

Contribution ID: 60

Type: Oral

The ²³⁹Pu neutron capture and fission cross-section measurements at n_TOF, CERN

Tuesday 9 July 2024 17:00 (15 minutes)

The NEA/OECD included the cross-section of neutron capture and neutron-induced fission reactions for 239 Pu in its High Priority Request List, in response to the demands for more accurate and reliable nuclear data essential for the design and operation of nuclear technologies. Recent efforts have been concentrated on meeting these data needs by means of a new measurement utilizing ²³⁹Pu samples in the n_TOF time-of-flight facility at CERN. This activity forms part of the scientific program approved by the European Commission H2020 Supplying Accurate Nuclear Data for energy and non-energy Applications (SANDA), and aims to improve the current knowledge and reduce existing uncertainties on the ²³⁹Pu neutron capture and fission cross-sections, along with the α -ratio. Ten thin samples of 1 mg each were deposited within a novel ionization chamber, specifically designed for the challenging conditions of high counting rates coming from the α -decay of ²³⁹Pu. This fission fragment detector was operated in combination with the n TOF Total Absorption Calorimeter to highly suppress the γ -ray fission background in the measurement of the capture reaction cross-section, employing the so-called fission tagging technique. To extend the measurement of the capture cross-section, a thicker ²³⁹Pu sample of 100 mg was also used. In addition to the cross-section data, the measurement will also provide valuable information on the distribution of the γ -rays cascades emitted in ²³⁹Pu(n, γ) and ²³⁹Pu(n,f) reactions, as experienced in previous experiments performed with the TAC. This contribution to the CNR*24 workshop will provide a description of the experimental activities of the ²³⁹Pu measurement at n_TOF and will also show the latest updates on the data analysis, including preliminary results of the experimental reaction yields.

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Track Classification: Measurements relevant to compound-nuclear reactions