Procedure file

Basic information

NLE - Non-legislative enactments Regulation	2018/0251(NLE)	Awaiting final decision

Nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme)

Subject
3.60.04 Nuclear energy, industry and safety

Geographical area
Lithuania

Legislative priorities
Multiannual Financial Framework 2021-2027

Key players

European Parliament	Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
	ITRE Industry, Research and Energy		30/08/2018
		HARMS Rebecca	
		Shadow rapporteur	
		LANGEN Werner	
		KOUROUMBASHEV Peter	
		MATTHEWS Rupert	
		PUNSET Carolina	
		PAKSAS Rolandas	
		LETARD-LECHEVALIER Christelle	
	Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
	BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
Council of the European Union			
European Commission	Commission DG	Commissioner	
	Energy	ARIAS CAÑETE Miguel	

Key events

13/06/2018	Legislative proposal published	COM(2018)0466	Summary
10/09/2018	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
21/11/2018	Vote in committee		
29/11/2018	Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading	A8-0413/2018	Summary
16/01/2019	Debate in Parliament		
17/01/2019	Results of vote in Parliament		
17/01/2019	Decision by Parliament	T8-0035/2019	Summary

Technical information

Procedure reference	2018/0251(NLE)
Procedure type	NLE - Non-legislative enactments
Procedure subtype	Consultation of Parliament
Legislative instrument	Regulation
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 159
Stage reached in procedure	Awaiting final decision
Committee dossier	ITRE/8/14494

Documentation gateway

Legislative proposal		COM(2018)0466	13/06/2018	EC	Summary
Committee draft report		PE627.763	13/09/2018	EP	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE628.644	15/10/2018	EP	
Committee report tabled for plenary, 1st reading/single reading		A8-0413/2018	29/11/2018	EP	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading		T8-0035/2019	17/01/2019	EP	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary		SP(2019)150	27/02/2019	EC	

Nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme)

PURPOSE: to establish the nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme).

PROPOSED ACT: Council Regulation.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: the Council adopts the act after consulting the European Parliament but without being obliged to follow the opinion of the latter.

BACKGROUND: in the context of its accession to the European Union, Lithuania made a commitment to close and subsequently decommission two nuclear reactors of the same type as in Chernobyl in the Ignalina nuclear power plant. As an act of solidarity with Lithuania, the European Union committed itself, through Lithuania's Accession Treaty, to providing adequate financial assistance for the decommissioning of Ignalina nuclear power plant.

The Ignalina programme has the general objective of assisting Lithuania in managing the radiological safety challenges of the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant.

The programme's mid-term evaluation concluded that the current programme is coherent with EU policies aiming at ensuring the highest level of nuclear safety. Lithuania has progressed effectively and efficiently in the decommissioning of its reactors in line with the baseline agreed in 2014 (i.e. decommissioning plan). The analysis also demonstrated that substantially improved levels of safety are going to be achieved at the site as a result of the Union funding in this multiannual financial framework.

The programme has been conducted through several financial periods and will be finalised by 2038. The Commission considers that the programme is expected to meet important milestones with the funding provided in this multiannual financial framework (2014-2020). However, substantial amounts are still required in order to address the remaining key radiological safety issues related to its decommissioning. Beyond 2020, the raising of additional funds needed until 2038 for the decommissioning of Ignalina nuclear power plant calls for a careful follow-up as the financing gap is sizable (EUR 1331 million).

CONTENT: the draft regulation - presented for a Union of 27 Member States - establishes the nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania. It lays down the objectives of the Programme, the budget for the period 2021 2027, the forms of Union funding and the rules for providing such funding.

The programme will focus in the next multiannual financial framework on radiological safety challenges of the decommissioning of the Ignalina nuclear power plant where the greatest EU added value can be achieved (i.e. progressive decrease of the level of radiological hazard for the workers, the public and the environment in Lithuania but also in the EU as a whole).

The Programme has the specific objective of carrying out the dismantling and decontamination of the Ignalina equipment and reactor shafts in accordance with the decommissioning plan and disseminating the generated knowledge among EU stakeholders.

The proposal:

- sets out the level of shared effort between the EU and Lithuania in decommissioning the Ignalina nuclear power plant;
- sets a yearly ceiling for EU payment maximum Union co-financing rate at 80%;
- introduces a major simplification with respect to the current programme, i.e. the use of a multiannual work programme, which reflects the nature of decommissioning programmes;
- defines the process for the multiannual work programme revision over a period which is commensurate to the programme nature and provides the Commission with adequate tools to introduce corrective measures if necessary.

