

INTRODUCTION AND MAIN CONCLUSIONS

INTRODUCTION

At the request of the Government of Lithuania, an IAEA Operational Safety Review Team (OSART) of international experts visited Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant from 5 to 21 June 2006. The purpose of the mission was to review operating practices in the areas of management organization and administration; training and qualification; operations; maintenance; technical support; operating experience feedback; radiation protection; chemistry; and emergency planning and preparedness. In addition, an exchange of technical experience and knowledge took place between the experts and their plant counterparts on how the common goal of excellence in operational safety could be further pursued.

The Ignalina NPP OSART mission was the 135th in the programme, which began in 1982. The team was composed of experts from Belgium; Czech Republic; Hungary; Russia; Slovakia; the Netherlands; The United Kingdom and Ukraine, together with the IAEA staff members and observers from Belgium, France, Ukraine and Russia. The collective nuclear power experience of the team was approximately 365 years.

Before visiting the plant, the team studied information provided by the IAEA and the Ignalina plant to familiarize themselves with the plant's main features and operating performance, staff organization and responsibilities, and important programmes and procedures. During the mission, the team reviewed many of the plant's programmes and procedures in depth, examined indicators of the plant's performance, observed work in progress, and held in-depth discussions with plant personnel.

Throughout the review, the exchange of information between the OSART experts and plant personnel was very open, professional and productive. Emphasis was placed on assessing the effectiveness of operational safety rather than simply the content of programmes. The conclusions of the OSART team were based on the plant's performance compared with good international practices.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

The OSART team concluded that at Ignalina NPP the management and staff are really motivated to pursuit operation in a safe manner and transfer safe programmes, practices and behavior to the decommissioning phase.

The team identified a lot of commendable features in the organization, policies, programmes, procedures and application to the field.

As strengths the team identified:

- A management committed to promote safety culture approach (good sets of safety performance indicators, good training programme and series of meetings) who developed two systems to monitor and analyze commitment among the plant and contractor staff;
- A good effort to maintain house keeping and cleanliness in the major part of the plant was witnessed by the team;
- A notably good programme supported by several training sessions for maintenance contractors concerning maintenance planning and outage management is in place and consolidated.

- Good usage on safety areas of international aid, support and funds to improve the monitoring equipment, the general material condition and communication systems.

During the mission the team also focused on areas for improvement. During opened discussion between plant counterparts and experts frank exchanges took place. This teamwork conducted to identify recommendations and suggestions among which the most significant are as follow:

- Emergency response organization should develop pragmatic actions to enhance the efficiency of assembling points, the gathering, counting and protection of the workers, and improving drills and exercises;
- Fire response needs in the same manner clarification and training to be understood by all staff;
- Radiation protection monitoring, control, posting should be improved. Adherence to rules, coaching and information should be delivering to the staff and rules should be strictly reinforced and observed;
- Industrial safety should be treated as an area where continuous improvement is as paramount as continuous improvement in safe operation;
- Reporting from staff on deficiencies needs still to be re-enforced, awarded and promoted by more involved line management. Management expectations are set, however it should be re-enforced and acceptance of weak standards should be minimized.
- Existing self-assessment programme should take into account systematic approach to allow good usage of performance indicators as a leading tool for improvement;
- Finally, several observations conduct the team to encourage the plant to develop further the questioning attitude in areas such as: categorizing low level events and near misses, detecting weaknesses in the foreign material exclusion programme, supporting common owner attitude on systems, structures and components, improving modification process.

Ignalina management expressed a determination to address all areas identified for improvement and indicated its willingness to apply all necessary corrective actions. The plant management is eager to address in the safest manner all issues identified by the team and supported by the plant counterparts and accepted a follow-up visit in about eighteen months.