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Council adopts nuclear safety directive

The Council today adopted the revised nuclear safety directive ([10562/14](#)). The adoption follows the agreement reached in the Working Party on Atomic Questions on 28 May 2014.

The Fukushima nuclear accident in Japan in 2011 brought renewed worldwide attention to the measures needed to minimise risk and ensure the most robust levels of nuclear safety. Based on the European Council's conclusions of March 2011, the national competent regulatory authorities, together with the Commission within the framework of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group, carried out EU-wide comprehensive stress tests of nuclear power plants. The results identified a number of improvements which could be made to nuclear safety approaches and industry practices in the participating countries.

The revised directive introduces EU-wide nuclear safety objectives that aim to limit the consequences of a potential nuclear accident as well as address the safety of the entire lifecycle of nuclear installations (siting, design, construction, commissioning, operation and decommissioning of nuclear plants), including on-site emergency preparedness and response.

The directive further strengthens the independence and role of the national regulatory authorities. As the consequences of a nuclear accident can go beyond national borders, close cooperation, coordination and information exchange between regulatory authorities of member states in the vicinity of a nuclear installation is encouraged.

P R E S S

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The revised directive further enhances transparency on nuclear safety matters. The provisions on the information to be provided to the general public are more specific as regards which type of information should be provided. In addition, the general public will have opportunities to participate in the relevant phases of the decision-making process relating to nuclear installations in accordance with the national framework, taking into account the different national systems.

The directive reinforces monitoring and exchange of experiences, as it contains provisions on peer reviews of nuclear installations. Member states will ensure that arrangements are in place to allow the first topical peer review to start in 2017, and for subsequent topical peer reviews to take place at least every six years thereafter. In addition, at least every ten years member states will arrange for periodic self-assessments of their national framework and competent regulatory authorities and request an international peer review of relevant segments of their national framework and competent regulatory authorities with the aim of continuously improving nuclear safety.

Member states will submit a first report to the Commission on the implementation of this directive by 22 July 2014, and then another by 22 July 2020.

The directive will enter into force on the twentieth day following its publication in the Official Journal of the EU. The member states will have three years to incorporate it into national legislation.

Background

The directive amends [directive 2009/71/Euratom](#). In line with the mandate given by the European Council ([10/1/11 REV 1](#)) at its meeting in March 2011 "to review the existing legal and regulatory framework for the safety of nuclear installations" and to propose any improvements that may be necessary, the European Commission adopted its proposal in October 2013, on the basis of Articles 31 and 32 of the Euratom Treaty.
