



5th meeting of the EU-Belarus Coordination Group

26-27 April 2018, Minsk

BRIEFING PACKAGE

Draft agenda

26 April 2018

| Timing | Agenda items |
|--------|--|
| 10.30 | Introductory session of the EU – Belarus Coordination Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction of delegations • Exchange of views on recent developments in Belarus and the EU and the state of play of bilateral relations • State of play of bilateral partnership priorities |
| 11.00 | Human rights and democracy (<i>BY lead</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human rights situation • Specific concerns/ cases • Preparations for the Human Rights Dialogue 2018 |
| 12.15 | Lunch |
| 14.15 | State of play of sectoral cooperation, including sectoral dialogues and related financial assistance – Part I (<i>BY lead</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digital economy • Privatisation and enterprise development • Transport (EU lead) • Customs and customs fraud • Education • Research and development <i>(with civil society participation)</i> |
| 16.00 | State of play of sectoral cooperation, including sectoral dialogues and related financial assistance – Part II (<i>EU lead</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trade • Sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards, cooperation in the field of agriculture • Environment (including Climate Change) • Energy (including nuclear issues) and energy efficiency • Labour, employment and social protection • Economic and Financial issues <i>(with civil society participation)</i> |

27 April 2018

| Timing | Agenda items |
|--------|---|
| 9.30 | Belarus in the Eastern Partnership (<i>BY lead</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up to the Senior Officials Meeting (SOM), including implementation of the agenda of '20 deliverables for 2020' and the new streamlined EaP architecture (<i>with civil society participation</i>) |
| 10.30 | State of play of EU assistance programmes to Belarus (<i>EU lead</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiannual programming and Annual assistance programmes Belarus' participation in the E5P Cooperation with EIB, EBRD Cross-border cooperation programmes TAIEX, TWINNING, SIGMA |
| 11.30 | Mobility Partnership (<i>EU lead</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation agenda – state of play on cooperation Visa Facilitation and Readmission Agreement (<i>EU lead</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> State of play |
| 12.00 | Concluding remarks and way ahead <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next steps in EU-Belarus relations Calendar ahead |
| 12.30 | Closing statements and end of the meeting |

[Pages 4-70 redacted as out of scope]

9. Environment (including climate action issues)

- [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]
- I [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

DG ENV proposed lines to take:

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- Welcome the adoption of the new legislation on Strategic Environmental Assessment and ask Belarus whether there are any new developments regarding their ratification of the Espoo Convention's Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment.

- [REDACTED]

- Stress the importance of a sound Environmental Impact Assessment for the construction of Ostrovets Nuclear Power and encouraged Belarus to carry out bilateral consultations with Lithuania in order to improve cooperation and communication with the objective of achieving full compliance of the project with the Espoo Convention.
- Effective access to justice on environmental matters is also essential for good environmental governance. Invite Belarus to provide better access to justice on environmental matters in line with the provisions of Aarhus Convention to which Belarus is a party to.

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Background notes

Bilateral issues and bilateral cooperation with Belarus (environment)

Belarus is a party to Espoo Convention, but not yet a party to its Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment. New legislation on Strategic Environmental Assessment was developed with EU assistance and Belarus should be encouraged to become a party to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment, since it has adopted the relevant legislation

Belarus is building its first nuclear power plant (NPP), designed by Russian state corporation Rosatom near Ostrovets/Astravets, which is a subject of dispute with its neighbour country Lithuania. Lithuania argues that with the Ostrovets NPP Belarus is in violation of international standards and requirements on nuclear safety and has raised its concerns to the European Commission. Lithuania has urged the European Commission to urge Belarus to ensure that international safety requirements and standards are met, an independent supervision of the construction process is ensured and that an effective information sharing policy is adhered to. One of the main issues is also the question of compliance of the project with Espoo Convention. During a past Espoo MOP in Minsk the Implementation Committee (IC) of the Espoo Convention acknowledged that Belarus had made some progress since the previous MOP in 2014 in addressing compliance issues, but that on a number of scientific and technical matters concerning the construction of the nuclear power plant, and in particular the selection of its site (less than 50 km away from Vilnius) the IC felt that it had neither the capacity nor the mandate to answer

these. A draft decision on Ostrovets could not be agreed and it is to be tackled in an intermediate Meeting of the Parties to the Convention towards the end of 2018 or in early 2019.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- 1. [REDACTED]
- 2. [REDACTED]
- 3. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

| Age Group | Percentage |
|-----------|------------|
| 18-24 | 10% |
| 25-34 | 25% |
| 35-44 | 35% |
| 45-54 | 20% |
| 55-64 | 10% |
| 65+ | 5% |