Budget: the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme for the period 2021 - 2027 shall be EUR 552 million in current prices.

Nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme)

The Committee on Industry, Research and Energy adopted the report by Rebecca HARMS (Greens/EFA, DE) on the proposal for a Council regulation establishing the nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme) and repealing Council Regulation (EU) No 1369/2013.

The Committees main amendments are as follows:

It clarified the programmes general objective as being to adequately assist Lithuania in safely implementing Ignalina nuclear power plant decommissioning. This would include the safety of the interim spent fuel storage.

It assigns as the programmes complementary objective toensure broad dissemination in all Member States of the generated knowledge on nuclear decommissioning. This complementary objective shall be funded by the financial assistance programme for decommissioning of nuclear facilities and management of radioactive waste because dissemination is not mentioned in the Protocol No 4 of Lithuanias EU accession treaty which created the Ignalina programme.

The Committee increased the financial allocation for the implementation of the programme over the 2021-2027 period to EUR 780 000 000 in current prices for the implementation of the main objective of the programme (decommissioning activities). It considered that the amount proposed by the Commission fails to take into account that the process of dismantling the Unit 2 will start in 2026 and last beyond 2027, whereas sufficient funding for this task must be accumulated before the start of the works. Otherwise, the national regulator will not be in a position to authorise the commencement of the dismantling of the Unit 2 reactor.

Members proposed that the overall EU co-financing rate applicable under the Programme should be 86% (in contrast to the 80% proposed by the Commission). Since the inception of the programme, Lithuania has contributed about 14% to direct decommissioning activities. However, given that certain related activities (such as physical and fire safety of the plant) are not covered by the Ignalina programme, the actual contribution by Lithuania is higher. The proposal to increase Lithuanias share to 20% would present a significant financial burden for Lithuania.

The Committee also upgraded the safe handling and storage of spent nuclear fuel to the category of a critical nuclear safety issue (in contrast to the category of lesser challenges in the Commissions proposal).

The Committee proposes that while the disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste in a deep geological repository isexcluded from the scope of the programme over the 2021-2027 period, Lithuania and the EU should begin, in due time, consultations regarding the potential inclusion of those activities in the scope of the programme under the subsequent Multiannual Financial Framework. It considers that the EU, in solidarity with Lithuania, should include the disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste within the scope of the Ignalina programmes in the future Multiannual Financial Frameworks to at least co-finance the beginning of these extremely expensive works, such as the search for the suitable site, research and excavation.

Nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme)

The European Parliament adopted by 569 votes to 17, with 32 abstentions, a legislative resolution on the proposal for a Council regulation

establishing the nuclear decommissioning assistance programme of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania (Ignalina programme) and repealing Council Regulation (EU) No 1369/2013.

Parliament approved the Commission proposal subject to the following amendments:

Objectives

Members clarified the programmes general objective as being to adequately assist Lithuania in safely implementing Ignalina nuclear power plant decommissioning. This would include the safety of the interim spent fuel storage.

It assigns as the programmes complementary objective to ensure broad dissemination in all Member States of the generated knowledge on nuclear decommissioning. This complementary objective shall be funded by the financial assistance programme for decommissioning of nuclear facilities and management of radioactive waste.

Budget

Although the Commission proposed to set the financial envelope for the implementation of the Programme over the period 2021-2027 at EUR 552 million expressed in current prices, Parliament proposed to increase the financial envelope to EUR 780 million expressed in current prices for the implementation of the main objective of the Programme (decommissioning activities).

Taking into account the findings of the Commission's 2018 report on the evaluation and implementation of EU nuclear decommissioning assistance programmes in Bulgaria, Slovakia and Lithuania, as well as Lithuania's political commitment to contribute 14% of the total cost of decommissioning, the EU co-financing rate, Members proposed that the overall EU co-financing rate applicable under the programme be 86% (compared to 80% proposed by the Commission).

Scope

Parliament proposed for the safe handling and storage of spent nuclear fuel to be upgraded to the category of a critical nuclear safety issue (in contrast to the category of lesser challenges in the Commissions proposal).

Members proposed that while the disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste in a deep geological repository is excluded from the scope of the programme over the 2021-2027 period, Lithuania and the EU should begin, in due time, consultations regarding the potential inclusion of those activities in the scope of the programme under the subsequent Multiannual Financial Framework.

Lastly, Parliament recalled that it should be an ethical obligation for each Member State to avoid any undue burden on future generations in respect of spent fuel and radioactive waste, including any radioactive waste expected from decommissioning of existing nuclear installations. National policies have to be based on the polluter pays principle.