

ENEF Secretariat's Conclusions

60 years of Euratom

The Forum

- Marks the 60th anniversary of the signature of the "Rome treaties", which include the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community ("Euratom"), on 25th March 1957, using the innovative and inclusive World Café format to maximize participation and contribution from multiple perspectives;
- Welcomes the achievements over the last 60 years, which span many across diverse areas, as the Euratom Treaty regulates far more than just the nuclear energy industry. The Treaty and ensuing secondary legislation provide a framework for all civil nuclear activities, from the nuclear fuel cycle to industrial and medical applications, the control of foods, and safeguards inspections of nuclear materials. The Euratom acquis serves the public and workers in terms of radiation protection and the use of radioactive substances. It also addresses certain environmental concerns such as regulating and monitoring radioactive releases, including responsible waste management and the promotion of sustainable systems. The acquis is implemented in strict compliance with the principle that it is the choice of each Member State to decide whether or not to use nuclear energy;
- Acknowledges that a number of challenges linked with the implementation of the Euratom Treaty priorities were identified, and some challenges are likely to remain for the future, such as the focus on the back end of the lifecycle of nuclear power plants, in particular radioactive waste and spent fuel management and decommissioning, as well as the level of transparency associated with it;
- Highlights that future initiatives should be undertaken in areas such as:
 - ensuring the correct and full transposition and conformity of the Radioactive Waste Directive, amended Nuclear Safety Directive and amended Basic Safety Standards Directive without delay, to ensure fast and visible results for the citizens;
 - emergency preparedness & response mechanisms, also ensure cross border and EU level harmonisation of the plans in place in individual Member States;
 - ensure increased compliance with highest safety standards and best regulatory practice in the EU, the EU neighbouring and third countries;
 - ensure improved application and transparency in the area of investments under Article 41 of the Euratom Treaty (investments), also in the case of long-term operation;
 - ensure timely and safe decommissioning of shut-down reactors, with adequate funding available when needed;
- Recognises that nuclear energy represents, for a considerable number of EU Member States, a significant share of their energy mix and that it is, for several of these Member States, a vital part of the solution to meet the ambitious EU's energy security and decarbonisation objectives. The Forum participants note that the European Union is currently one of three global economic actors that generate more than half of their electricity from low-carbon sources, with 28% coming from nuclear;

- Recognizes that there are in Europe deep divisions in view on the position and role that Euratom plays, especially in relation to the Treaty of the EU and the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU. The Forum recommends further discussion on this issue among all stakeholders.

1. The Radioactive Waste and Spent Fuel Management in the EU

The Forum:

- Welcomes the publication of the first report on the implementation of Directive 2011/70/Euratom the management of radioactive waste and spent fuel on 15th May 2017 by the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. The report brings transparency to this important matter to European Union citizens, in an easy-to-understand way;
- Notes that all Member States generate radioactive waste (through a variety of activities ranging from medical applications to electricity power generation), while 21 of them also manage spent nuclear fuel on their territory; as well as the importance of ensuring the safe management of such material from generation to disposal, owing to its radiological properties and the potential hazard it poses to workers and the general public;
- Reminds that the aims of the Directive are to ensure that radioactive waste and spent fuel is managed safely, responsibility is clearly assigned, and no undue burden is passed on to future generations;
- Recognizes that although much has been achieved in many Member States, a lot of work is yet outstanding;
- Recognizes the difference in terms of the stage of implementation of the Directive among the Member States, as well as the lagging behind by most Member States including those with no spent fuel (radioactive waste only) in their responsibility not to pass undue burdens to future generations, and calls on all Member States not to delay forward planning, but show firm commitment to crucial policy challenges in the future;
- Acknowledges that the development of geological disposal facilities, and specifically the decision on their location is a complex, long-term process in which continuous efforts towards transparency and public participation play an essential role;
- Points out, however, that the Directive requires Member States to engage in this process without delay. Greater efforts need to be undertaken by the Member States, benefiting from each other's experience as much as possible;
- Invites the Commission to deepen its analysis of the timely and adequate availability of funding for decommissioning and waste management, and to continue reporting on the topic in a transparent manner. In this way, the Commission should ensure the application of the polluter-pays principle. Undue burdens should not be imposed on future generations;
- Considering the large number of reactors to be decommissioned in the coming years, the Forum asks the Commission to help support the best possible sharing of knowledge among Member States, operators and regulators, and thereby the highest possible level of safety and cost-effectiveness of decommissioning within the EU, providing opportunities for jobs and growth.

2. Standardisation potential in the supply chain of nuclear power plants and potential cross-benefits/costs from a regulatory point of view for an increased coordination among regulators

The Forum:

- Underlines the commitment to nuclear safety of all institutional and industrial actors, civil society actors and the public, in the European Union, as well as the protection of the public and workers from harmful effects of radiation;
- Recognizes that, as the Commission highlighted in the 2016 PINC (as well as the 2017 update, adopted on 12th May 2017), areas have been identified where cost-effectiveness can be improved, such as with the standardisation of supply chains, which would also lead to improvements of safety;
- Recognizes that stronger cooperation between regulators is necessary to continuously improve nuclear safety and to strive for equally high standards; in particular, recognizes that stronger coordination of ENSREG regulators is necessary during the licensing process particularly on non-site specific design aspects of a nuclear power plant.
- Recognizes that while overall safety goals are given, the way to achieve them is often not the same;
- Highlights the benefits of performing environmental impact assessments;
- Highlights that for Member States that decide to develop new capacities for nuclear energy, they have to operate nuclear power plants according to the highest nuclear safety standards. Similarly, where the operation of existing nuclear installations is extended, the license holders, regulators and Member States have to ensure that continuing operation is according to the highest reasonably practicable safety standards.