

Nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme)

2018/0251(NLE) - 29/11/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Rebecca HARMS (Greens/EFA, DE) on the proposal for a Council regulation establishing the nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme) and repealing Council Regulation (EU) No 1369/2013.

The Committee's main amendments are as follows:

It clarified the programme's general objective as being to **adequately** assist Lithuania in **safely** implementing Ignalina nuclear power plant decommissioning. This would include the **safety of the interim spent fuel storage**.

It assigns as the programme's complementary objective to **ensure broad dissemination in all Member States of the generated knowledge on nuclear decommissioning**. This complementary objective shall be funded by the **financial assistance programme for decommissioning of nuclear facilities and management of radioactive waste** because dissemination is not mentioned in the Protocol No 4 of Lithuania's EU accession treaty which created the Ignalina programme.

The Committee increased the financial allocation for the implementation of the programme over the 2021-2027 period to **EUR 780 000 000** in current prices for the implementation of the main objective of the programme (decommissioning activities). It considered that the amount proposed by the Commission fails to take into account that the process of **dismantling the Unit 2** will start in 2026 and last beyond 2027, whereas sufficient funding for this task must be accumulated before the start of the works. Otherwise, the national regulator will not be in a position to authorise the commencement of the dismantling of the Unit 2 reactor.

Members proposed that the overall EU co-financing rate applicable under the Programme should be **86%** (in contrast to the **80%** proposed by the Commission). Since the inception of the programme, Lithuania has contributed about 14% to direct decommissioning activities. However, given that certain related activities (such as physical and fire safety of the plant) are not covered by the Ignalina programme, the actual contribution by Lithuania is higher. The proposal to increase Lithuania's share to 20% would present a significant financial burden for Lithuania.

The Committee also upgraded the **safe handling and storage of spent nuclear fuel** to the category of a **critical nuclear safety issue** (in contrast to the category of "**lesser challenges**" in the Commission's proposal).

The Committee proposes that while the disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste in a deep geological repository is excluded from the scope of the programme over the 2021-2027 period, Lithuania and the EU should begin, in due time, consultations regarding the **potential inclusion of those activities** in the scope of the programme **under the subsequent Multiannual Financial Framework**. It considers that the EU, in solidarity with Lithuania, should include the disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste within the

scope of the Ignalina programmes in the future Multiannual Financial Frameworks to at least co-finance the beginning of these extremely expensive works, such as the search for the suitable site, research and excavation.