10. Energy (including nuclear issues) and energy efficiency

- Energy and energy supply in all its forms is a vital issue. It is also explicitly addressed in the draft of EU-BY Partnership Priorities.
- The EU is hopeful that the Partnership Priorities will clear the way to a possible re-launch of the Energy Dialogue. We need a constructive dialogue on all issues.
- Our priorities in this regard remain unchanged: nuclear safety, energy security and energy efficiency are the issues which we are prepared to discuss and identify ways to better cooperation.
- Refer to the issue of nuclear safety which is a particular concern for the EU, as also highlighted by the Council in its February 2016 Conclusions.
- However, a precondition to progress is resolving the issue of nuclear safety and a clear commitment of Belarus to the follow-up actions based on the recommendations of the peer review mechanism.
- Pass the floor to DG ENER ([REDACTED]) to present the topic on the EU side.

[Pass the floor to DG ENER]

Fyi - Speaking points of DG ENER

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

NPP Ostrovets – stress tests [REDACTED]

- The Peer Review Mission to Belarus took place from 12 to 16 March 2018 and was conducted in a good and collaborative atmosphere. Cooperation with both the Belarus authorities, in particular the national regulator, as well as the operator, were constructive throughout. Observers from the IAEA and from third countries participated to the peer

review mission. The peer review team included 17 experts from 12 MS (including Lithuania) with a good balance between nuclear power and non-nuclear member states.

- A draft peer review report was established by the Peer Review Team. The key outcomes of the peer review mission have been presented to the Belarus nuclear safety regulator and Belarus Nuclear Power Plant representatives on Friday 16 March. The draft peer review report has been transmitted to the Belarus nuclear safety regulator and will be discussed over the coming weeks before being finalised and endorsed by the Peer Review Board. The Chairperson of the Board will present the final report to the Belarus authorities in June 2018.
- Stress that the EU Stress Test peer review process to be conducted in Belarus will not deviate from past stress test exercises and is performed in full transparency. Detailed information about the stress tests peer review exercises that were already conducted in the EU and neighbouring countries or the ongoing process in Belarus are publically available on the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) website. <http://www.ensreg.eu/EU-Stress-Tests/Country-Specific-Reports/EU-Neighbouring-Countries/Belarus>
- Highlight that as an outcome of the EU peer review – as it was the case in previous stress tests exercises - recommendations will be made to the National Regulator. It is important these recommendations will have to be followed-up in close collaboration with Belarus.
- Similar to past cases the Council will be informed of the outcome and might issue Council conclusions

Radiological protection

- 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.
- 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.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

DEFENSIVE POINTS

Ostrovets Nuclear Power Plant in Belarus

[REDACTED]

Will the stress test process be fully transparent?

- The EU Stress Test peer review process to be conducted in Belarus will not deviate from past stress test exercises and will be performed in full transparency. Detailed information about the stress tests peer review exercises that were already conducted in the EU and neighbouring countries are publically available on the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) website.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Background notes:

Ostrovets NPP:

The Ostrovets nuclear power plant is being built by Belarus close to the Lithuanian border. An agreement was signed in July 2012 with a Russian consortium to build two reactors (VVER 1200), which are planned to start producing 2400 MWe by 2018 and 2020.

Distance from Belarus NPP:

- Lithuanian Capital Vilnius – 50 km;
- Lithuanian border – 20 km;

1/3 of Lithuanian population might be affected by Belarus NPP.



