



**Statement from Ms. Marta Žiaková,
Chairperson of ENSREG,
on the finalisation of the preliminary Peer Review Report on the
Belarus National Action Plan**

At the Group's 42nd meeting of the 3-4 March 2021

ENSREG approved the preliminary report of the peer review team of experts on the Belarus National Action Plan at its 42nd meeting on 3 March 2021. The report was issued following a visit of a team of European experts to the Nuclear Power Plant in Astravets, Belarus, on 9-10 February 2021.

ENSREG recalls that a stress test exercise remains a targeted process reviewing the safety of certain aspects of an NPP with the objective of further enhancement of safety. A stress test and the implementation of follow-up actions should not be used to justify or authorise the safe operation of an NPP nor its long-term operation or lifetime extension. Such authorisations have to be in line with the procedures prescribed in national law and under the full responsibility of the national regulatory authorities.

ENSREG welcomes the approval of the preliminary report as an important contribution to the ENSREG community's wider efforts to advance nuclear safety in the EU and the EU's neighbouring countries.

The peer review has the aim to evaluate the content and status of implementation of the Belarus National Action Plan (NACp) that was published by Belarus Gosatomnadzor in August 2019 following the ENSREG stress tests report of July 2018¹. This NACp, aimed at converting recommendations in Belarus's stress test national report and the ENSREG stress test peer review report into concrete actions to enhance safety, together with a timeline for implementation. Belarus published an update of the implementation of the NACp in January 2020².

In June 2020, the Commission received Belarus's agreement to conduct the peer review of the NACp. Due to the COVID pandemic, the peer review had to be reorganised into two phases. The first phase, which has now been completed, reviewed the state of implementation of the seven issues and the related stress test recommendations, which were recognized by the ENSREG peer review team and by the ENSREG Stress Test Board as priority issues.

ENSREG underlines the safety significance of all recommendations formulated in the 2018 PRT report and encourages its Belarusian counterparts to continue working on them to ensure and enhance the safety of BelNPP in a timely manner. The full review of their implementation will be addressed in the second phase of the peer review, which is expected later in 2021, depending on the situation with the Covid-19 pandemic. The peer review team's final report will be compiled at the end of the second phase. This approach is in line with the risk informed approach adopted by ENSREG and EU nuclear safety regulators in the stress tests in the EU and has been fully supported by ENSREG Stress Test Board and ENSREG as a whole for the current peer review exercise.

¹ http://www.ensreg.eu/sites/default/files/attachments/2017-10-31_belarus_stress_test_final_report_eng_final_end.pdf

² https://gosatomnadzor.mchs.gov.by/upload/iblock/f65/natsplan-stress_testy.rar

The preliminary report concludes, based on the information made available and the site visit, that the NAcP has addressed all the peer review team's recommendations related to the priority issues and that progress has been made in addressing all recommendations related to the seven priority issues.

The preliminary report was duly reviewed, discussed and approved by ENSREG today.

As chair, I would like to thank the peer review experts for their dedication in carrying out the review and mission in these very difficult circumstances. I would also like to note the excellent cooperation from the Belarusian side and in particular, from the Belarusian regulator Gosatomnadzor, which since last year is an observer in ENSREG.

It will now be important that the Belarusian regulator and the operator of the Belarus Nuclear Power plant carefully review the conclusions of the preliminary peer review report and address the remaining recommendations as well as any further improvements identified by the peer review team. ENSREG stresses the importance of continuing the good cooperation with Gosatomnadzor in order to complete the second phase of the peer review swiftly, once the pandemic permits. ENSREG stands ready to continue reviewing the implementation of the National Action Plan over the next few years, until all recommendations identified in the 2018 stress tests are satisfactorily addressed.

ENSREG stresses that the responsibility for the safety of the nuclear power plant remains solely with the operator under the supervision of the national regulatory authorities.