



6th meeting of the EU-Belarus Coordination Group

12-13 December 2018, Brussels

BRIEFING

Day 1

AGENDA

12 December 2018

Timing	Side event
14:45 – 15:00	[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Timing	Official agenda
15:00 – 16:00	Introductory session of the EU – Belarus Coordination Group <i>[presence of Belarus ONT TV at the beginning, before the meeting starts]</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of the delegations and approval of the agenda • Exchange of views on recent developments in Belarus and the EU and the state of play of bilateral relations • State of play of the EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities (including follow-up to the stress test peer review)
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee
16:15 – 17:30	Human rights and democracy - BY lead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights situation • Specific concerns / cases • Follow-up to the EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue of 2018

Timing	Side event
18:30	[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

State of play of the EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities (including follow-up to the stress test peer review)

Scene setter

[EU side starts the discussion]

Speaking points for EEAS Chair

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- As you are well aware, **nuclear safety** remains a **key priority** for the EU and its Member States. Therefore we welcome that Belarus has **voluntarily** participated in the stress test peer review and authorities have been **transparent** throughout the process.
- But the process does not end here. I stress the importance of your **continued cooperation** in the next steps, including the preparation of the National Action Plan for implementation of the peer review recommendations. [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

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Speaking points for DG ENER:

- Nuclear safety is a key priority of the EU and that it remains the responsibility of the licensee, investors and national regulator to ensure that any operating or new nuclear power plant complies with the highest standards of nuclear safety. The EU has been a world leader in carrying out comprehensive risk and safety assessments (stress tests) of its nuclear power reactors following the Fukushima accident.
- Since the Stress Test Peer Review in 2012, ENSREG and COM have maintained a strong follow-up of this process. Participating countries have developed National Action Plans (NACPs) which have been peer reviewed in 2013, 2015 and this process continues in 2017-2018.
- Stress that the ongoing peer review by ENSREG of 2017 NACPs shows that Stress Test safety upgrades are still under implementation in several EU countries and that in several cases the work will not be finished before the end of 2020-2021.

Belarus

- Nuclear safety is a key priority for the European Union, and even more so when new facilities are being constructed so close to the borders of an EU Member State.
- The European Commission welcomes the completion of the EU Stress Test Peer Review in Belarus by the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) and the publication of the final report the 4 July 2018. This was an important confidence building block that exposed the Ostrovets NPP construction project to the scrutiny of all EU nuclear safety regulators and the civil society.
- Welcome that the Belarusian regulator accepted to prepare an Action Plan addressing these recommendations in line with past practice in all EU stress tests.
- Call upon the Belarusian authorities to develop such a National Action Plan swiftly, latest by the end of 2018. Underline that such a National Action Plan needs to foresee timely implementation of all safety improvement measures in accordance with their safety significance and include the associated schedules. We expect that the Belarus submits to ENSREG for peer review the National Action Plan addressing *all* recommendations (not only relevant).
- While final decision regarding the detailed planning of safety upgrades implementation remains with the Belarusian regulatory authority, it should be possible to implement several measures in a short time frame. Recall that the Action Plan should be subject to an independent review. ENSREG has agreed to review the National Action Plan once submitted to it and, if appropriate, endorse it.
- Recall the invitation to the Belarusian regulator to become observer in ENSREG (COM letter to the Belarus Ministry of Emergency Situation) EURDEP and ECURIE. Next meeting of the ENSREG plenary planned for 25 March 2018.
- Highlight that according to information available to the Commission, recent progress have been made in the cooperation on emergency preparedness between Lithuania and Belarus. The Commission welcomes this progress.

- Recall that Belarus is already sending data to the European Radiological Data Exchange Platform (EURDEP) on the voluntary basis and that an administrative arrangement to regulate such participation is in preparation on Commission side.
- In order to strengthen the EURDEP co-operation, the Commission has also offered to carry out an "Expert Advisory Mission" to advise Belarus on national radiation monitoring arrangements.
- Invite Belarus to join also ECURIE. ECURIE is the interface to the EU early notification and information exchange system for radiological emergencies.

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[illegible]

What has the Commission done to ensure that construction of the Ostrovets NPP meets the high safety standards that are applicable in the European Union?

The stress test exercise plays a crucial role in these efforts and we welcome that Belarus (and other neighbouring countries) have conducted such stress tests in accordance with the EU methodology developed after the Fukushima accident in 2011.

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The series of projects aim to transfer EU expertise and build national capacity in a way that complies with the best international practices and standards. The prime responsibility for any decisions with regard to the licencing process rests however entirely with the competent Belarusian regulatory authority. Since the inception of the programme, the competent regulatory authority of Belarus has improved its human and technical capacity.

*In addition, with a view to reinforcing radiological protection, the Commission is taking steps for Belarus **to participate in EURDEP** (European Radiological Data Exchange Platform), which makes radiological environment monitoring data from most European countries available in near real-time and in **ECURIE**. An administrative arrangement to regulate such participation is in preparation. In order to strengthen the EURDEP co-operation, the Commission has also offered to carry out an "Expert Advisory Mission" to advise Belarus on national radiation monitoring arrangements. On the technical side, Belarus has recently started sending radiation monitoring data on daily basis to the EURDEP system, so the Commission is fairly well aware about the current radiological situation in this country. For the time being the data received from Belarus in EURDEP is available only to the Commission and the MS authorities, not to the general public.*

What is the purpose and actual outcome of the financial aid provided by the Commission to Belarus?

The actual priorities of EU assistance are to promote an effective nuclear safety culture and to strengthen the capacity of the Belarus Nuclear Regulator.

No direct financial support has been provided by the EU to Belarus through the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation (INSC). Since 2011 the EU has been providing only technical assistance through the INSC in supporting the Belarussian nuclear regulatory authority. The INSC's programme, including technical assistance projects, is annually endorsed by the EU Member States. Since the inception of the programme, the competent regulatory authority of Belarus has improved its human and technical capacity, and the Commission is overall satisfied with the execution of the ongoing project. There are no Euratom loans granted to Belarus.

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Background

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[REDACTED] The peer review report was published in July 2018. The report **overall confirms the adequacy of nuclear safety features and makes recommendations** requiring thorough follow up and continued implementation measures. The EU expects that the recommendations of the Stress Test Peer Review will be duly implemented.

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[Pages 26-70 redacted as out of scope]