

22.03.2019 № 11-1-1/103-ИНО

The Implementation Committee under  
the Convention on Environmental  
Impact Assessment in a  
Transboundary Context

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus (hereinafter referred as the Ministry of Environment), within the framework of implementing paragraph 59 of decision VI/2 of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (the Espoo Convention), presents the report on the implementation by Belarus in 2018 of the recommendations made by the Meeting Parties regarding the submission of Lithuania. This report complements Belarus' reports submitted in November 2014, December 2015, December 2016 and January 2018.

During 2018 the Republic of Belarus continued to take measures to involve Lithuania in a bilateral dialogue on the issues of ensuring environmental safety, nuclear and radiation safety of the environment.

As part of the implementation of **paragraphs 57 and 62 of the decision VI/2**, the Belarusian side informs that after the beginning of construction of the Belarusian NPP Belarus invited in 2014 all interested countries, including Lithuania, to take part in the implementation of the post-project analysis of the proposed activity. Later on Lithuania was invited to establish a permanent joint body on post-project analysis of the Belarusian NPP.

Being aware of the importance of ensuring the environmental safety of radiation and nuclear hazardous facilities located on both sides of the Belarusian-Lithuanian state border (the distance from the new nuclear facilities of the Ignalina nuclear power plant to the border with the Republic of Belarus is 3.5 km; the distance from the Belarusian nuclear power plant to the border with the Republic of Lithuania is 17 km), Belarus considers the conducting of the post-project analysis as the best of the mechanisms envisaged by the Espoo Convention, which inter alia facilitates raising public awareness about the facilities activity and ensuring transparency and mutual confidence between the parties.

Taking into account the Lithuania's principle agreement with our proposal to establish the permanent joint body on the post-project analysis of the Belarusian NPP, Belarusian side is convinced that such a body can

coordinate the implementation of post-project analysis programs on various facilities. The work of this body can also be a good expert platform for:

- discussion and development of a consolidated position on important issues of post-project analysis;
- sharing best experience and practices;
- joint development of methodological guidances.

The approach proposed by the Belarusian side will increase the efficiency of the post-project stage of the environmental impact assessment.

For the purposes of organizing the work of this joint body on post-project analysis (Working group), the Belarusian side by the letter of December 14, 2018 № 11-1-1/302-ИНО (with a copy to the Implementation Committee) proposed to Lithuania to develop a Regulation on the joint body on post-project analysis and to define the composition of the joint body on post-project analysis, formed on the basis of proposals of States. It was proposed to consider the draft Regulation of the work of the permanent Belarusian-Lithuanian working group on post-project analysis (also sent to Lithuania) developed by the Belarusian side as a basis.

As of now, the Lithuania's response to our proposals has not been received.

Regarding **paragraph 58 of the decision VI/2**, we would like to inform that a regular round of Belarusian-Lithuanian consultations on the draft bilateral Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania on the implementation of the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a transboundary context was carried out in June 12 – 13, 2018 in Minsk (Republic of Belarus). The experts of the Parties continued their work on the preparation of this Agreement. The Articles of Agreement are being developed taking into account a sufficiently detailed description of the procedural steps of the transboundary environmental impact assessment, with a view of the requirements of the relevant national legislation of each Party.

During the June meeting, the Parties agreed to hold the next consultations in October – November 2018 in Vilnius. Regarding the organization of the next meeting the Parties conducted relevant correspondence in November - December 2018, Belarus proposed acceptable dates for the consultations in December 2018 or in January 2019. As the correspondence was taking place, changes occurred in the leadership of the Ministry of the Environment of the Republic of Lithuania. As a result, Lithuania informed about the postponement of the next meeting for an indefinite time.

As of now, the proposals of Lithuania to resume the work on the preparation of the draft Agreement have not been received.

As part of the implementation of **paragraph 64 of the decision VI/2** Belarus in 2017 - 2018 submitted the report of IAEA Site and External Events Design Service of the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant (SEED-mission), along with explanatory information about its results to the Implementation Committee.

Although the IAEA peer-review missions are of voluntary nature, Belarus conducted SEED mission in full conformity with the encouragement of the sixth Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention. The results of the SEED mission confirmed that an NPP of this design at this particular site is safe, all external hazards are screened adequately and safety margins are wide enough. The so-called by Lithuania “full-scope” SEED mission does not exist – SEED mission consists of a set of optional modules related to different stages of a nuclear power programme.

For the sake of the success of the Belarusian NPP project Belarus continuously takes **confidence-building measures** between the countries that are open for constructive engagement.

Prior to the commissioning of the first NPP unit, Belarus has hosted a number of important IAEA safety-related review missions and intends to continue this work. The reports of the IAEA review missions have been published. Belarus will follow this approach further on.

The Emergency Preparedness Review Service (EPREV), held in October 2018, noted the availability of the comprehensive response arrangements at different levels.

This year we are expecting another important safety-related mission, such as the pre-Operational Safety Review Team (pre-OSART).

I would also like to emphasize that since 2015 Belarus has been participating on a voluntary basis in the European Radiological Data Exchange Platform. Belarus also cooperates with the World Association of Nuclear Operators, Regulatory Cooperation Forum, Western European Nuclear Regulators Association, as well as with other specialized entities and partners. Preparations for participation in the Joint IAEA/NEA International Reporting System for Operating Experience are under way.

Throughout a number of years Belarus has repeatedly invited Lithuania to the expert dialogue on the nuclear-related issues suggesting various formats and instruments of joint work. Among them of note our initiatives to establish a permanent joint body on the post-project analysis of the Belarusian NPP and on any other relevant issue regarding the Belarusian NPP, as well as to develop and to implement a joint system of radiation monitoring of nuclear facilities located on both sides of the Belarusian-Lithuanian border. The Belarusian side once again conveyed these proposals to Lithuania in December 2018.

We are interested in establishing normal work with Lithuania and expect that Lithuania returns to a constructive and professional dialogue.

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Belarus on the Espoo Convention

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