Ostrovets NPP "stress test"

Following the Fukushima accident, the March 2011 European Council called not only for comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessments ('**stress tests**') of all EU nuclear power plants (NPPs) but also for carrying out similar stress tests in the neighbouring countries and worldwide. Moreover, the Council Conclusions adopted on 15 February 2016 reiterate the importance of ensuring nuclear safety beyond the borders of the EU.

As an outcome of the **meeting of 23 June 2011 with Commissioner Oettinger**, Deputy Ministers of Energy and senior representatives of the Ministries of Energy and national authorities responsible for nuclear energy of the Republic of Armenia, **Republic of Belarus**, Republic of Croatia, Russian Federation, Swiss Confederation, Republic of Turkey, Ukraine, in cooperation with the EU confirm their willingness to undertake (if this has not yet been done) on a voluntary basis comprehensive risk and safety assessments, taking into account the specifications agreed by the European Commission and the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) on 24 May 2011.

From the beginning of Ostrovets NPP project, Belarus has shown interest in involving the EU in stress tests (joint statement of June 2011) of Ostrovets NPP, and the EU confirmed its interest in conducting a peer review as soon as Belarus national report is finalised (the normal practice for peer reviews). DG ENER has been in regular contacts with the Belarusian Ministry of Energy and the Belarusian Nuclear Safety Regulator to explain the process of stress tests peer review and to ensure that the EU type stress test can be conducted in Belarus as soon as possible.

Practical organisation of the peer review should proceed in the same way as in 2012 with the set-up of a board and a peer review team.

In preparation of the peer review, the European Nuclear Regulators Safety Group (ENSREG) has already established in September 2017 a board and team of experts to review the Belarusian national stress test report

A first meeting of the peer review board took place on 21 September in Vienna. This meeting allowed further fine-tuning of the practical organisation (timing, team composition, etc.) of the peer review. In the meantime, following exchanges with Belarus counterpart, Belarus Nuclear Regulatory Authority has approved the final version of the "Peer Review Practical Arrangements" the 18th October 2017.

Belarus national stress test report in Russian has been approved during an inter-governmental meeting on 27 September 2017 and has been transmitted to the European Commission in English version on 31st October 2017.

With a Belarus Stress Test National Report received at the end of October 2017; the Peer Review Mission to Belarus will take place in March 2018 and presentation of the final version of the peer review report in June 2018. This timing has been agreed with Belarus (Letter from Belarus Nuclear regulatory Authority to DG ENER DDG on 21 November 2017).

Belarus Stress Test Board Composition:

Chairperson: [REDACTED]

Deputy Chairperson: [REDACTED]

Peer Review Team Leader: [REDACTED]

Representative from non-nuclear EU MS: [REDACTED]

COM representative: [REDACTED]

The Belarus Stress Test Peer Review Team (PRT) which is currently proposed would be composed of 17 experts from EU and non EU Member states (2 DE; 2 SE; 1 FR; 1 ES; 1 LT; 1 GR; 1 HU; 1 BG; 1 UK; 1 FL; 1 CEZ; 1 SW; 1 SK; 1 UA).

The PRT will also include 2 representatives from the Commission, 1 expert from JRC and 1 rapporteur from DG ENER and observers from the IAEA and from the Russian Federation.

DEFENSIVES

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Background info

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Following the commitment taken in June 2011, **Belarus** has agreed to carry out the voluntary stress test peer review exercise according to the EU methodology at the Ostrovets nuclear power plant and **had transmitted to the Commission and ENSREG its Stress Test National Report for peer review on 31 October 2017.**

In preparation of the peer review, the **European Nuclear Regulators Safety Group (ENSREG)** has **already established in September 2017 a Board and team of 17 experts from EU and non EU Member states to review the Belarusian national stress test report.**

The Belarus Stress Test National Report was received end of October 2017. The Peer Review Team of experts reviewed the Belarus Stress Test national report in depth and prepared more than 400 questions. These questions were transmitted to Belarus counterpart at the beginning of February and replies were received beginning of March. The Belarus Stress Test national report was also submitted to a public consultation on the ENSREG Website from Monday 13 November 2017 to Saturday 13 January 2018. Questions from the public were also transmitted to the Belarus counterpart.



[Pages 88-96 redacted as out of scope]