

Working Group on EIA and SEA (Espoo Convention), 11th meeting
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LEGAL ANALYSIS AND PRACTICAL GUIDE ON LIFETIME EXTENSIONS OF NUCLEAR REACTORS¹

Due to the wide scope of potential impact of projects in the nuclear sector, international legislation is essential in this area. The Aarhus Convention and the Espoo Convention ensure that nuclear projects are subject to environmental assessment, that transparent processes take place and that the public is involved. A particular issue involves lifetime extensions of nuclear reactors, which are becoming more frequent and have occurred in several cases without an EIA and associated public participation. Since the new construction of nuclear power plants is often no longer economically feasible, operators are trying to keep old reactors online as long as possible by means of lifetime extensions, which can lead to enormous safety risks. Specific legal and practical questions concerning LTEs have led the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention to adopt a guidance document addressing this particular issue.

ÖKOBÜRO and Resource & Analysis Center “Society and Environment” (RACSE) took this as an opportunity to write a legal analysis and practical guide on lifetime extensions. In addition to providing an overview as to relevant legal aspects and recent developments, it shall lead to a clear overview of interrelations and better information of the public and interested representatives of Parties to the Espoo and Aarhus Conventions. The analysis takes into account the perspectives of nuclear regulators, focal points, affected Parties and members of the public and might thus be of interest for the participants to this Meeting.

¹ ÖKOBÜRO/RACSE, Assessment and Participation Requirements for the Lifetime Extension of Nuclear Power Plants. Analysis and Practical Guide (2022).

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