

The eighth plenary meeting of the European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF) took place in Prague on 30 and 31 May 2013 and was hosted by the Czech government. 250 high-ranking participants discussed the perspectives for nuclear energy in the EU in the medium to longer term; from long term safe operation of existing plants to new built safe generation III reactors, demonstration of generation IV systems and development and implementation of waste management solutions.

The Forum was opened by the Czech Prime Minister, Petr Nečas, his Slovak counterpart Robert Fico, and the EU Commissioner Günther Oettinger, in the presence of Ministers, Members of Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee, industry leaders as well as regulators and other representatives of the civil society.

The opening statements by the Prime Ministers of the CZ Rep and Slovakia and by the Commissioner Oettinger, reflected the importance of affordable and reliable energy for the competitiveness of the European economy (industry and households) in the global world of today. Accordingly, the focus of the Plenary was mainly on investment difficulties and the need to look at the whole energy system approach to strike the right balance between competitiveness, security of supply and sustainability. Challenges and solutions in particular for safety and waste issues were discussed as well as the way to channel objective and balanced information to the public at large. Specific reference in this context was made to the report recently published by the European Groups on Ethics (Bureau of European Policy Advisers of President Barroso) on the ethical aspects of the energy mix of the future.

In the context of the preparation of the EU Energy Policy for 2030, the Forum concluded that the Commission needs to develop a 2030 framework which will provide a stable long term platform to trigger and maintain investment in low carbon energy (covering all low carbon generation sources and the network) while ensuring the flexibility for Member States to choose their energy mix. That needs to be built on a "global energy system approach", getting out of the silo thinking, without ideology but realism.

To foster the investment climate, the nuclear industry needs to ensure its capacity to build on time and costs, presenting credible projects for financing by the banks.

Nuclear Safety stays the first priority. The sole national responsibility for safety was strongly recalled by participants, within a general framework which might be set at EU level. For Waste management, solution exists which need to be implemented. Costs for safety and waste management have to be integrated in the overall costing scheme of nuclear projects.

Communication with the public is necessary on the wide aspects of the energy mix. Therefore the debate in ENEF will be broadened to integrate the "entire low carbon" dimension. Practical ways will be developed and the next Plenary in Bratislava in May 2014 should reflect this broadened dimension.

During the final session, Mr Poncelet was thanked for his skilled chairmanship of the WG Opportunities since its creation. Mrs Trojanowska has taken over the responsibility.

Opportunities

- The Working Group Opportunities presented its contributions to the "EC Consultation on generation adequacy and capacity mechanisms", and on the "EIB consultation on its Energy

Investment Policy". It also issued its contribution to the socio-economic impact of nuclear energy in the EU and a position on the Green Paper Energy 2030. A full new report on the financing aspects and proposals to overcome the investment barriers was published for the Prague Plenary. Finally a position paper was issued on the harmonisation of licensing approaches in the EU.

- During the debates, ENEF noted that one of the major reasons for the lack of investment in the energy sector is due to the overall complexity and uncertainty of the playing field. ENEF agreed on the importance for the EU to develop, without delay, a stable but flexible framework for the EU Energy Policy 2030.

The EU Energy RM 2050 showed that decarbonisation is possible and gave an insight in the role nuclear energy may play. Concrete steps need to be taken now to launch the post 2020 process. Balanced 2030 objectives (or targets) and implementing mechanisms will have to be designed to foster much needed investments where the market is not yet functioning adequately. These objectives and implementing mechanisms need to be developed and/or coordinated at EU level to avoid more discrepancies and distortions in the future, if this was done purely at national level.

ENEF agreed to contribute to the development of these objectives and implementing mechanisms, in particular by considering the system's effects related to nuclear energy in the energy mix, on equal footing with other low carbon sources.

Banking institutions, including the EIB, are expected to make a fair analysis, on technical and financial ground, of the benefits and limitations of nuclear energy in the mix, again on equal terms with other low carbon generation sources. The EIB insisted on its alignment with the EU Energy Policy and on the need for industry to have well prepared credible projects and to demonstrate its capacity to build on time and at cost.

Beyond the existing technologies, keeping EU technology leadership in Generation IV systems is also recognised as important, including for waste management optimization. It requires the design and construction of a few demonstration projects in the EU in the coming decade.

- The Opportunities Working Group is invited to focus on the following issues in the coming months:

- contribute to the better understanding of the "System's Effects in low carbon Electricity Systems" and serve as steering group for the on-going study on the costs of nuclear energy (financed by EC)
- provide consolidated comments to the Green Paper Energy 2030 and, as appropriate, prepare supporting materials for the preparation of the Energy Policy 2030
- provide inputs, as appropriate, for the development of EU level mechanisms to foster investments in the nuclear sector
- pursue active dialogue with the banking institutions on the financing of nuclear investments
- in cooperation with WG Transparency and on the basis of the paper on the socio-economic aspects of nuclear energy and inputs from the WG Risks, issue a consolidated report for the next plenary, revisiting the benefits and limitations of nuclear energy for wide use and information of the public – as final consumer of energy
- analyse the opportunity for small and medium size reactors in the electricity grid of the future
- in cooperation with the WG Risks, help the Commission to develop concrete initiatives to progress

towards harmonisation of nuclear industrial codes and standards at EU level.

