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Stress tests and Peer Review Process

Joint statement of ENSREG and the European Commission

The national European regulators and the European Commission as European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) have endorsed today the peer review board report prepared as an answer to the mandate delivered by the European Council of 25 March 2011, asking for the launch of stress tests on the European NPPs;

ENSREG and the European Commission share the view that the work achieved since the Fukushima accident has been of exceptional nature from a quantitative and qualitative point of view. The seventeen national reports¹ covering all nuclear power plants of the EU and of participating countries have been assessed by 80 reviewers from 24 nations in Europe and the European Commission;

ENSREG and the European Commission underline that the stress tests and peer review have been a rigorous review of the safety of NPPs in the light of three main areas of the Fukushima accident. This review was carried out through three different steps:

- 1) *The first step required the operators to perform an assessment and make proposals for safety improvements, following the ENSREG specifications;*
- 2) *The second step was for the national regulators to perform an independent review of the operators' assessments and issue requirements, whenever appropriate;*
- 3) *The third step was a European peer review of the national reports submitted by regulators, subdivided in 2 phases:*
 - *Peer review on the basis of the national reports, from January to March 2012.* This review was conducted through a topical review structured around the 3 topics of the stress tests (natural hazards, loss of safety systems and severe accident management). Each national regulator was heard and questioned on its report;
 - *"Country peer reviews", from March to April, on which occasion each country subjected to the peer review was visited by a team of eight peer reviewers for several days (including sites visits, in order to provide complementary information of some aspects of the implementation and results of the stress tests).*

According to the principle of continuous improvement, ENSREG and the European Commission consider that the stress tests have identified tangible improvements. Both the overall peer review report and the country reports issued contain very practical recommendations aiming at achieving these concrete improvements:

- the overall report highlights four main areas for improvement to be explored across Europe:

¹ Fifteen EU countries, Switzerland and the Ukraine.

- 1) *Issuing WENRA guidance with the contribution of the best available EU expertise on assessment of natural hazards and margins taking account of the existing IAEA guidelines*
- 2) *Underlining the importance of Periodic Safety Review*
- 3) *Implementing the recognised measures to protect containment integrity*
- 4) *Minimising accidents resulting from natural hazards and limiting their consequences*

- national actions plans have already been or will be shortly defined in all countries;

ENSREG and the European Commission recognise that the results of the stress tests related to loss of safety systems and severe accident management provide valuable insight also in all indirect initiating events like aircraft crashes.

ENSREG and the European Commission have made their best efforts to make the stress tests process as transparent as possible, and to ensure the best possible accessibility to all interested stakeholders and the citizens. Transparency and public accessibility have been acknowledged as key objectives from the beginning of the process. National reports as well as all EU documents were made public in the English version on the ENSREG website. A European public meeting was held in January 2012 to inform the stakeholders about the ongoing process and trigger a constructive dialogue. A new European public event is scheduled next 8 May in Brussels to present the results of the stress tests; ENSREG and the European Commission encourage the staging of national events to further inform the public;

ENSREG and the European Commission welcome the fact that this unprecedented exercise was rapidly echoed internationally. For instance, several third states demonstrated great interest in the ongoing process and subsequently decided to get involved in it. The stress tests thus contributed in strengthening the EU's commitment to actively promote nuclear safety at world level.

ENSREG and the European Commission realise that the full implementation of the measures identified in the reports to improve safety will be a long-term process.

ENSREG and the European Commission agreed to propose an action plan in the national, the European and the global context. This action plan should comprise:

- *Implementation of the recommendations of the peer review report;*
- *Implementation of the IAEA action plan on nuclear safety;*
- *The outcomes of the extraordinary meeting of the Convention of Nuclear Safety;*
- *Additional site visits as agreed.*

ENSREG and the European Commission will ensure that all the stress test relevant information received from licensees, national authorities, including plant specific information, will be available via its web site with the exception of confidential information.

ENSREG and the European Commission share the understanding that work may be required in other areas than nuclear safety – such as off-site emergency preparedness and response.

The endorsed peer review board report will be sent to the June European Council for information. ENSREG and the European Commission understand that, on the basis of the peer review report and the additional elements above, the European Commission will present its Communication to the European Council.