

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN 2016

Cooperation within the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)

In the context of Slovakia's membership in the EU, during the whole of 2016 UJD SR managed the European agenda falling under peaceful uses of nuclear energy, including provision of tasks and commitments arising from its membership. Another dimension of the European nuclear agenda included activities related to the Slovak Presidency of the EU Council. UJD SR representatives regularly attended meetings of the EU Council working groups, and also meetings of the working committees and groups of EC, where as experts in the areas related to competences of UJD SR, particularly in relation to commitments and actions resulting from the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (the Euratom Treaty), defended the interests of the Slovak Republic.

One of the most important working groups of the EU Council in terms of competences of UJD SR is the Working Party on Atomic Questions (ATO). Activities within the scope of this working group in the course of 2016 concentrated primarily on activities related to the preparation and the actual Slovak Presidency of the EU Council (SK PRES). In the context of performance SK PRES, during the second half of 2016 the meetings of ATO were carried out under the leadership of Slovakia, specifically on 7 July, 7 September, 11 October, 9 November, 30 November and 14 December 2016, with the representatives of UJD SR taking the position of chairman and 2 national experts. UJD SR actively cooperated with the Permanent Representation of SR to the EU in Brussels, the Ministry of Economy of SR, the Council Secretariat and the EC, where it was responsible for a smooth running of the negotiations, factual and expert roofing of respective agenda, discharge of Presidency duties of Slovakia and mediation in promoting interests of individual Member States and seeking compromise solutions. During SK PRES, the draft Council conclusions on Special Report by the European Court of Auditors No. 22/16 entitled "EU Nuclear Decommissioning Assistance Programs in Lithuania, Bulgaria and Slovakia: some progress made since 2011, but critical challenges ahead" was successfully approved and adopted. In addition, during 2016 this working group discussed, for example, the draft Nuclear Illustrative Programme - PINC, the draft report of the Euratom Community on the Convention on Nuclear Safety and related issues of Euratom, the national reports of third parties, and on other documents. Due to the SK PRES also to other international organizations (the IAEA Vienna, OECD/NEA Paris), during SK PRES UJD SR was responsible for expert covering of the relevant agenda also at these Forums.

In relation to the fulfilment of Slovakia's commitments arising from the EU Directives, activities continued throughout the year 2016 related to the transposition of the Council Directives 2014/87/Euratom and 2013/59/Euratom. In connection with the approaching deadline for meeting the obligations under Article 14, 3 of the Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom, UJD SR representatives during 2016 actively participated in international working meetings in preparation of the ARTEMIS mission, the IAEA services providing expert peer reviews in the field of RAW and SNF management, decommissioning of nuclear installations, remediation programs, and also legislative and regulatory framework in line with the requirements of the Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom. The subject of these meetings was primarily preparation of methodical guideline on how to perform ARTEMIS peer reviews and preparation of self-assessment questionnaire. Work on this documentation will continue also during the next year. Activities within the European High Level Group on Nuclear Safety (ENSREG) and its subgroups in 2016 focused on continuation in monitoring of measures taken and the implementation of recommendations of peer reviews carried out as part of the Stress

Tests (Action Plan). At the same time preparations for the first thematic peer review were made, which will be in 2017 according to the Council Directive 2014/87/Euratom on the topic of aging of NPPs. Next year there will be another ENSREG conference on current issues in nuclear safety. The UJD SR, as the coordinator for Article 37 of the Euratom Treaty, coordinated activities in this field and communicated with the EC. In September 2016, notification of general data was sent to EC on the “Facilities for melting metal radioactive waste at the Jaslovské Bohunice site“. EC sent its positive statement on the matter by letter in November 2016.

Given the implications associated with the preparation and the performance of the Slovak Presidency of the EU Council in the second half of 2016, UJD SR was actively involved in activities related to the preparation, as well as discharge of the Slovakia’s Presidency of the EU Council. UJD SR representatives regularly attended meetings of the Interdepartmental Coordination Group for the preparation of SK PRES 2016 and its sub-groups. In this context the Slovak Government adopted several framework documents to anchor the basic program framework and the main starting points for the Slovak Presidency. It defined also the priority areas and specificity of measures in the administrative and organization, budget and HR areas. UJD SR representatives discharged their chair duties in the WP ATO and also provided cooperation to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of SR, as needed, which was the main coordinator in this area.