Risks

- The Working Group Risks presented its report on the European Reactor Design Assessment (ERDA) with diverse options to progress towards greater harmonisation at EU level. Position papers were issued on the outcomes of the Stress Tests and the December 2012 draft of the new Nuclear Safety Directive. Detailed Guidelines were produced to help streamline the National Waste Management Programmes, fostering the implementation of the Nuclear Waste Directive. A report on export control regime at EU level was issued as a result of a seminar jointly organised with the Committee responsible for the EU Dual Use Regulation, presently under revision.
- ENEF gave the opportunity to discuss how far solutions are put in place to handle the challenges associated with the use of nuclear energy, in particular safety aspects and nuclear waste management, both from the technical and costs perspectives. Participants insisted on the sole responsibility of the national Safety Authorities for safety related decisions. For waste management, geological disposal is the best option and is under implementation in some MS. Partitioning and transmutation might bring added value in terms of increased sustainability of nuclear energy. The demonstration phase is therefore now appropriate. On export control, restrictions on intra-EU transfer of nuclear technology may have negative effects on the competitiveness of industry.
- Against this background, the Forum Working Group Risks could focus in particular on the following:
 - contribute to a wide analysis of energy related risks, their quantification and costing and the way to internalize them (ia for nuclear: waste management and decommissioning costing);
 - support the Commission, as appropriate, to develop a Recommendation on the basis of ERDA, in order to progress towards harmonisation of design licensing at EU level;
 - in cooperation with the WG Opportunities, help the Commission to develop concrete initiatives to progress towards harmonisation of nuclear industrial codes and standards at EU level;
 - following the second Commission's Report on Human Resources and Education and training, investigate the opportunity to launch an initiative, in cooperation with EHRON, on knowledge and skills management in nuclear energy technologies;
 - engage in the preparation of the Nuclear Industry (Security) Summit to be held in Amsterdam in 2014.

Transparency

- The Working Group Transparency reported about its endeavours to both enhance ENEF working structures and to elaborate ways to further improve the implementation of transparency and participation requirements at national level. Discussion papers on internal ENEF challenges helped to structure the debate on improved working methodologies and a balanced set-up at a joint meeting of all working groups (December 2012 in Luxemburg). Work also covered remaining challenges in crisis communication following the experiences made in Fukushima and the first steps towards the creation of an Energy Transparency

Centre of Knowledge (E-TRACK) to facilitate the national understanding and implementation of state of the art information and participation requirements. A position paper was issued to the Commission covering transparency aspects in the envisaged revised Directive on the Safety of Nuclear Installations.

- The discussions of ENEF confirmed that more work will be required on the need and implementation of a public dialogue about energy and the mix, based on the principles set out in the EGE 'Energy Ethics' report. The decisions a country takes on energy sources should be ultimately based on society's value judgements over technical and economic considerations to create confidence and trust. ENEF could provide guidance to this end.

To respond to this challenge ENEF need to develop a more balanced composition and improved cooperation between working groups, as well as to broaden the debate to integrate the nuclear aspects into the energy system as a whole.

- Against this background, the Forum working group Transparency could focus in particular on the following:

- based on the report of the European Group on Ethics on Energy, raise awareness of decision-makers on the value of an ethical argumentation. This would help gain legitimacy for their decisions and identify ways helping citizens to structure and elaborate their perspective on energy as a whole and nuclear energy in particular;

- in cooperation with WG Opportunities and on the basis of the paper on the socio-economic aspects of nuclear energy and inputs from the WG Risks, issue a consolidated report for the next plenary revisiting the benefits and limitations of nuclear energy for wide use and information of the public – as final consumer of energy;

- as to the Directive on the Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste (2011/70/Euratom), identify what is required to ensure the de-facto implementation of the transparency requirements at national level and make recommendations to the European Commission on the way forward;

- assist the Commission in setting up a project "Energy Transparency Centre of Knowledge" (E-Track) at the Joint Research Centre;

- further identify challenges and gaps still existing in the area of crisis communication and summarise them in a discussion paper.

The next plenary session of the European Nuclear Energy Forum will take place in Bratislava in May 2014. The overall setup of ENEF could be broadened to integrate more visibly the global low carbon energy system's perspective. This should be further developed during the inter-plenary session in Luxemburg in December 2013.