



Final minutes of the 18th meeting of ENSREG

25 April 2012, 10:15 – 18:00

Berlaymont, Brussels

Participants

All the EU Member States, with the exception of Malta, Estonia and Portugal, as well as the European Commission, were represented in the meeting.

Mr. Wanner (Swiss Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate) attended the meeting as Observer.

The Chairman introduced the new ENSREG Members:

Mr Axel Vorwerk (Federal Ministry for the Environment, Nature Conservation and Nuclear Safety) replacing Mr Michael Hertrich as an ENSREG Member from Germany.

Mr Andris Abramenskvs (Director of Radiation Safety Centre of the State Environmental) replacing Mr Andrej Salmins as an ENSREG Member from Latvia.

1) Introductory address by the ENSREG Chairperson

The meeting started with a delay of approximately 45 min, due to a pre-meeting of some ENSREG Members with Commissioner Oettinger in the morning. Following a request for clarification by Mr Ronáky, the Chairman apologised for the late start and underlined that the main topic of today's discussion will be the Stress Test peer review Report.

2) Adoption of the Agenda

The meeting Agenda was adopted without amendments.

3) Peer Review of Stress Tests – ENSREG report

Related document: HLG_p(2012-18)_91

The Chairman briefly presented the process and thanked all involved parties. All work was done together with the European Commission. EC recently got more involved in the process.

The pre-meeting with the Commissioner was set up to clarify open questions with regard to the finalisation of the Stress Test Process; inter alia, the peer review report and the possibility of having joint statement of ENSREG and the European Commission were discussed. Such joint statement would contain references on how the peer review report handles the issue of air plane crashes, the possibility to carry out additional site visits as well as increased transparency on site specific information about nuclear facilities.

It was agreed that a small group would draft a joint statement by ENSREG and the European Commission, which should be then endorsed by ENSREG.

The Chair of the Peer review board, Mr Jamet, reported about the main steps of the stress test process and the follow-up actions. WENRA shall be involved in the process to develop guidance. He mentioned that many comments formulated by ENSREG Members were taken into account, while major comments necessitated a dedicated discussion in ENSREG.

Mrs Drábová mentioned that she is impressed by the results of the peer review process; CZ would endorse the report as it is. She proposed to use the reporting mechanism under the Nuclear Safety Directive as follow-up. Mr Varjoranta mentioned that the follow-up to the stress test process will take years; the peer reviews were only one element, there is extensive work to be performed. Mr Lacoste underlined that an action plan has to be set up after the meeting. Mr Laporta highlighted that the public might feel uncertain if the report would not be endorsed.

Mr Stritar mentioned that what happens on political level is not in the hands of ENSREG. Mrs Martinez Ten had no further comments on the report; it should be published and a press release be issued. Further it should be explained to stakeholders what has to be done in the future.

Mr Weightman underlined that it is an important task of the meeting to adopt the report in its present form – also in connection with the meeting of 8th May. He stressed that independent, technical regulators are constantly working on improving nuclear safety. Political matters should not be mixed with nuclear safety; we could fall into a trap following this approach.

Mr Molin mentioned that follow-up actions have to be agreed, it is a meaningful way forward. Mr Rónaky mentioned that the whole exercise is a big challenge and should be closed today. Hungary intends to publish the report tomorrow morning. The IAEA representative mentioned that during the Second Extraordinary Meeting of Contracting Parties to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) in August there will be a presentation on the stress test exercise also in other countries.

Mr Faross mentioned that a unique machinery was used for the peer reviews. There is no doubt with regard to the appreciation of the performed work. The two amendments of the EC to the report were rejected by the Board. The reasoning for the rejection is not convincing though. The Fukushima event is being surpassed, an Action Plan has to be established. Amendments could be touched upon in the joint declaration. Cooperation with WENRA should be further exploited.

Mr Jamet mentioned the public event on 8 May in Brussels. He asked the ENSREG Members to provide concrete figures on the global estimation of man-years used for the exercise. This includes an estimate of the resources spent by countries including utility assessment, regulatory review of utility assessment and additional national work generated by the peer reviews. Mr Majerus mentioned that the report has to be accompanied by a press release.

Mr Weightman highlighted that national events shall remain a national decision due to the different national environments. He was supported by the Chairman, individual regulators should decide on this issue.

Mr Wanner then briefly presented the WENRA proposals on stress test follow-up; WENRA will follow up on the 4 identified issues as per conclusions from the 20-21 March WENRA meeting, namely:

- I.4 Mutual assistance - WENRA will put in place arrangements for mutual assistance amongst regulatory bodies in responding to nuclear accidents in one of its members' states.
- T.1 Natural hazards - WENRA will produce updated harmonised guidance for the identification of natural hazards, their assessment and the corresponding assessment for “cliff-edge” (margins) effects. Safety Reference Levels will be updated accordingly.
- T.2 Containment in Severe Accident - WENRA will review Safety Reference Levels in light of the various measures identified to prevent containment overpressurisation, including those relevant for hydrogen mitigation and containment venting, and modify them if necessary.

