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INFORMATION NOTE

From: General Secretariat of the Council

To: Council

Subject: Any other business

Call for urgent actions to ensure full implementation of nuclear safety recommendations in the Belarusian NPP and the EUCO conclusions of December 2020

- Information from the Lithuanian delegation

Delegations will find in Annex an information note from the Lithuanian delegation.

Call for urgent actions to ensure full implementation of nuclear safety recommendations in the Belarusian NPP and the EUCO conclusions of December 2020

Recent events that have been in the spotlight around the world have proved that the Belarusian regime is completely unpredictable and dangerous. Yet, the Belarusian NPP is about to be granted a license for commercial (industrial) operation despite the fact, that EU-led stress test process is still ongoing. This is an issue of the highest concern, as the primary focus of the EU should be to ensure the safety of the European citizens. Furthermore, dumping of surplus electricity from the Belarusian NPP, if not addressed properly, would hinder our ambition to accelerate the development of the green electricity generation and achieve the goal of a carbon-neutral economy.

Safety concerns and lack of transparency

The Belarussian NPP will soon be operational despite the fact that the final peer review report of the European nuclear safety regulators group (ENSREG) on the implementation of the vast majority (around 2/3) of stress tests' recommendations will not even be finished by then. Another alarming development is the lack of cooperation and transparency from the Belarusian side since the start of the commissioning process of the Belarusian NPP.

Until this moment, reasons for the series of observed Belarusian NPP stoppages and equipment failures have not been disclosed. Temporary disconnection of the Belarusian radiological monitoring system from the European Radiological Data Exchange Platform (EURDEP) during the Belarusian NPP shutdown in March 2021 remains to be explained. The radiological data is not being transparently shared with the Lithuanian institutions and international community. While majority of the critical observations and recommendations for safety enhancement by the EU, IAEA or other international experts is disregarded, Belarus is picking fragments of any positive assessments of the separate project elements out of context and using it for disinformation purposes.

European solidarity and EUCO conclusions of December 2020

The EU must stand firm behind the unanimous call of the Member States leaders to ensure the safety of our people and stop the commercial imports of unsafely produced electricity. The **European Council** Conclusions of 11 December 2020 underlined the importance of ensuring nuclear safety of the Belarusian NPP and invited the Commission to investigate possible measures preventing commercial electricity imports from third countries' nuclear facilities that do not fulfil EU recognised safety levels. Common EU actions should be built on these conclusions maintaining pressure on Belarus to immediately comply with the highest international environmental and safety standards.

Preventing unsafely produced electricity is necessary in order to ensure competitive and well-functioning EU internal electricity market. This can only be achieved when all market participants are playing on the same level playing field, with the same requirements applied and followed. This is a prerequisite for our green transition.

This is also a test of the European solidarity, that we firmly believe the EU can withstand. A common position should be applied for the EU companies to not take part in any projects related to the Belarusian NPP. It is essential to fulfil the EU political agreement to reduce level of cooperation and impose restrictive measures against the Belarusian regime.

Call for support and action

Lithuania highly values the Commission's efforts and commitment to find relevant solutions be it at the EU, regional or national level, to prevent commercial unsafely produced electricity flows into the EU market. However, further development of the Belarusian NPP project clearly shows, that further action is needed. Therefore, we urge the Commission:

1. To take firm political stance demanding postponement of commercial operation of the Belarussian NPP before the expected completion of the peer review report;
2. To ensure the final ENSREG peer review report addresses **all** nuclear safety concerns and gives specific recommendations to Belarus on their implementation.

3. To set up a detailed plan in cooperation with ENSREG for close monitoring of the final implementation of the stress tests recommendations at the Belarusian NPP as soon as possible and urge Belarus to accept it;
4. To dedicate all available technical and political support in order to identify and apply necessary measures preventing electricity imports from third countries operating unsafe nuclear facilities in line with Article 3 of the new Electricity Market Directive (EU) 2019/944).
