

EUROPEAN AFFAIRS IN 2019

Cooperation within the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom)

In the context of membership of the Slovak Republic in the European Union and in the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom), ÚJD SR ensured the tasks and fulfilled the obligations arising from this membership. ÚJD SR representatives regularly participated in the meetings of working groups of the Council of the EU, and in meetings of working committees and groups of the European Commission, where, as experts in areas related to competencies of ÚJD SR, especially in relation to obligations and activities arising from the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom Treaty), defended the interests of the Slovak Republic.

One of the most important working groups of the Council of the EU from the view of nuclear safety is the Working Party on Atomic Questions (ATO). In 2019, ATO met eighteen times. In the first half of 2019, the Presidency of the Council of the EU was held by Romania (RO PRES). The frequency of WP ATO meetings chaired by RO PRES was relatively intense given the extensive agenda, and in particular the discussions on the draft Council conclusions to strengthen the safety of nuclear installations through better physical protection. This was a problematic area, which most Member States, including the Slovak Republic, rejected and did not support due to the competences of the Euratom Treaty. The adopted Council Conclusions on the non-energy use of nuclear and radiation technologies were widely supported. At the same time, discussions continued during Romania's Presidency, and subsequently the WP ATO at the Council adopted the Council Conclusions in March 2019 on the first topical peer review on nuclear safety. The conclusions are intended to highlight this evaluation process at the highest political level, and to encourage Euratom Member States to draw up national action plans, and to implement the improvements identified. In the second half of 2019, Finland took over the Presidency of the Council of the EU (FI PRES), thematically following the RO PRES on the topic of non-energy use of nuclear and radiation technologies. Within the WP ATO, preparations for the 8th Review Meeting for the Convention on Nuclear Safety began, which will be held in spring 2020 at the IAEA in Vienna.

In March 2019, the 38th Plenary Session of the European High Level Group on Nuclear Safety (ENSREG) elected Marta Žiaková, the Chairperson of ÚJD SR as the ENSREG chairperson for the following period. During 2019, ENSREG in cooperation with the European Commission, continued to evaluate historically the first topical peer review of EU Member States carried out under Council Directive 2014/87/Euratom. The topic of the first review was aging management of nuclear power plants and research reactors. NPPs in the Slovak Republic, in terms of set goals related to aging were assessed very well. Following the adopted conclusions, ÚJD SR in cooperation with the operator elaborated and sent to the European Commission in the second half of 2019 a National Action Plan with the aim of further improving the aging management of NPPs. In June 2019, the European Commission (EC) in cooperation with ENSREG organized the 5th ENSREG Conference on Nuclear Safety in Brussels. The aim of the Conference was to present the situation in the field of nuclear safety in Europe and in a global context. The topics of the conference reflected the results and experiences from the peer reviews on aging management of NPPs in the EU Member States, concerning the decommissioning of NIs, the standardization of the supply chain and knowledge management and skills in the nuclear area.

Other activities within the ENSREG group and its subgroups in 2019 focused mainly on the continuation of monitoring of the measures taken and on the implementation of recommendations resulting from the peer reviews within the Stress Tests (Action Plan) undertaken after the nuclear accident at Fukushima – Daiichi NPP. The current state of fulfilment of the Action Plan was sent to the European Commission for Slovakia at the end of 2019.

In December 2019, the EC published the third Report of the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee on the implementation of the Council Directive 2006/117/Euratom on the supervision and control of shipments of radioactive waste and spent fuel by the Member States, which the EC elaborated on the basis of national reports of the Member States, including the Slovak Republic. The Report covers shipments for the period 2015 – 2017.

In December 2019, the EC published the second Report of the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament on progress in implementing the Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom, on the Community inventory of radioactive waste and spent fuel, and on future developments, prepared by the EC on the basis of national reports of the Member States, including the Slovak Republic.

JAVYS, a. s., still in April 2018 forwarded to ÚJD SR general data prepared in accordance with the relevant annexes of Commission Recommendation 2010/635/Euratom for notification to the European Commission under Article 37 of the Euratom Treaty on the Completion of Interim Spent Fuel Storage Capacity in Jaslovské Bohunice. The documentation was reviewed again in 2019, and a request was made to revise and supplement it. After its completion, the documentation will be sent to the EC.

In the course of 2019, the inter-ministerial coordination group for the coordination of tasks arising from Articles of the Euratom Treaty continued, which was established at ÚJD SR on the basis of Slovak Government Resolution No. 442/2006. Two meetings were held during the year, in May and in December 2019. They discussed current topics, such as for example, the Commission Communication on more efficient and more democratic decision-making in the field of energy and climate, which seeks to change and democratize decision-making processes under the Euratom Treaty, the planning of the ARTEMIS mission, the EU taxonomy and others.