Nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes in Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia 2014-2020

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The Commission presented a report on the implementation of the work under the nuclear decommissioning assistance programme to Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia in 2016 and previous years.

Reminder of the objectives: upon their accession to the EU, Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia committed to shut down eight Soviet-designed nuclear power plants before the end of their scheduled lifetime. In exchange, the EU committed to provide financial assistance for decommissioning the designated power plants, namely:

- **Kozloduy** Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) units 1 to 4 in **Bulgaria**;
- **Ignalina** NPP in **Lithuania**;
- **Bohunice** V1 NPP in **Slovakia**.

The objective of the nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes is to assist the relevant Member States in implementing the steady process towards the decommissioning end-state whilst maintaining the highest safety standards.

Programme management: the Commission recalled that it implemented the programmes in the framework of **indirect management**.

Since 2001, the implementation of the programmes' budget has been entrusted to the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), with contributions to three International Decommissioning Support Funds and to the Central Project Management Agency (CPMA) in Lithuania since 2003 and the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency (SIEA) since 2016.

In accordance with the new governance approach for the multiannual financial framework 2014-2020, each of the Member States concerned has appointed a programme coordinator (ministerial or state secretary rank) who is responsible for programming, coordination and monitoring of the decommissioning programme at the national level.

In 2016, the Commission successfully implemented all actions following the 2015 internal audit on the governance and supervision of the programmes. It also accepted the recommendations made in September 2016 by the European Court of Auditors and started the mid-term evaluation in November 2016.

Budget and financing: the Commission adopted the 2014, 2015 and 2016 annual work programmes and the associated financing decisions committing the assigned budget through delegation agreements with **EBRD** (EUR 120.6 million for Kozloduy IDSF, EUR 9.0 million for Ignalina IDSF, EUR 30.3 million for Bohunice IDSF), **CPMA** (EUR 176.6 million) and **SIEA** (EUR 62.5 million).

On the basis of the Commission's 2016 study, funding under the 2014-2020 MFF is adequate to achieve the objectives set out.

There is no financial shortfall expected in any of the 3 countries until 2020. The raising of additional funds needed in the long term (post 2020) calls for a careful follow-up, especially in Lithuania.

Project progress and performance: the report concluded that **Bulgaria, Lithuania and Slovakia have advanced in the decommissioning of reactors**:

- all the reactors are shut down, with all but one core defueled. In 2016, key milestones were reached; the issuance of the decommissioning license for Kozloduy Units 3 and 4; and restart of defueling of the Ignalina NPP;

- the Commission considered that three Member States further advanced dismantling activities to the extent that the **decommissioning process is clearly irreversible** and that none of the reactors can be restarted under economically viable conditions;

- programmes are **progressing towards the most challenging phases** of decommissioning. For example, in Bohunice, where the programme is furthest advanced, the operator started dismantling and decontamination of the reactor primary circuits and faced initial difficulties as the programme enters in the technically most challenging phase. However, the governance setup is proving to be apt for early detection of issues through monitoring and key performance indicators, and prompt identification of mitigation measures;

- the difficulties in commissioning the waste management infrastructure have now been mitigated and the relevant projects are back on track under strict monitoring.

Outlook: the Commission will perform the **mid-term evaluation** of the programmes and report the results to the Parliament and the Council by the end of 2017. In this context, the detailed implementation procedures will be revised to further streamline the programmes' management.

Major expected developments in the field are:

Bulgaria: the start of construction of the National Disposal Facility and the finalisation of other key waste management infrastructures;

Lithuania: the steady progress of defueling and the preparations for dismantling the graphite core;

Slovakia: the decontamination of the primary circuit and the award of key contracts for dismantling.