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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

OPINIONS

EUROPEAN COMMISSION

COMMISSION OPINION

of 4 June 2018

relating to the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste arising from the Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station (two UK-ABWR reactors) located in Wales, United Kingdom

(Only the English version is authentic)

(2018/C 193/01)

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 20 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 Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station (two 1 350 MWe UK-ABWR reactors).

On the basis of these data and additional information requested by the Commission on 13 December 2017 and provided by the United Kingdom authorities on 22 January 2018, and the complementary information provided by representatives of the government of the United Kingdom at the meeting of the Group of Experts on 30 and 31 January 2018 and further information provided on 14 February 2018, the Commission has drawn up the following opinion.

1. The distance between the site and the nearest border with another Member State, in this case Ireland, is 118 km.
2. During normal operation of the UK-ABWR reactors of the Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station, the discharges of liquid and gaseous radioactive effluents will not be 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⁾.
3. Secondary solid very low-active and low-active radioactive waste will be treated and conditioned on-site before transfer to licensed disposal facilities within the United Kingdom. Treatment by incineration or melting may be outsourced to licensed facilities outside the United Kingdom.

Spent fuel elements and conditioned intermediate to high-level solid waste will be temporarily stored on site, awaiting the future availability of a deep geological repository. The reprocessing of spent fuel is not envisaged.

4. In the event of accidents of the type and associated magnitudes of unplanned releases of radioactive effluents as considered in the general data, the doses likely to be received by the population of 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 two UK-ABWR reactors of the Wylfa Newydd nuclear power station, located in Wales, United Kingdom, both in normal operation and in the event of accidents of the type and associated magnitudes of unplanned releases of radioactive effluents as 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, 4 June 2018.

For the Commission
Miguel ARIAS CAÑETE
Member of the Commission
