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The U.S. (with NRC as lead) was the impetus in sunsetting the G-24 NUSAC. Without this effort, this out-dated international vehicle would most likely have continued to exist for the next several years.

- Attachments: 1. Letter from Chairman Currie
 2. Overview of the NUSAC questionnaire replies

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UNITED STATES
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20555-0001

December 8, 2000

MEMORANDUM TO:

Chairman Meserve
Commissioner Dicus
Commissioner Diaz
Commissioner McGaffigan
Commissioner Merrifield

FROM:

Janice Dunn Lee, Director
Office of International Programs

SUBJECT:

SUCCESSFUL SUNSETTING OF THE G-24 NUCLEAR SAFETY
ASSISTANCE COORDINATION (NUSAC) GROUP

Purpose:

The purpose of this paper is to inform the Commission that on November 30, 2000 the G-24 NUSAC participants formally concluded that immediately disbanding the existing G-24 NUSAC coordination mechanism was justified as there are other international fora in which effective coordination of nuclear safety assistance activities for Soviet-designed reactors is occurring (Attachment 1). As such, no additional G-24 NUSAC meetings will be held.

Background:

The G-24 NUSAC was created in September 1992 under the administrative auspices of the European Commission (EC). The G-24 NUSAC is an inter-governmental arrangement of the world's 24 most industrialized countries (the Group of 24, G-24), the Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries and the New Independent States (NIS) of the former Soviet Union in which Soviet-designed reactors are operated. The goal of NUSAC is to enhance effectiveness of bi-lateral and multi-lateral assistance and cooperation programs through coordination of ongoing or planned activities. An assistance database was also created and has been a useful tool in helping the donors co-ordinate assistance and provide important input on efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of nuclear assistance programs.

Initially, G-24 NUSAC meetings were held quarterly, with the G-24 database playing a central role in helping identify overlaps and gaps in assistance. Once effective international information exchanges began emerging, meetings were reduced to twice a year, and since 1997 they have been held annually.

At the last annual meeting (March 2000) the U.S. delegation successfully advocated that the group be discontinued in favor of other existing international groups which coordinate nuclear safety assistance activities for Soviet-designed reactors. As expected Russia, Ukraine and small G-24 countries (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Switzerland) opposed the idea.

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EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT

The Director-General

Brussels, 30.11.2000
D(2000) C/500064 - C.G-24/550068

To all NUSAC participants

Subject: Disbanding the NUSAC mechanism

Dear Colleagues,

At the 11th NUSAC Group meeting (23-24 March 2000) the participants instructed the Secretariat to investigate the feasibility of transferring NUSAC functions deemed essential to other relevant information exchange mechanisms and dialogue platforms with a view to fulfil these more effectively and efficiently. The updating of the NUSAC databases and web sites was suspended awaiting the outcome of this investigation.

To implement this task, in May a questionnaire exercise was launched involving all NUSAC participants with the purpose of identifying residual co-ordination needs, viable alternatives and for collecting ideas. Through this letter I would like to inform you about the results and the conclusions to be drawn.

Questionnaire exercise results

In general, the response to the questionnaire has been slow and gives evidence of a **general lack of interest in the activity**. The attached Secretariat note (NUSAC SEC(00) 11/1) gives a summary of the results. A full compilation of all replies received has been placed on the NUSAC restricted-access web site (doc. NUSAC SEC(00) 10/1).

As we can see, some participants have expressed interest in preserving (certain) NUSAC functions. At the same time various key participants have not responded, thus showing no interest at all. The (few) needs/expectations expressed vary across the NUSAC participants, both in technical terms and in level of intensity. Therefore, one is led to the conclusion that no broad support with common denominator for collectively searching and implementing alternatives has emerged. This is in line with the experience that since a couple of years the amount of NUSAC business has dropped to virtually zero, despite Secretariat efforts to stimulate in-between meeting activities (database, web sites).

Conclusions drawn and actions (to be) taken

Given this situation I have concluded that it is **justified to disband NUSAC immediately without convening another plenary meeting**.

community gives the sign that after more than a decade of intense concerted action the situation regarding international nuclear safety assistance and co-operation has normalised and that residual co-ordination needs can be addressed satisfactorily through normal channels and structures now in place.

I wish to congratulate all of you with this achievement and thank you for your invaluable contributions and above all for the genuinely remarkable openness, transparency and frankness without which it would have been difficult to come to this result. Special mention needs to be made of those participants who contributed in kind to the successful workings of the mechanism, notably by detaching highly qualified experts to the Secretariat in Brussels: Belgium, France, Germany, Japan, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and the United States. Also the effective and close co-operation with the IAEA as technical advisory body to NUSAC has been crucial.

Wishing you much success in your future common endeavours aimed at ever improving nuclear safety throughout the world,

Sincerely Yours,

(signed)

James Currie
Chairman of the NUSAC Group

Attachment: NUSAC SEC(00) 11/1



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE-GENERAL
ENVIRONMENT
Directorate C - Nuclear safety and civil protection
ENV.C.G-24 - Nuclear Safety Assistance Co-ordination

NUSAC SEC(00) 11/1
October 2000

G-24 NUCLEAR SAFETY CO-ORDINATION

Overview of the NUSAC questionnaire replies

1. Participation and response

On 10 May 2000 the questionnaire (Doc. NUSAC SEC(00) 8/1) was sent to the following countries and organisations:

G-24 countries:

Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States

CEEC and NIS participants:

Armenia, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Kazakhstan, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Russian Federation, Slovak Republic, Ukraine

Multilateral participants and International Organisations:

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, European Commission, European Investment Bank, International Atomic Energy Agency, OECD International Energy Agency, OECD Nuclear Energy Agency, World Bank

On 6 June 2000 all these addressees were reminded about the exercise.

