

On the construction of the Belarusian NPP

Recently, the Lithuanian authorities of various levels have been distributing information on the construction near the EU border of “an unsafe Belarusian nuclear power plant”, which does not meet the international requirements. **These statements are absolutely unfounded and are not confirmed by any evidence.**

The appeals of Lithuanian politicians addressed to other countries and the European Union to block electric power supply from Belarus just prove the opinion of experts who believe that Lithuanian authorities’ conduct is based on principles of unfair economic competition and is politically motivated due to the upcoming electoral campaign.

Belarus, being the most affected by the Chernobyl catastrophe, wishes more than any other country that no such disaster ever happen again. We take all the necessary measures to ensure the safety of the future NPP. We do it transparently, work closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), European Commission, World Association of Nuclear Operators and other partners.

Belarus has chosen one of the most up-to-date NPP design “AES – 2006”, which meets the most strict international safety standards. This model has won international contests for construction of NPPs in Turkey, Hungary, Finland, Bangladesh, Jordan, Vietnam, where all the world leading NPP vendors participated.

In accordance with the Espoo Convention and national legislation comprehensive environmental impact assessment and all the necessary risk and safety assessments have been carried out during the process of consideration and designing the Belarusian NPP.

Austria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine participated in the procedure of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) of the Belarusian NPP that was conducted from 2009 to 2013. **All the countries except Lithuania were satisfied with the results of the EIA.**

Since 2010 Belarus has sent to Lithuania written responses to the questions of the latter 10 times altogether (in January and June in 2010, in April and September in 2011, in November and December in 2012, in April, June, October in 2013, in February and November in 2014). **Belarus respects Lithuanian interest in obtaining detailed information on the Belarusian NPP. Not a single question has remained unanswered.**

Belarus at all levels, including the level of Prime Minister, has been repeatedly inviting the Lithuanian Side to hold expert consultations on Belarusian

NPP in order to discuss the existing concerns. Lithuania, expressing grave concerns about the Belarusian NPP, not only refuses to participate in expert consultations, but does its best to avoid them.

Belarus has provided the Lithuanian public with all the reasonable opportunities to express their opinion on this issue, including at the public hearings in Vilnius in 2010 and the additional ones we organized in Ostrovets in 2013. A number of Lithuanian officials were invited to the hearings in Ostrovets, including the Minister of Environment, the Minister of Energy and members of Parliament. Unfortunately, none of them considered it necessary to come or to send their representatives.

Having started the construction of the NPP, Belarus invited all interested countries, including Lithuania, to participate in the implementation of a post-project analysis programme. Lithuania is the only country that is lingering to work with Belarus within the programme.

Belarus works closely with the IAEA and intensively uses all instruments that the Agency provides. Technical cooperation projects on the development of nuclear power infrastructure, personnel training for the nuclear power programme and strengthening a regulatory body have been implemented since 2009.

Prior to the commissioning of the first NPP unit, **Belarus is planning to conduct seven IAEA review and assessment missions** and has sent appropriate requests to the Agency. The nearest of these is the IAEA Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) to be held in October this year. Moreover, we met the proposals of Lithuania and in September, 2014, requested to conduct the IAEA Site and External Events Design Review Service (SEED) in Belarus as a confidence-building measure.

The Belarusian NPP has become a member of the World Association of Nuclear Plant Operators (WANO), which will conduct partner inspections. **Preparation of stress-tests for the Belarusian NPP has also been started.**

Belarus is ready for a constructive dialogue and is waiting for responses to its proposals to establish in cooperation with Lithuania, European Commission and other partners a joint system of radiation monitoring of nuclear facilities located on both sides of the Belarusian-Lithuanian border and to establish a permanent Belarusian-Lithuanian body on post-project analysis of the Belarusian NPP.