

Policy Paper (Speech)

Set up

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The Law on Necessary Measures against the Threats Posed by Unsafe Nuclear Power Plants in the third countries (Lithuanian: Seimas ypatingos skubos tvarka priėmė Būtinųjų priemonių, skirtų apsisaugoti nuo trečiųjų šalių nesaugių branduolinių elektrinių keliamų grėsmių įstatymą, projektas Nr. XIIP-4639(2))¹.

The Seimas of Lithuania adopted the Law on Necessary Measures against the Threats Posed by Unsafe Nuclear Power Plants in Third Countries issued 20 April 2017. The law lays down general principles, conditions and stages of protection of the Lithuanian electricity system and electricity market against electricity from third countries that have unsafe nuclear power plants, assessing threats they pose to Lithuania's national security, environment and public health. According to the Seimas, an unsafe nuclear power plant means any nuclear power plant under construction or operation in a neighbouring third country that is *designed, installed or operated in violation of environmental, nuclear safety and radiation protection standards, international agreements, and international conventions and poses, due to its geographical location or technological characteristics*. The Law determines that the Lithuanian electricity market should be closed for electricity from third countries that have unsafe nuclear power plants.

The main claims to the Republic of Belarus, on the basis of the Law, could be defined as follows - *discontinuation* of the construction of the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant in Astravets (hereafter referred to as the Belarusian NPP) without delay, based on the *noncompliance* of the project with *international environmental and nuclear safety standards, the lack of experience* of a *nuclear safety inspectorate* and construction companies, permanent *manipulations* with international instruments and public opinion in Belarus and its neighbouring countries. As well as the claims that could be deemed as the most essential – ***the absence of proof of radiological impact assessment*** under normal operation and in emergency situations, ***no evidence of acceptably low level risk of exposure of the population*** to the *harmful effects of ionising radiation* in the event of an accident, ***the loss of proper assessment of the possible seismic and other natural risks***, furthermore, ***no evidence provided that the Belarusian NPP site was selected in accordance with International Atomic Energy Agency (hereafter referred to as IAEA) safety requirements***.

¹ Retrieved from: http://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=119&p_k=2&p_t=172006

**Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of the Republic of Belarus
(Russian: Министерство природных ресурсов и охраны окружающей среды Республики Беларусь).**

The Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry of the Republic of Belarus is a national state administration body in charge of exploitation of natural resources and environmental protection, pursuing the state ecology policy. The main areas of activities of the Ministry are the following – *pursuing unified state policies in the area of environmental protection; international cooperation, analysis and climate control; state management of examination, protection and rational use of natural resources; coordination of activities of other governmental agencies, local executive and regulatory bodies, organizations involved in ensuring ecological safety, etc.*

The last decade in connection with the adoption of state laws, programs and decrees the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection was set in charge of maintaining and providing ecological security and environmental compliance throughout all phases of preparation and design works, construction and operation of the Belarusian NPP. As well as in cooperation with other nuclear-related organizations and experts, its main function is to ensure a normal operation of the NPP, whereby the population and equally its natural environment are absolutely protected from the radiation influence rendered by the NPP, taking into consideration the need for overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl accident that is still a matter of great importance for the Republic of Belarus.

The additional session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention

The Espoo (Environmental Impact Assessment hereafter referred to as EIA) Convention sets out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning. It lays down the general obligation of States to notify and consult each other on all major projects under consideration that are likely to have a significant adverse environmental impact across boundaries. *So on behalf of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, I would like to represent the Republic of Belarus (a member of the Espoo Convention) during the additional session of the Meeting of the Parties to the Espoo Convention, that will take place in late 2018-early 2019 in Geneva, as an energy and environment advisor of the Belarusian NPP. The speech*, delivered before the participants of the meeting, will be aimed at reassuring the representatives of Lithuania to reconsider their security policy, as well as at ensuring that nuclear and radiation safety of the Astravets NPP is in line with the recommendations of IAEA. It should be pointed out that the previous session that was held in Minsk 13-16 June, 2017 left these issues unresolved for the Lithuanian representatives (*comments and claims are introduced above*). At the same time, the aforesaid law and prohibition of exportation of energy produced by the Belarusian NPP to the Baltic neighbors can lead to the crisis of overproduction of energy and necessity of the consumption growth inside the borders, undermining the economy of the Republic of Belarus and jeopardizing the existence of the Belarusian NPP.

= interesting case. What is missing is a better specification what issues/problems will be addressed in your speech. Are you to tackle all objections Lithuanian policy-makers have?