

Public meeting on Post-Fukushima stress tests peer review
Brussels 8th May 2012

Greetings from the Presidency of the Council

Dear President, participants,

Can I start by thanking the Commission and ENSREG for having invited to this important event. It is a pleasure to be here with all of you to discuss the EU nuclear stress tests and the peer review process.

The terrible events in Japan - only one year ago - are still very clear in our minds. The challenges that Japan face in rebuilding and cleaning contaminated areas are tremendous; so is the human suffering. Japan's energy policy and production are faced with fundamental changes that will likely transform the energy sector beyond recognition. The lessons to be learned from the Fukushima accident are truly of global relevance and should be reflected upon by us all.

An important priority for the Danish EU Presidency is to make Europe a safer place to live. In a globalised world we must cooperate in Europe and with third countries if we want to ensure the security of European citizens and solve cross-border problems. Nuclear safety is obviously an important part of this work.

It took barely two months for the stress test process to be set up and launched after Fukushima. And today, only 11 months after the start of the process, the peer reviewed ENSREG report is made public.

The Council has closely followed ENSREG's work all along. We have had first-hand reports of the enormous efforts made by ENSREG, WENRA, the Commission and the many committed experts that Member States urgently

made available for this task. The expertise, which was mobilised in such a short time is indeed impressive. Allow me therefore to use this opportunity to warmly thank all of you who contributed to the assessments in a national context and to the European peer reviews.

It is the first time ever that a comprehensive nuclear safety and risk assessment is made on such a scale. Not only has it created international awareness, but it has already contributed to the strengthening of a nuclear safety culture in Europe. All 15 Member States with nuclear power plants, plus Ukraine and Switzerland, have submitted reports on risks and safety assessments, including re-assessments of safety margins of nuclear power plants.

The stress tests are first and foremost of relevance to the countries that have chosen to have nuclear power as a part of the energy mix. But, as you may know, also EU Member States with no nuclear power plants participate in the work. This is for example the case of Denmark. Nuclear safety is a common concern for the whole EU and today every EU Member State is a stakeholder.

One main success of the process is transparency. Full transparency and public involvement are means to ensure that stress tests are not only for experts, operators and authorities. The more transparent and open such a process is, the more public confidence can be increased, and the more we can rest assured that the EU aims for the highest levels of nuclear safety - collectively as well as for each and every nuclear plant.

In follow-up to the European Council conclusions from March last year the Commission has been meeting with neighbouring countries and other partners to promote nuclear safety. Japan, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine, Belarus, Switzerland, Armenia and the Arab Emirates have been involved in the process one way or another. Moreover, as part of the strengthening of external

relations the Council is negotiating an Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation. The aim of this instrument is to look beyond borders and markedly contribute to strengthening nuclear regulatory systems and radiation protection at a global level.

Nuclear safety and nuclear security are obviously closely related. There can be no complete assessment of the safety of nuclear power plants without similar analyses of security aspects. Therefore, Member States last year agreed to establish a Council Ad-hoc Group on Nuclear Security to work on the so-called "2nd track" of the stress-test process. This group is currently chaired by the Danish EU Presidency. The group looks at responses to incidents due to malevolent acts, and its recommendations will become part of the assessments and the broader follow-up to the Japanese accidents.

I shall not predict the outcome of today's debate. Having seen the Peer Review Report, it seems clear however that important recommendations have already been identified, which we must look carefully into. Implementation will be a key issue and include the possible elaboration of new legislation. What you have done are first important steps in a process of new activities. No doubt this will lead to a public debate in the coming months.

The EU and its citizens must be assured that the level of nuclear safety and security is constantly developed to the highest standards and that the results of our efforts are shared and implemented. We owe it to ourselves and our children a safe environment, nothing more nothing less.

Thank you

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