



Press Release

Comprehensive risk and safety assessments (stress tests) of the Belarusian nuclear power plant Peer Review of the National Action Plan

Brussels, 24 November 2021

The report of the Peer Review, conducted on the Belarusian National Action Plan as part of EU Stress Test process, has been published today. 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. The review was carried out by the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG). The full Peer Review report that details the outcome of the review, endorsed by ENSREG, can be found on the ENSREG website¹.

The **Peer Review was conducted in an open and collaborative manner and in full compliance with the specification for the EU stress test, including on transparency²**. The peer review team consisted of twelve experts from EU and non-EU Member States and four representatives of the European Commission. The **Peer Review Team** recognizes and commends the positive and open way in which the Belarusian Nuclear Regulatory authority (GAN) and the licensee sought to address all their comments and questions during the review.

The peer review was conducted on the basis of updated IAEA safety requirements and WENRA³ Safety Reference Levels. The team found that the structure and the content of the Belarusian National Action Plan (NAcP) were adequate and fulfilled the requirements of the EU stress tests.

The peer review team recognized that progress in the implementation of the NAcP has been significant and faster than announced in the original plan. The team underlines that all recommendations formulated in the 2018 Stress Test Peer Review Report (2018 PRT report) are important and encourages GAN to continue implementing remaining actions in a timely manner. Having identified some areas where further safety enhancement could be achieved, the team encourages GAN, in the spirit of continuous safety improvement, openness and transparency, to incorporate these measures into the updated NAcP and publish regular reports on its status of implementation.

New knowledge and experience, emerging from domestic and international operating experience, safety research, development of science and technology, should be systematically collected, analysed and used for instance for training of the regulator's and operator's personnel, improving plant design, the emergency operating procedures, severe

¹ <http://www.ensreg.eu/belarus>

² Detailed information is publically available on the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) website <http://www.ensreg.eu/EU-Stress-Tests/Background-and-Specifications>

³ WENRA = Western European Nuclear Regulators Association

accident management guidelines, and national regulations. The Belarusian nuclear power plant (BelNPP) and GAN are encouraged to engage with other nuclear power plants and regulatory bodies and continue utilising international peer review services and other support programmes.

Background

In the wake of the Fukushima accident in 2011, Europe took the lead in carrying out comprehensive risk and safety assessments ("Stress Tests") of Nuclear Power Plants (NPPs) to assess how they can withstand a Fukushima type event.

In 2011 the Republic of Armenia, **Republic of Belarus**, Republic of Croatia, Russian Federation, Swiss Confederation, Republic of Turkey, Ukraine, in cooperation with the EU, **confirmed their willingness to undertake on a voluntary basis, comprehensive risk and safety assessments ('stress tests')**, in accordance with the specifications agreed by the European Commission and the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) on 24 May 2011.

The results of the EU Stress Tests have provided important technical insights for safety improvements for all participating countries – EU and neighboring. The EU Stress Tests have been carried out in a transparent manner in the interests of citizens and a stronger global safety culture. Since the beginning, the stress tests have been carried out on a voluntary basis. The **European Commission** and the **European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG)** have continually expressed their willingness to support any non-EU country wishing to undertake the same kind of peer review process and this support has been extended to Belarus.

Note that a stress test and the implementation of follow-up actions focus on a number of aspects with the objective to enhance safety, but does not constitute a full basis for providing licenses to start operation nor to decide on long-term operation options. Such authorisations are based on national legislation under the responsibility of the national nuclear safety authorities.

In line with its voluntary commitment, Belarus prepared a National Report in 2017, which made a series of recommendations associated with identified safety improvements and it hosted a peer-review of the National Report undertaken by ENSREG in 2018. In 2019, following the report of the ENSREG Peer Review Team (PRT), the Belarusian Nuclear Regulatory Authority (GAN) prepared a National Action Plan (NACp) that incorporated safety improvements from the PRT's report. This NACp was submitted to ENSREG in August 2019, with updates on implementation of actions submitted as of January 2020.

This was the second peer review of a National Action Plan since the two workshops to peer review the NACps in the EU, held in 2013 and 2015. The approach adopted for Belarus followed that applied in Armenia, which was the first state to host an ENSREG peer review of its National Action Plan after the workshops. As in Armenia, the peer review of the Belarusian NACp was carried out simultaneously with the update of the non-reviewed NACp.

The objective of the peer review was to consider the way the actions included in the National Action Plan had been developed from the National Report, the Stress Test PRT's recommendations and other relevant recommendations. It also assessed the adequacy of progress in implementing the actions. The review comprised a desktop review resulting in PRT questions and subsequent answers from GAN, which paved the way for fact-finding in Belarus.

Due to the Covid-19 the peer review was divided into two phases. The PRT completed the first phase of the peer review, focusing on recommendations related to high priority issues, on 9 and 10 February, before BelNPP started commercial operation. The second phase, addressing all recommendations, was finalised after the full fact-finding mission to BelNPP that took place from 31 August to 2 September 2021.

Detailed information on the Belarusian Stress Test process and associated documents have been published on the ENSREG website: <http://www.ensreg.eu/belarus>