

AGREEMENTS

BILATERAL AGREEMENTS

Latvia – Lithuania

Agreement on Co-operation in Radiation Safety (2002)

On 19 May 2002, the Radiation Safety Centre of the Republic of Latvia and the Radiation Protection Centre of the Republic of Lithuania signed this Agreement, which entered into force upon signature for a period of five years, which will be automatically extended for another term of five years.

The Agreement focuses on the following activities:

- development of a national legal framework in each country on radiation safety, the supervision and control of radiation sources by the relevant national authorities, and practices involving radiation sources;
- establishment and development of the national registers of radiation sources and occupational exposure of radiation workers;
- development of procedures concerning notification, registration and licensing, validation of practices, and assessment of safety for practices and sources;
- emergency preparedness and response.

Both authorities agreed to exchange information on a regular basis on:

- supervision and control of radiation sources and practices involving radiation sources;
- unknown or previously unidentified sources and practices, including the properties of those sources and details on practices that raise concern from a radiation safety viewpoint or may have an impact on the safety of the population and the environment;
- any accident or incident which occurs in the territory of one of the Parties and which may have consequences in the other country;
- training activities, conferences, workshops, etc.;
- co-operation projects.

Ten years after the entry into force of this Agreement, a meeting shall be convened to decide whether the Agreement shall continue in force indefinitely or whether it shall be extended for an additional fixed period.

Russian Federation – Ukraine

Agreement on Exchange of Information and Co-operation in the Field of Safety Regulation in Respect of the Peaceful Utilisation of Nuclear Energy (2002)

The above Agreement was signed by the State Nuclear Regulatory Committee of Ukraine and the Russian Federal Agency for Nuclear and Radiation Safety (*Gosatomnadzor*) on 15 August 2002 and entered into force on the same date. This Agreement is valid for three years.

It establishes a legal basis for exchange of information and co-operation in the following fields:

- development of regulations and standards of nuclear and radiation safety, guidelines on regulatory activity;
- supervision over nuclear and radiation safety including implementation of sanctions;
- regulation of accountancy and control of nuclear material and physical protection of nuclear material, nuclear facilities, radioactive substances and radiation sources;
- regulation of nuclear and radiation safety during transport of nuclear and radioactive material.

Mechanisms for implementation of this Agreement will be established in Additional Protocols.

Russian Federation – United States

Co-operation on Reduction of Weapons-grade Nuclear Material (2002)

On 24 May 2002, the Presidents of the Russian Federation and the United States agreed to establish a joint experts group under their respective Ministries for Energy to examine means to eliminate more weapons-grade nuclear material.

Both countries have recognised that one important means to prevent nuclear weapons materials from falling into the hands of “hostile nations” or terrorists is to reduce the amount available. Under existing agreements, Russia and the US are committed to reducing the amount of nuclear weapons-grade material, through the elimination of 34 metric tons each of plutonium and through US purchase of 500 metric tons of Russian highly-enriched uranium (HEU) for use in commercial nuclear reactor fuel (see in particular *Nuclear Law Bulletin* No. 66). More than 140 metric tons of highly-enriched uranium has already been delivered under the latter agreements.

It is estimated that these programmes will eliminate enough material for almost 25 000 nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, both Governments agree that they should seek to do more. Therefore, this joint

experts group was established to examine near and long-term means, both bilateral and multilateral, to further reduce inventories of plutonium and HEU.

In its report, the joint experts group identified the following areas for potential further reductions of HEU:

- creation of a strategic reserve in the US from Russian HEU down-blended into low enriched uranium (LEU);
- increase in the rate and quantity of HEU converted to LEU under the Nuclear Material Consolidation and Convention Project;
- use of LEU down-blended from Russian HEU to fuel reactors in western countries;
- use of Russian HEU to fuel selected US research reactors, until cores are converted to LEU;
- in parallel, work on accelerated development of LEU fuel for both Soviet-designed and US-designed research reactors.

The group also identified potential new areas of “near-term co-operation” for military-origin plutonium disposition. These include:

- fabrication of additional MOX fuel for use in Russian reactors, using additional military-origin plutonium in line with the 2000 Agreement related to the Disposal of Weapons-grade Plutonium (see *Nuclear Law Bulletin* No. 66);
- a variation of this scenario that would provide for the possible use of some MOX fuel in Russia and for leasing or exporting of the remainder for use in other countries.

The report has now been forwarded to the Russian and US Presidents. The group will continue to study additional options that could be relevant in the future, taking into account their technical feasibility, impacts on commercial nuclear fuel market industries and required financial resources.