

**Adhoc Group on the applicability of the Espoo Convention to the
lifetime extension of nuclear power plants
28 May 2020, 10am to 11am**

**Virtual Exchange of the Co-Chairs of the ad hoc Espoo/LTE Working Group
with NGOs on progress of work**

Summary of Discussion

Participants

Lucy Tanner (Co-Chair, UK)
Christof Sangenstedt (Co-Chair, DE)
Heidi Stockhaus (DE)

Jan Haverkamp, Greenpeace and WISE, representing Nuclear Transparency Watch
Patricia Lorenz, Friends of the Earth Europe (FoEE)

Summary

The Co-chairs gave an overview of the developments within the ad hoc Group on the applicability of the Espoo Convention to the lifetime extension of nuclear power plants since the 8th meeting in Vienna in December 2019. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the related travel restrictions, the physical meetings of the ad hoc Group in March (Rome), April (Sofia) and June (Helsinki) had to be cancelled. The 9th session of the Working Group has been postponed to 24 to 26 August 2020. It will take place in Geneva but online participation will be possible.

Despite the difficult circumstances, the ad hoc Group has continued drafting the Guidance. Exchange between the members was organised via a written procedure and a series of virtual meetings. The basic structure of the Guidance has not changed since the 8th meeting of the ad hoc Group in Vienna. All options for the different chapters are still on the table, nothing has been finally concluded yet. There are still differing opinions within the ad hoc Group about certain issues. The Co-chairs are trying to find compromises where possible. Remaining controversies will be made transparent in the draft Guidance which will be submitted to the Working Group by the end of June 2020. The Working Group at its meeting in August 2020 may then consider and suggest a way forward.

The Implementation Committee has been asked to provide input to the work of the ad hoc Group, notably on the question of whether the Convention requires Parties to introduce decision-making procedures for proposed activities, including major changes.

The NGO representatives thanked the Co-chairs for the update and the opportunity to discuss. They highlighted the increasing number of cases of lifetime extension and expressed their concern that in some of these cases Parties might not act in compliance with the Espoo Convention or might try to circumvent its provisions. They therefore draw the attention to the fact that in the coming months and years even more cases will be brought to the attention of the Implementation Committee.

Guidance is therefore urgently needed. They agreed that the involvement of the Implementation Committee in drawing up the Guidance would be helpful to ensure that the relevant issues would be addressed. They also asked about remaining opportunities for civil society to constructively influence the work of the group. The Co-chairs highlighted that the meeting of the Working Group in August would be the opportunity for this.

The NGO representatives stressed the importance of decision-making informed by an environmental impact assessment in all cases of a major change. When considering whether a lifetime extension of a nuclear power plant is likely to cause significant adverse transboundary impact, design basis accidents as well as beyond design basis accidents would have to be taken into account. They stressed that it is widely acknowledged (including in the industry) that Probabilistic Risk Assessment (PRA - also known as Probabilistic Safety Assessment, PSA) is not a sufficient tool to establish whether or not significant adverse transboundary impact can be expected.

Another exchange between the Co-chairs of the ad hoc Group on Espoo/LTE and the NGO representatives is envisaged for August 2020, ahead of the meeting of the Working Group.