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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

OPINIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

COMMISSION OPINION

of 24 June 2015

relating to the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste arising from the Sellafield Local Sludge Treatment Plant, located in the United Kingdom

(only the English text is authentic)

(2015/C 209/01)

The assessment below is carried out under the provisions of the Euratom Treaty, without prejudice to any additional assessments to be carried out under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union and the obligations stemming from it and from secondary legislation ⁽¹⁾.

On 18 March 2015, the European Commission received from the Government of the United Kingdom, in accordance with Article 37 of the Euratom Treaty, General Data relating to the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste arising from the Sellafield Local Sludge Treatment Plant.

On the basis of these data and additional information requested by the Commission on 23 March 2015 and provided by the United Kingdom authorities on 7 April 2015, and following consultation with the Group of Experts, the Commission has drawn up the following opinion:

1. The distance from the site to the nearest border of another Member State, in this case Ireland is 180 km.
2. Under normal operating conditions, the discharges of gaseous and liquid radioactive effluents are not liable to cause an exposure of the population in another Member State that would be significant from the point of view of health, in respect of the dose limit laid down in the new Basic Safety Standards (Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom ⁽²⁾).
3. Solid secondary radioactive waste will be temporarily stored on site before transfer to licensed disposal facilities within the United Kingdom.
4. In the event of unplanned releases of radioactive effluents, which may follow the accident of the type and magnitude considered in the General Data, the doses likely to be received by the population in another Member State would not be significant from the point of view of health, in respect of the reference levels laid down in the new Basic Safety Standards (Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom).

⁽¹⁾ For instance, under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, environmental aspects should be further assessed. Indicatively, the Commission would like to draw attention to the provisions of Directive 2011/92/EU on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment, 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, as well as to the Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

⁽²⁾ Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom of 5 December 2013 laying down basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation, and repealing Directives 89/618/Euratom, 90/641/Euratom, 96/29/Euratom, 97/43/Euratom and 2003/122/Euratom (OJ L 13, 17.1.2014, p. 1).

In conclusion, the Commission is of the opinion that the implementation of the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste in whatever form, arising from the Sellafield Local Sludge Treatment Plant, located in the United Kingdom, both in normal operation and in the event of the accident of the type and magnitude considered in the General Data, is not liable to result in a radioactive contamination, significant from the point of view of health, of the water, soil or airspace of another Member State, in respect of the provisions laid down in the new Basic Safety Standards (Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom).

Done at Brussels, 24 June 2015.

For the Commission
Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE
Member of the Commission
