



7th meeting of the EU-Belarus Coordination Group

24-25 April 2019, Brussels

BRIEFING

Day 1

AGENDA

24 April 2019

9:15– 10:00	<div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 95%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 90%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 70%;"></div>
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Timing	Agenda point
9:30 – 10:00	Arrival of participants (main building of the MFA)
10:00 – 11:00	Overall EU-Belarus relations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory remarks of the co-chairs • Exchange of views on recent developments in the EU-Belarus bilateral relations • State of play of EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities negotiations, including on nuclear safety
11:00 – 11:30	Financial cooperation (EU lead) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Portfolio review and prospects for future cooperation • Communication and visibility of EU support
11:30 – 11:45	Coffee
11:45 – 12:45	Human rights and democracy (BY lead) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights situation and preparation for the EU-Belarus Human Rights Dialogue • Prospects for cooperation in the area of good governance
12:45 – 14:30	<div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 20%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div>
14:30 – 16:00	Sectoral cooperation – Part I (BY lead, with civil society participation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Privatisation and enterprise development • Economic and financial issues • Education and youth • Research and innovation • Digital economy • Transport
16:00 – 16:15	Coffee
16:15 – 17:00	Belarus in Eastern partnership (BY lead, with civil society participation) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EaP 10th anniversary celebration and state of play in Belarus' implementation of 20 deliverables for 2020 • Preparation of the EaP high-level event in Minsk

19:30	<div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 100%;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; height: 15px; width: 80%;"></div>
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[Pages 3-7 redacted as out of scope]

State of play of the EU-Belarus Partnership Priorities (including nuclear safety)

Scene setter

[Redacted text block containing multiple paragraphs of information, with several yellow horizontal lines indicating redaction points.]

ENER sent a letter in October 2018 to the Ministry of Emergency Situation (GAN is a department of this Ministry) to remind them the expectation that the Belarus NAP is submitted to ENSREG before the end of 2018 for review. This letter recalled as well the invitation made by ENSREG to Gosatomnadzor (GAN) to become observer in ENSREG. ENSREG Chairman also sent a similar letter to Olga Lugoskaya (Head of GAN) on 18 February 2019. In March ENSREG received a reply from GAN indicating that the **National Action Plan (NAP)** once finalised will be published, but no indication that the report will be sent to ENSREG for peer review. GAN was invited to the ENSREG March meeting as observer. GAN accepted to become observer in ENSREG but will only participate to ENSREG meetings once commissioning of the NPP will be finished (see letter in Background).

[EU side starts the discussion]

Speaking points for EEAS Chair

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- In the meantime, I stress the importance of your **continued cooperation with ENSREG**. I would like to underline that ENSREG asked and the **BY regulator accepted to prepare a National Action Plan** on how to address the stress test recommendations in line with past practice in all EU stress tests.
- The **Commission and the ENSREG Chairman have been consistently calling** on the Belarusian authorities to **develop such a National Action Plan swiftly** to ensure timely implementation of all safety improvement measures in accordance with their safety significance. *Ask about the timeline for publication of the NAP?*
- We note the reply letter sent by Gosatomnadzor (GAN) to the ENSREG Chairman and the fact that GAN accepted to become observer in ENSREG. However, we very much regret that GAN will not participate to ENSREG meetings until completion of the licensing of Ostrovets NPP. *Inquire about the underlying considerations for this approach?*
- I have been assured that the Commission and the ENSREG Chairman will carefully monitor the issuance of the National Action Plan. They have foreseen that the National Action Plan and its implementation would undergo a peer review by ENSREG in the future.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

Defensives

[REDACTED]

What is DG ENER's view on the decision of Espoo parties on Ostrovets (5-7 Feb 2019)?

As expressed in the letter of 15 March 2019 sent by DG ENV to the Ambassador of Belarus to the EU, The Commission, and in particular the DG ENV, DG ENER and DG NEAR encourage Belarusian authorities to comply with this decision" and encourage the Belarusian and the Lithuanian authorities to continue their bilateral expert consultations, in order to reach an agreement on the establishment of a joint bilateral body and of the procedures for such analysis;". We "have been working [with other Espoo parties] to make clear that the Espoo Implementation Committee does not examine the compliance with technical provisions and requirements outside the scope of the Convention, such as those related to nuclear safety". Finally, we are open to work together with BLR authorities to further promote transparency and the strengthening of mutual trust in order to reach the goals of the Espoo Convention."

Background

Espoo Convention non-compliance case

On 5-7 February in Geneva, the Intermediate Meeting of the parties (I-MoP) endorsed several draft decisions prepared by the Espoo Implementation Committee concerning nuclear power projects that were already discussed at the (inconclusive) MOP in Minsk in June 2017 and have proven controversial among MS in view of the interpretation of the Convention, in particular decision on general issues of compliance with the Convention, on non-compliance by Belarus regarding Ostrovets NPP and on Hinkley Point). The I-MoP moved to an exceptional voting on these last two decisions, having failed to reach a compromise between EU and Belarus.

According to the decisions endorsed by the Parties, the Implementation Committee acknowledges that Belarus had taken all required procedural steps to reach the final decision concerning the project, but found that Belarus had in its EIA documentation provided insufficient information under Appendix II of the Convention on the alternative sites.

Belarus considered that the decision was both factually and procedurally flawed and sought to present it as a discriminatory application of the Convention, “an anti-Belarusian position taken by the EU to please Lithuania” according to an MFA statement at the end of the I-MoP.

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