

Proposal for Skopje Spring Congress 2020

Proposal
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LYMEC Spring Congress, April 3 to 5, 2020 in Skopje

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Status: accepted rejected transferred to _____

The Skopje Spring Congress 2020 may decide:

1 **Resolution on unsafe Astravyets nuclear power plant**

2 Introduction:

3 The Astravyets Nuclear Power Plant (NPP) is a multi-reactornuclear power plant project in
4 Belarus. The need for the project evolved in the aftermath of the energy dispute between Russia
5 and-Belarus in 2007.

6 The project for the Astravyets NPP (specifically reactor 1) has brought with it numerous violations
7 and shortcomings, including a general lack of respect towards international standards for nuclear
8 safety, serious safety violations, and major incidents (ex. fire incident during building process),
9 the worst violation in the development of Astravyets NPP being the selection of an unsustainable
10 site for its construction. The full realization of the Astravyets NPP would have a devastating
11 impact on the health and safety for most of Europe and have comparable effects on the residents
12 of Europe as the Chernobyl disaster. Said accident occurred in 1986, the harmful effects of the
13 released nuclear radiation are seen until today. Estimates conclude that between 15 000 and 30
14 000 people have lost their lives due to the Chernobyl accident and more than 2.5 million
15 Ukrainians are still struggling with health problems related to nuclear waste.

16 The project plans for the Astravyets NPP have raised several concerns among civil liberty groups
17 which have collected signatures against the construction of a nuclear power plant in Belarus. On
18 7th of February 2019, a meeting of the parties of the Convention on Environmental Impact
19 Assessment (the Espoo Convention) decided that Belarus had violated the Convention when
20 choosing a construction site for the nuclear power plant. Reviewing violations of the Astravyets
21 NPP has attracted the attention of the international community. After the Fukushima disaster, the
22 International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) issued recommendations against building NPPs
23 within a 100-kilometers radius from major centers of population and larger cities (Vilnius 45 km
24 away).

25 The former President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker stated on 24th of
26 November 2017 that the Astravyets Nuclear project was not simply a bilateral issue between
27 Lithuania and a neighboring country but a European issue, and that he was in full solidarity with
28 Lithuanians, with the need for the issue to be monitored very closely.

29 Considering that:

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- the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant (Astravyets NPP) construction site is located 20 km

31 from the Lithuanian (EU) border, 45 km away from the capital city Vilnius, the largest city
32 in Lithuania which has more than 544 000 inhabitants and is home to national and
33 European governmental institutions;

34 • the Astravyets NPP poses a threat to the national security of neighbouring countries, the
35 environment, and public health;

36 • The nuclear power plant is a commercially unfeasible project, given its dependence on
37 Russian funding and technology and is aimed towards strengthening the geopolitical
38 position of Russia in the region;

39 • The decision of the Espoo Convention on February 7th states that Belarus has infringed
40 Articles 4 to 6 of the Convention. It has been concluded that Belarus had not properly
41 assessed the environmental impact of the NPP project, had not properly consulted the
42 potentially affected countries and overall had adopted the wrong final decision for the
43 location of the Astravyets NPP without justifying the decision;

44 • The relevant regulator for nuclear safety in Belarus has no full institutional independence;

45 • The European Council has endorsed the objective to achieve a climate-neutral European
46 Union by 2050 and clearly stated on 12 December 2019 that even facilities in third
47 countries need to adhere to the highest international environmental and safety standards;

48 • Radioactive waste can pose a threat to the environment and is highly dangerous for
49 humans;

50 • Nuclear power plants have a greater impact on the environment than just the waste they
51 produce. mining and enrichment of uranium are not environmentally friendly processes;
52 open-pit mining for uranium is safe for miners but leaves behind radioactive particles,
53 causes erosion, and can even pollute nearby sources of water.

54 Therefore the LYMEC Congress:

55 • Demands EU that the nuclear regulatory authorities of Belarus should not be issued an
56 operating license for the Astravyets NPP (reactor 1) that is currently being built on a site on
57 the border with the EU and with this in an immediate proximity to the capital of Lithuania,
58 Vilnius. In the event of the Belarusian authorities and ROSATOM deciding to continue
59 with the project for the construction of the remaining reactors 2, 3 and 4, the European
60 Union should pressure for the relocation of the reactors to another site with the
61 closing or relocation of reactor 1;

62 • Expresses that the European Commission and the Council should express full solidarity
63 with Lithuania, which has declared the Astravyets NPP a threat to its national security and
64 subsequently adopted laws banning the import of electricity generated in the power plant,
65 specifically reactor 1;

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- Finds that the EU (and associated countries from the region) should not trade for electricity that has been generated by unsafe nuclear power plants that can threaten the national security of at least one of the EU Member States with the European Commission and the Council of the EU;
 - Demands that Belarus fully implement the recommendations of the stress tests of the Astravyets NPP carried out by the EU nuclear safety authorities before putting the plant into operation.
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- Calls on the European Commission, the Council of the EU, associated countries and strategic partners of the EU to consider sanctions against ROSATOM and other companies responsible for the construction of the Astravyets NPP and those engaged in the trade of electricity produced by the nuclear plant in case the aforementioned demands are not being met. Accordingly, the future of the the relations between the EU and Belarus should depend on the readiness of the Belarusian authorities to meet these demands;
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- Finds that the synchronization of the energy sectors in the Baltic States to the European network of power systems should be completed as early as possible but no later than by 2025. This would increase the energy security of the EU and reduce the dependence of the Baltic States on energy resources from Russia. The full independence of the Baltic States from Russian energy sources is incomplete as long as the relevant electricity grid systems are not synchronized with the European network, remaining to be connected with the power supply system covering the Baltic States. This can create an opportunity for political interference by Russia, the Russian nuclear industry is already being used in Europe as an instrument for the implementation of the Russian government's geopolitical agenda. The continuation of this agenda can create new threats, including hybrid threats, increasing the influence of Russia or be a measure for imposing a Russian set of rules there.

Attention: This is a preview! The official text is printed in the proposal book for Skopje Spring Congress 2020 03 - 05 April 2020.