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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

OPINIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

COMMISSION OPINION

of 18 April 2018

relating to the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste arising from the Sellafield Self-Shielded Box Interim Storage Facility located in the United Kingdom

(Only the English version is authentic)

(2018/C 139/01)

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 5 October 2017 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 ⁽²⁾ arising from the Sellafield Self-Shielded Box Interim Storage Facility.

On the basis of these data and additional information requested by the Commission on 14 November 2017 and provided by the United Kingdom authorities on 15 January 2018, 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 discharge of gaseous radioactive effluents is 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 limits laid down in the Basic Safety Standards Directive ⁽³⁾. Under normal operating conditions the facility will not discharge liquid radioactive effluents.
3. Secondary solid radioactive waste will be transferred to on-site treatment and conditioning facilities. Conditioned low-level waste will be shipped to the nearby licensed Drigg disposal facility.
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 Basic Safety Standards Directive.

⁽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, as amended by Directive 2014/52/EU; to Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment, as well as to Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora and to Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community action in the field of water policy.

⁽²⁾ The disposal of radioactive waste in the meaning of point 1 of Commission Recommendation 2010/635/Euratom of 11 October 2010 on the application of Article 37 of the Euratom Treaty (OJ L 279, 23.10.2010, p. 36).

⁽³⁾ 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 Self-Shielded Box Interim Storage Facility, 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 Basic Safety Standards Directive.

Done at Brussels, 18 April 2018.

For the Commission
Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE
Member of the Commission
