

In 2017 the regulator has completed a review of the documentation related to the approval of the site for Unit 7 of the Kozloduy NPP.

The project for the construction of Belene NPP can move to an approval of the technical project, if the Council of Ministers and the National Assembly take a decision to restart the project, Lachezar Kostov, Chairman of the Nuclear Regulatory Agency commented. He highlighted that in all cases the technical project must be revised, according to the new technical requirements for safety, which followed the incident at the Fukushima NPP, and then be reviewed by the NRA again. In Kostov's words, this would not take long. He did not wish to give a deadline, but underlined that the nuclear regulator could conduct a review of the revised technical project in six months.

The NRA Chairman also commented the check of the Agency in relation to the storage of the equipment for Belene NPP, which has a long construction period. He reminded that such has been carried out by experts at the regulator in the headquarters of the National Electricity Company, which consisted of verification whether the company has the necessary resources and procedures in order to store the equipment. The experts have concluded that NEC is capable to store the equipment, according to producers' prescriptions.

Lachezar Kostov noted that one of the main challenges the Bulgarian nuclear sector faces is the deficit of trained workers. The deficit is stark, and financial incentives won't resolve the issue, he stressed. According to him, emergency measures to prepare workers should be taken. Otherwise, in a few years whatever the wages in this sector will be, there will be nobody to work, he was adamant.

As for the extension of the license of Unit 6, the NRA reminded that the current one expires in October 2019. This means that Kozloduy NPP must submit the documents, required for the extension of the reactor's life, for approval until October 2018. Unit 6 will start functioning at an increased thermal output of 104% over the coming months. The tests of the unit for switching to increased output have begun in the end of last year, the NRA also stated. Unit 5, whose license was extended for another 10 years in November 2017 is due to undergo complex tests which are to allow it to work at an increased power.

The NRA report also shows that the review of the documentation for the approval of Kozloduy NPP's Unit 7 site was completed last year. It is will be approved after there is an approved environmental impact assessment.

In 2017, 3 operational events at Kozloduy NPP have been reported, all of which at Unit 5. Two of the events are related to a change in a system management and reactor protection controller. The third event included a shutdown of the turbo generator due to a fault in its

actuator system after an electric shock.

Seven events related to radioactive sources have been recorded. 80% of the cases concerned metal scrap, which contained materials with high activity.

The individual annual dose, resulting from the natural background radiation, per person in Bulgaria was 2.3 millisieverts in 2017, Lachezar Kostov reported. On a global scale, individual doses are in the range of 2-20 millisieverts.

43 charged particle accelerators currently operate in the country, the nuclear regulator informed. 31 of them are linear accelerators used for medical purposes, 3 are cyclotrons which produce Fluorine-18, and the remaining 10 are used on border crossing points.

Source: publics.bg