Long-term operation of nuclear power plants in the EU and Euratom law & procedures

Workshop on the application of the Espoo Convention to the Lifetime Extension of Nuclear Power Plants
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1. The situation in the EU

- Most of the nuclear power plants were built in the 1970s and 80s with a planned lifetime of 30 or 40 years.
- Average age of the nuclear power plants in the EU is today around 30 years.
- Without Long-Term Operation (LTO), around 90% of the existing reactors would finish operation by 2030.
- Long-term operation/life-time extension is a national decision; licensing procedures differ between EU Member States.
- Highest safety standards must be ensured by the operator under the control of the regulator.
2. The Euratom legal framework

- **Euratom Treaty:**
  - All EU Member States are party to the Treaty which remains a separate treaty within the EU.
  - A major objective: to establish uniform safety standards to protect health.
  - Euratom law and EU environmental provisions complement each other.
  - Euratom secondary legislation has been significantly strengthened (safety, waste, radiation protection).
2. The Euratom legal framework (continued)

- **Key features of the Nuclear Safety Directive** (amended in 2014):
  - Licence holders must **re-assesses, at least every 10 years**, the safety of the nuclear installation
  - **Newly introduced safety objective** to prevent accident/mitigate their effects applied to the design of new installations; used as a reference for the *timely implementation of reasonably practicable safety improvements* to existing ones
  - **EU wide topical peer reviews** performed every 6 years (**1st** one on ageing management organised in May 2018)
  - **Cross-border consultations.**
3. Preparation of guidance on the application of the Espoo Convention

- A clear framework and process should be established for the preparation of key elements of a possible guidance by the next mid-term Meeting of the Parties (MoP) (February 2019)

- Some of the key questions to be addressed:
  - Power upgrades versus safety upgrades
  - Regulatory approaches to Life-time Extension (LTE) versus Long-Term Operation (LTO)
  - Screening before possible EIA.
THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION!