Dear Ms. Vesna Kolar Planinšič,

In accordance with the letter of the Implementation Committee for the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context of 12 September 2013, the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus (hereinafter - the Ministry) sends the answers to the questions on the planned construction of the Visaginas nuclear power plant.

**Regarding question 1.** By the letter, dated on July 27, 2007 № (1-15)-D8-6437, The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania informed Belarus about the beginning of the assessment procedure of the environmental impact of construction and operation of the planned Visaginas nuclear power plant (hereinafter - the Visaginas NPP). The program of the impact assessment on the environment (hereinafter - the Program EIA) is attached to the letter. In this letter Lithuania requested intention of Belarus to participate in the procedure for the assessment of transboundary impacts on the environment.

Belarus has expressed a desire to participate in the process.

By the letter of 27 September 2007 №14-09/3285-вн The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania sent their comments, additions and suggestions (12 points) about the EIA program of new nuclear power plant in Lithuania.

By the letter of 7 March, 2008 № (1-15)-D8-2072 The Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania has requested information on the state of the environment in the territory of the Republic of Belarus for the preparation of the EIA report of the new nuclear power plant. The Ministry sent
requested information to Lithuania by the letter of 8 May, 2008 № 14-09/423.

The EIA report "New Nuclear Power Plant in Lithuania" was received by the Ministry from the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania on 29 August, 2008 with the cover letter № (1-15)-Д8-7448.

Ministry's comments on the EIA report sent by the letter of 24 November 2008 №14-09/4822-ВН to the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania.

On 22 of December, 2008 the representatives of the Ministry took part in the consultations to discuss the comments on the EIA report in Vilnius.

Belarus has not yet received answers to the questions:

- about overall impact on the environment of the Republic of Belarus of all radiation hazard facilities associated with the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant:

  1. Complex for solid waste management and storage, including systems for the processing and storage of liquid and solid long-and short-lived radioactive waste;

  2. New interim storage of spent nuclear fuel;

  3. The burial ground for radioactive waste with very low activity like Landfill;

  4. NSR-near surface repository for low and intermediate level radioactive waste;

  5. Bituminized waste repository, which is expected to turn into a burial ground;

  6. Setting the conversion of liquid radioactive waste in solid;

  7. Dry storage of spent nuclear fuel;

  8. Decommissioning of the two units of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant and the planned construction of the Visaginas nuclear power plant on the same site;

- thermal effect on the lake Drisyvaty (Dryukshay in the Lithuanian language) used to cool the nuclear power plant, which is characterized by relatively slow water exchange. The river Prorva flows out of Lake, and flows through the territory of the Republic of Belarus.

In addition:

- didn’t consider alternative areas of the NPP. Was considered only variants of accommodation on one area. The location of the Visaginas nuclear power plant taken at a distance of 2.3 km from the border with the Republic of Belarus. The sanitary protection zone is 3 km, in other word its covers the territory of the Republic of Belarus on 0.7 km, including Drisyvaty Lake, which is a place of recreation for residents of Belarus (in the sanitary protection zone economic activity is limited and rest is denied);
- geological study of the area was not carried out, in the EIA process although this area is a major sublatitudinal Drusias (Visaginas) fault. The researches were done after the submission of the EIA report of Belarus. The researching materials were not represented to us.

**Regarding question 2.** The public was informed about the public discussions of the EIA report "Building of new nuclear power plant in Lithuania" in the newspaper "Sovetskaya Belorussia" and on the website www.atominfo.ru/news (July 2007) by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus).

**Regarding question 3.** The public discussion of the EIA report, "Building of new nuclear power plant in Lithuania" was held in October 13, 2008 in the auditorium of the educational establishment "Braslavskaya gymnasium" Braslav city, Vitebsk region. The discussion was attended by 145 representatives of organizations, institutions, businesses of Braslav district.

**Regarding question 4.** The Republic of Belarus wasn’t informed and, therefore, did not participate in the public discussion of the EIA report "Building of new nuclear power plant in Lithuania", which was held in Lithuania.

**Regarding question 5.** By the letter of April 21, 2009 № (1-15)-D8-3504, the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania presented "Resolution on the possibilities of construction of the Visaginas nuclear power plant", to the Republic of Belarus, which were signed by the Secretary of the Ministry of Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. The final decision in accordance with Article 6 of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary context has not yet been submitted by the Republic of Lithuania.

Sincerely yours,
First Deputy Minister

V.Kulik

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