



Council of the
European Union

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NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Delegations

Subject: Espoo Convention:
Eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA Protocol)
(Vilnius, Lithuania, 8–11 December 2020)
- Information from the Lithuanian delegation

Delegations will find in the Annex an information note from the Lithuanian delegation on the above subject, to be dealt with under "Any other business" at the Council (Environment) meeting on 23 October 2020.

Espoo Convention:

**Eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) and fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Convention serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Protocol on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA Protocol)
(Vilnius, Lithuania, 8-11 December 2020)**

- Information from the Lithuanian delegation

The eighth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention and the fourth session of the Meeting of the Parties to the SEA Protocol (hereinafter ‘the meeting’) will take place in Vilnius, Lithuania, from 8 to 11 December 2020.

The meeting in Vilnius will commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Convention and take important decisions on financial arrangements for 2021-2023, work plan, long-term strategy and action plan for the Convention and the Protocol, guidance on the applicability of the Espoo Convention to the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants, follow-up decisions on countries’ compliance with their obligations under the Convention, etc.

It is in the interest of all the EU Member States to facilitate the adoption of decisions at the meeting that would strengthen the Espoo Convention and contribute to the mitigation and reduction of unfavourable impacts on the environment. In this regard, timely and appropriate preparation and coordination, currently led successfully by the German Presidency team, will remain of particular importance. Lithuania, as the host country, is looking forward to a successful and productive meeting and underlines the importance of EU solidarity and unity on all key issues.

Due to the travel restrictions related to the COVID-19 pandemic it is essential to note that the meeting will be held in the form of a hybrid meeting (by means of video conferencing and in person). Quarantine-free entry into Lithuania will be granted to all registered participants. To counter unexpected technical communication issues, it is advisable to engage with Member States’ embassies in Vilnius.

Last but not least, Lithuania feels that it is necessary to mention the non-compliance case of the Belarusian nuclear power plant (NPP) and notes that the power start-up of the NPP is scheduled for 7 November 2020. Lithuania appreciates the efforts of the German Presidency in coordinating, and the European Commission and the EU Member States in supporting, a common EU position on this case. Reaffirming the non-compliance status of Belarus at the forthcoming meeting will be critical in the attempt to safeguard the core principles of the Espoo Convention. Lithuania would welcome further solidarity and support in this regard.

