



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 8 June 2010**

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**ENV 401  
ENER 189  
ATO 23  
COEST 174**

**NOTE**

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from: General Secretariat  
to: Delegations

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Subject: Nuclear installations planned in the EU neighbourhood (Kaliningrad region and Belarus)  
- Information from the Lithuanian delegation

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Delegations will find attached a note from the Lithuanian delegation on the above topic, to be dealt with under "other business" at the Council meeting (Environment) on 11 June 2010.

**Nuclear installations planned in the EU neighbourhood (Kaliningrad region and Belarus)**

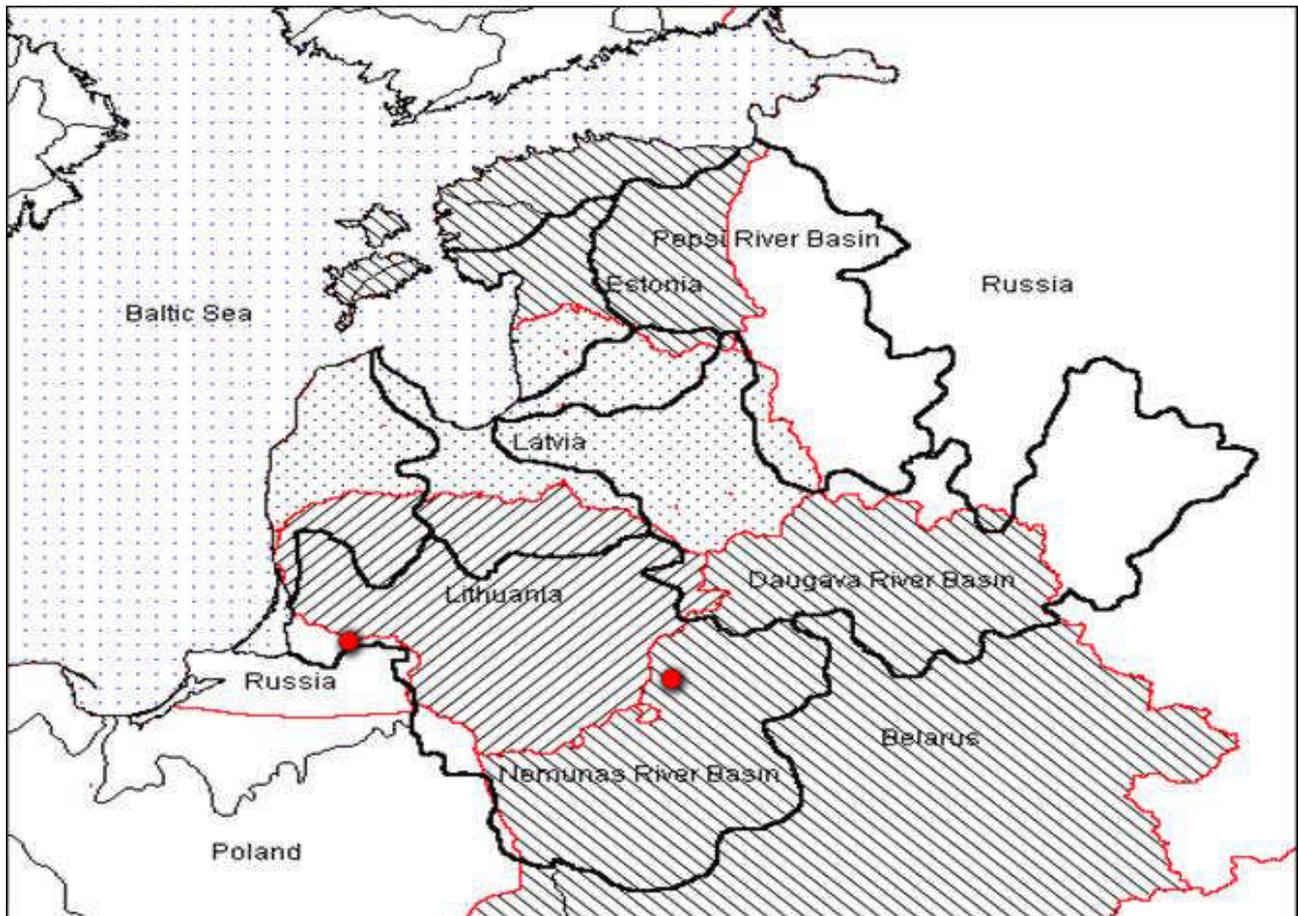
- Information from the Lithuanian delegation -

The Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation have plans to construct a nuclear power plant in the Baltic Sea region, which may significantly affect the environment of EU member states. The places selected for new nuclear power plants are marked with bullet points in the map in Annex I.

The Republic of Belarus, a Party to the UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context (Espoo Convention) has submitted environmental impact assessment documentation for the construction of the nuclear power plant in the Republic of Belarus. On 7 May 2010, the Ministry of the Environment of Lithuania submitted to the Republic of Belarus Lithuania's negative position regarding the environmental impact assessment process and documentation. Lithuania concluded that the environmental impact assessment had not been carried out properly, as the provisions of the Espoo Convention to provide a description of reasonable alternatives were not fulfilled. In the Espoo notification phase Belarus informed Lithuania that three location alternatives (Astravec, Kukshinovo and Krasnaya Polyana) would be assessed during the environmental impact assessment; unfortunately the EIA report presented the analysis only for the Astravec site, which is 23 km from the Lithuanian border (see attached map). It is planned to build the NPP just around 50 km from our capital, Vilnius, where the density of population is the highest in the country and the main government institutions are located. Lithuania has been informed that the other two candidate sites are in the karst region and it is forbidden to construct nuclear power plant in such areas. Nevertheless, the assessment of the chosen Astravec site also lacks important information – geological, seismological, and seismo-tectonic data; a thorough assessment of possible negative impacts on the ecosystem and hydrological regime of the second-largest river in Lithuania (Neris – intake of Nemunas river), which will be used for cooling purposes; an assessment of the radiological impact on the population under normal operational conditions and in the event of an accident. These were the main reasons why Lithuania raised objections to the construction of nuclear power plant in the proposed site.

The Russian Federation has also submitted environmental impact assessment documentation for the planned NPP construction in Kaliningrad. The Ministry of the Environment of Lithuania together with interested authorities examined the report and raised the following major issues: it is intended to situate the nuclear power plant only 10-12 km from the border to Lithuania (see attached map) and Natura 2000 sites. The nuclear power plant for cooling purposes will probably use water from the largest river in Lithuania (Nemunas). The Nemunas river basin forms part of the Baltic Sea intakes (see attached map). The ecosystem of the Nemunas Lowland River and Curonian Lagoon will therefore be significantly affected. The assessment of radiological impacts on the public of Lithuania during normal operation and in the event of accidents is not thorough enough. Moreover, although the Russian Federation has not ratified the Espoo Convention, it has signed it and has already applied its provisions during the transboundary environmental impact assessment of the proposed Nord Stream gas pipeline. It should be noted that application of the Espoo Convention is also envisaged in the EU-Russia Partnership and Co-operation Agreement. In view of the above, the Russian Federation should follow the same practice in the case of the proposed Baltic nuclear power plant and give access to the public of the Affected Parties to the relevant procedures of environmental impact assessment of the proposed economic activities and hold consultations according to the provisions of the Espoo Convention. We believe this would increase the clarity and transparency of the transboundary environmental impact assessment.

Taking into account the information given here and the potential environmental risks, we would like greater involvement on the part of the European Commission and EU member states in the process associated with the implementation of the Kaliningrad and Belarus NPP projects, including more active participation in the environmental impact assessment procedures.



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