

9th meeting of the Working Group on EIA and SEA (Espoo Convention)

(Geneva, 24 – 26 August 2020)

Statements by the EU and its Member States

Agenda item 6 (b): Draft guidance on the applicability of the Convention to the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants

Introductory statement

The EU and its Member States thank the Co-Chairs as well as the members of the ad hoc working group for their efforts and commitment in drawing up guidance on the applicability of the Convention to the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants and the Secretariat for its continuous support of this work. We are well aware that this is a complex and demanding task, considering in particular the difficult circumstances under which the ad hoc group had to proceed during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The EU and its Member States recognize the urgent need for guidance to assist the Parties in determining the applicability of the Convention with respect to lifetime extensions of nuclear power plants and to guide the Implementation Committee in assisting Parties to fully comply with their obligations under the Convention and reviewing related compliance cases. We confirm our support for developing this guidance in line with the mandate given by the 7th Meeting of the Parties, the extended mandate, given by the Working Group on EIA and SEA at its 7th meeting, the Terms of Reference, also adopted at that meeting, and decision IS/2 adopted by the Meeting of the Parties at its Intermediary Session.

State of Work

The EU and its Member States welcome the draft guidance published on the UNECE website as a good basis for further discussion. Considering the complexity of the matter, important results have already been achieved. Nonetheless, given the fact that the draft has not been validated by the ad hoc group, we are of the view that further considerations are needed in order to accommodate the remaining concerns of Parties and reach an agreement on text that would command consensus. This regards issues of particular disagreement which have been placed in square brackets, but also other issues. Work on these issues must therefore be taken forward in a spirit of compromise with a view to reach a consensus.

Further procedure until the MOP

The EU and its Member States propose to the Parties at the 9th meeting of the Working Group on EIA and SEA that the ad hoc group is mandated to continue its work in revising and finalizing the draft guidance, taking account of the comments and suggestions received in the context of that meeting, and to submit the revised draft guidance to the Meeting of the Parties for finalisation and adoption at its 8th session. The EU and its Member States reserve the right to bring issues of particular importance into the discussion taking place in the ad hoc group and at the Meeting of the Parties.

Draft decision VIII/6

The EU and its Member States have at this stage reservations on the related draft decision VIII/6 and suggest a detailed discussion on its form and content once the draft guidance has been finalised.
