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> units of the Mochovce NPP. The consent is subject to fulfilment of several provisions which take into account national legislation, the opinion of the European Commission, relevant technical documents from the Nuclear Energy Agency, the International Atomic Energy Agency as well as international best practices.

In addition my Government approved in May an initiative on the construction of a new unit at the Bohunice site to face the growing energy demand and consumption which is expected in the medium term. The Government will discuss the details of this initiative by the end of this year.

With regards to waste management my Government also approved in May this year the Strategy for the Back End of Nuclear Energy. This is an important step towards the safe, environmentally sound management of radioactive waste.

Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Research and development activities under the auspices of the Agency are, and remain an important part of Slovakia's international cooperation activities. In the course of Slovakia's membership in the IAEA, Slovakia has been co-operating with the Agency in a number of joint projects.

It is our conviction that these projects significantly contributed to the development of the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Another main characteristic of the Agency is that its work is highly professional, effective and efficient without other negative influences. These were the main reasons why Slovakia applied for membership of the Agency and we are honoured to be a part of this distinguished institution.

The expertise available at the Nuclear Energy Agency is considered by the relevant Slovak authorities to be an essential part of our international co-operation, and an essential measure of consensus building that supports the national decision-making process.

While using nuclear energy exclusively for peaceful purposes, Slovakia pays the utmost attention to safety. Based on the operational performance, regulatory assessments and inspection results, the Nuclear Regulatory Authority as an independent state authority considers the operation of all nuclear installations in Slovakia to be safe, reliable and operated within the national legal framework.

Finally, let me make a remark how we see the future of the Nuclear Energy Agency. My delegation is of the opinion that the future of the Agency should be marked by continued high professionalism, independence and accountability which will lead to effective, impartial and highly professional results in its activities.

In conclusion let me assure you of Slovakia's continued and full support to the work of the Agency.

Thank you for your attention.