

- First and foremost we all know why we are here today, so ... with that said I am beginning with a simple and well-deserved “Thank you” to the **ad hoc group** for **preparing the draft terms of reference** for possible guidance on the application of the Espoo Convention to the lifetime extension for nuclear power plants. The interventions so far have shown that the experience varies from country to country in terms of defining the scope and content of the term ‘lifetime extension’, as well as the application of the EIA procedure, and where applicable the transboundary notification. The Commission welcomes the existing draft and will continue to support the work for the preparation of the guidance. This is in line with our consistent support to the Espoo Convention and to its effective implementation, as part of the EU's membership to this Convention.

- **Let’s not lose the momentum**, roll our sleeves and **continue** this journey towards **preparing the guidance**. We already have the good experience in delivering in fairly short time the good practice recommendations on the application of the Convention to nuclear energy-related activities. And in each of the topic of this complex issue, we should always seek and build on the elements we can agree on. The working group and the guidance should build consensus between the Parties to the Convention on a complex and sensitive issue and should support and steer the work of the Implementation Committee.

- Establishing **transparent working and drafting arrangements** in the *ad hoc group* is key for delivering a credible output. Hence, comments and feedback coming from non-governmental organizations and inter-governmental organizations on the draft guidance should be welcome. They should influence in a virtuous way the drafting of the guidance on the application of ESPOO convention to the lifetime extension of NPP.

- It is worth bearing in mind in our future work two aspects:
 - that the Espoo Convention imposes procedural obligations related to environmental assessments;
 - that the rationale behind assessing the environmental impact of a particular activity is taking into account its **specifics, i.e. the characteristics of the activity** (size and design, interaction with other projects, location; use of natural resources, production of waste, nuisances; the type and characteristics of the project at stake) and the **type of impacts** (the magnitude and spatial extent of the impact; the transboundary nature of the impact; the intensity and complexity of the impact).

- Therefore, one can neither exclude the application of the Convention to “lifetime extensions”, **nor** – on the contrary – **assume that it applies for each and every action** that is undertaken within the operational lifetime of a nuclear power plant facility. Clearly establishing the thin red line in this exercise is the most challenging of all but it deserves the efforts.