The deadline for responses had been fixed on 23 June 2000, however, replies received after that date have been taken into account in the present overview. Participants from whom reactions were received have been underlined.

In summary, from the 38 addressees (of whom 31 are actively involved in NUSAC) a total of 14 (=45.2% of the active NUSAC participants) have replied to the questionnaire. From the bilateral donors group actively participating in NUSAC (16 in total), 8 (=50%) replied. All relevant multilateral and international organisations have replied (4 in total). From the recipient group

Netherlands. Regarding the assistance programmes, issues of common interest could be discussed within the frame of the EU programmes. Annual meetings of the Phare-Tacis management group with all the recipients could provide a proper forum for collective feedback. Regulatory aspects of NUSAC could mostly be integrated into the EU-CONCERT group activities.

Norway

Regional co-ordination of the Nordic assistance programmes takes place, but as a dialogue platform this has no potential of undertaking the role of the NUSAC mechanism (limited area of concern). Preservation of the essential NUSAC functions can only be done within the framework of an existing supra-national organisation (IAEA, OECD-NEA). Database and Internet sites could be maintained by an external organisation. A condition for preservation is that the parties involved must acknowledge the need for it and also provide the necessary funding.

United Kingdom

Co-ordination takes place via contacts and information exchange at existing international, bilateral and multilateral meetings. In terms of ensuring against overlap and repetition, ultimate responsibility must lie with the recipient countries. The Secretariat (Commission) is requested to consider the possibility of continuing with the database in a simplified form. This is deemed to be more effective and efficient than providing mutual access to individual (donors') projects databases.

United States

When efforts to improve the safety of Soviet-designed reactors began in 1992, communication between donors and recipients, donors and donors and recipients and recipients was poor or even non-existent. Since then, the formal G-24 co-ordination mechanism has successfully fostered open communication and closer ties between all parties. This evolution has resulted in strengthened co-ordination through both formal and less formal means. Consequently, the U.S. would suggest that there is no need for an organisation to fulfil the current NUSAC functions. The U.S. recognises however that NUSAC provides some G-24 countries without nuclear programs access to certain information of interest. For these parties NUSAC is the only mechanism for obtaining information in other regions of interest to them.

The U.S. desire is to ensure that there are and will continue to be relevant mechanisms, platforms or instruments (IAEA, EU Concert and RAMG groups, G-7 NSWG, EBRD-administered NSA, Chernobyl Sarcophagus and Decommissioning funds, etc.) that will foster sufficient opportunities for informal communications (and thus co-ordination) to continue. The U.S. do not necessarily believe there is a need to have the current formal G-24 co-ordination mandate subsumed into one of these other existing fora.

Consideration should be given to asking the IAEA to maintain the NUSAC database. This database was developed in parallel with the IAEA's database of safety issues for VVER-440s, VVER-1000s and RBMKs. The IAEA database captured what the safety issues/concerns were for these types of reactors, while the G-24 database captured

continued database and web-site operation in any form.

International Atomic Energy Agency

The IAEA performs various activities relevant to the essential NUSAC functions. The needs for NUSAC Country report type information seem to be well met for the near future (National Reports to the Convention on Nuclear Safety, Country Nuclear Safety Profiles). Technical nuclear safety information is exchanged through a variety of Technical Meetings and Workshops, where co-operation programmes are normally not discussed however. Information exchanges on the latter (could) take place at the planning and co-ordination meetings of the IAEA Technical Co-operation Programmes. The IAEA technical database on safety issues, including an update of the status of safety improvements at individual nuclear plants, is kept up to date. If requested by IAEA Member States, a meeting similar to the 1999 Conference on Strengthening Nuclear Safety in Eastern Europe could be organised again in the future. The IAEA is not in a position to offer to take over a reduced-scope NUSAC projects database, unless strong interest would be expressed by Member States, who would then have to provide the necessary extra-budgetary funding.

OECD Nuclear Energy Agency

The NEA programme of co-operation and assistance with non-member CEEC/NIS countries has been terminated some time ago (although Russia remains observer in the safety committee and co-operation in the legal and safety research area is continuing). Consequently, there is no realistic possibility for the NEA to preserve some NUSAC functions. Some CEEC countries have joined the OECD and are now taking part in the regular programme.

3. Synthesis of the responses

From the replies received, the following general observations may be drawn.

- There is a relatively low (and slow) response rate, especially from the CEEC and NIS participants. Some major players, both at donors and recipients side, have not reacted at all, including Finland, Sweden, France, Germany, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Russian Federation and Ukraine. The Secretariat interprets this as a general lack of interest in NUSAC and its fate.
- The formulation of the questionnaire let ample room for constructive and innovative ideas to be generated. However, the replies received show a general lack of details and miss constructive, new ideas. This confirms the conclusion to be drawn from the low response in general.
- The two CEEC/NIS countries that replied would prefer continuation of the NUSAC activities. However, convincing arguments to support this are lacking, and from the formulation it seems that these countries would acquiesce in case NUSAC stops.
- Only the IAEA and the EC have relevant activities, but show no clear willingness to change/optimize existing structures and practices in the light of meeting residual NUSAC