- T.3 Accident Management WENRA will review Safety Reference Levels in light of the various measures identified in relation to organisational and material arrangements for preventing or mitigating a significant radiological release, and modify them if necessary.

WENRA emphasizes institutional (roles and responsibilities of governments, regulators and utilities) and cultural (continuous improvement) aspects of nuclear safety in addition to technical issues.

WENRA is ready to tackle further issues as necessary on the basis of the lessons learned from the Fukushima accident. WENRA's commitment is to proceed along the path of defining or revising existing Reference Levels as well as developing guidance documents for practical use by regulators.

After a short break, the discussion within ENSREG continued on the text of a joint statement of ENSREG and the European Commission (HLG_p(2012-18)_95). Although there was the intention to reach a compromise, divergent positions mainly between UK and EC on the subject of additional site visits persisted. No agreement on the text could be therefore reached in the meeting and the peer review report was not endorsed. A silence procedure was therefore agreed upon (see below main decisions/actions).

Austria expressed its intention to attach a statement to the minutes (see annex).

Main decisions/Actions

ENSREG decided on a silence procedure on a draft text of the joint statement of ENSREG and the European Commission on stress tests and the peer review process by Thursday 26 April noon (Brussels time). No objection implies agreement on the statement and endorsement of the ENSREG Report. The silence procedure was not broken and the joint statement was thereby adopted and the report of the peer review board was endorsed.

ENSREG decided to establish a task force to define an action plan within the next 3 or 4 weeks, with actions to be performed as follow-up; Mr Jamet and Mr Krs are nominated as lead persons of the task force. Members of ENSREG and the Commission can propose additional candidates.

4) ENSREG's input for the review of EU nuclear safety legislation

Related document: HLG_p(2012-18)_92

Mr Stritar summarised the three contributions received so far (UK, LU, GR). A summary table was provided to delegations before the meeting. Most of the ENSREG Members stated that it was premature for them to provide concrete proposals, as the stress test phase has to be finalised first.

Mr Demcenko asked for including NPP's in the vicinity of the EU borders in the future legislation. Mrs Martinez Ten highlighted that, before inventing new rules, the existing legislation should be deepened. Mr Hennenhöfer agreed with this approach, existing instruments should be exploited first. The post-Fukushima work has to be finished before new legislation will be set up.

The Chairman concluded the discussion: no proposals for legislative change will be presented by ENSREG at the moment.

5) Initiative for the EU harmonisation of off-site emergency preparedness

Related document: HLG_p(2012-18)_89

The representative of the EC, Mr Janssens, presented the current arrangements in this area at the European level and its opinion of whether there are any weaknesses or possible improvements in those arrangements.

Mr Stritar highlighted that this issue has to be seen in a broader context – e.g. including civil protection issues. The question arises, which body then should take the lead? In the following debate, several ENSREG Members mentioned that this initiative represents a complex process, an overall picture has to be agreed upon.

Mr Lacoste asked to discuss how to include all responsible authorities. Mr Molin stated that – presently – a multilateral response to accidents does not exist. Mr Majerus mentioned that an overall view on the issue is missing. Mr Weightman underlined that it is not primarily important to harmonise the work, but there is the need that basic information is provided to all parties concerned.

Main decisions/Actions

The ENSREG Chairperson summarized that the same task force (as for the stress test follow-up) should prepare ideas how to proceed with emergency issues and table concrete proposals.

Any other business

The Chairperson informed about the need to present the stress test work of ENSREG in the Ad-hoc Council Group on Nuclear Security on 4 May. Mr Pouleur volunteered.

The Chairman also informed about an offer of DG DEVCO for up to three ENSREG Members to participate to an exploratory mission to Thailand around 14 June to assess the situation and consider the possibility for cooperation projects. Mr Hennenhöfer expressed his interest; other ENSREG Members were invited to do so as well.

Information on the next ENSREG meeting

The next ENSREG meeting will take place on 3 July 2012.

ANNEX

STATEMENT FROM AUSTRIA

After careful consideration of the "joint declaration" together with the "Peer Review Report" Austria abstains from voting on both, the adoption of the "joint declaration" as well as the endorsement of the "Peer Review Report".

It may be recalled that the European Council has asked for a "comprehensive and transparent risk and safety assessment ("stress tests")" and that ENSREG in May 2011 stated that "Paragraphs 1 and 2 above [safet track and security track] contribute to a comprehensive risk and safety assessment". Furthermore ENSREG stated that "for now" stress tests are defined as a targeted reassessment of the safet margins of nuclear power plants in the light of the events which occurred at Fukushima.

From this it is evident that additional activities are required to meet the mandate of the European Council in full. Whereas Austria fully acknowledges the importance of future activities already agreed, or indicated, we are convinced that more has to be done, on European level in particular.