

Report on the United Kingdom's discussions with other Espoo Convention States in respect of transboundary impact from the activity at Hinkley Point C

Introduction

1. In its findings and recommendations further to its initiative concerning the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (EIA/IC/CI/5), which were published in its report of its thirty-fifth session¹, the Espoo Convention Implementation Committee ("the Committee") recommended that the Meeting of the Parties should:

"(b) Invite the United Kingdom to enter into discussions with possibly affected Parties, including Parties that cannot exclude a significant adverse transboundary impact from the activity at Hinkley Point C, in order to agree on whether notification is useful at the current stage for this proposed activity;

(c) Ask the United Kingdom to report to the Committee on the results of its discussions"

2. This paper forms part of the United Kingdom's compliance with recommendation (c).

Discussions with other States

3. Although the United Kingdom maintains its position that activity in connection with the proposed Hinkley Point C new nuclear power station is not likely to cause a significant adverse transboundary impact and remains of the opinion, therefore, that no notification was or is required under the terms of the Espoo Convention in respect of that project, it decided to comply voluntarily with the Committee's recommendations, as it wishes to resolve the issue in a collaborative manner.
4. In order to comply with recommendation (b), as set out in paragraph 1 above, the United Kingdom sent the letter attached at Annex A to this report to all of the points of contact for other state parties to the Espoo Convention, as listed on the UNECE's website².

Responses received

5. In total, the United Kingdom received substantive responses from 9 States – Austria, Canada, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway. Copies of all the responses received are attached at Annex B to this report. In summary:
 - **Canada, Estonia and France** confirmed that they did not require notification at the current time.

1

http://www.unece.org/fileadmin/DAM/env/documents/2016/EIA/IC/REPORT_ENG_ece.mp.eia.ic.2016.2_e.pdf

² http://www.unece.org/env/eia/points_of_contact.html

- **Austria** did not specifically ask for further notification but expressed a general continued interest in the project.
 - **Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway** all considered that some form of further communication on the Hinkley Point C development could be helpful.
6. Denmark suggested that *“it might be advisable to arrange an information meeting for interested foreign authorities where they may be informed of the further details about the plants reactor and safety systems for emergency preparedness purposes.”*
 7. Germany considered that even *“if the development consent has already been granted, it seems useful for the United Kingdom to submit information on the planned activity including all information on possible transboundary impact and on the environmental impact assessment. Also, it appears useful to give the opportunity to the authorities and the public of other Parties to the Convention to comment on the project.*
Since there will still be, for instance, licenses for modifications for this project, we believe that comments and indications might still prove useful and can still be taken into account”
 8. Ireland stated that *“Hinkley Point is just over 240km from the east coast of Ireland and given the nature of the project it attracts significant interest among the Irish public and particularly environmental NGOs. Having the opportunity to formally comment on the UK’s new build programme is extremely valuable in allaying public concerns in relation to the programme.”*
 9. The Netherlands commented that *“it’s still necessary that the United Kingdom gives the authorities and the public in the Netherlands insight in their conclusion that the proposed NPP at Hinkley Point C. in Somerset, UK is not likely to cause significant adverse transboundary effects on the territory of the Netherlands, especially what may happen in case of a major accident or incident of the new nuclear power plant. We expect that the EIA-documentation will give good and complete information about this issue.”*
 10. Norway considered that notification *“could provide us with valuable information about the planned NPP [Nuclear Power Plant] and an opportunity to assess which scenarios have been investigated in connection with adverse transboundary effects from the NPP. In addition, notification at present stage would serve as a basis for the consideration of possible Norwegian participation in the further environmental impact assessment process.”*
 11. None of the responses requested that work should be suspended on Hinkley Point C pending the completion of any notification exercise that the United Kingdom might choose to undertake.

Next Steps

12. In view of the responses received, the United Kingdom has decided to set up bilateral meetings with those States that requested further engagement to inform them of the current planning practices and procedures relevant to Hinkley Point C, to update them on the current stage of the development and to consider what further engagement should take place in order to address their concerns.
13. Invitations have been sent to Denmark, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands and Norway, and so far meetings have been confirmed with Ireland, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands. We will have completed those meetings prior to the Meeting of the Parties for the Espoo Convention. Although Austria did not specially request further communication, we will also offer them a meeting to provide opportunity for further discussion.
14. We will report back to the Committee on the results of those meetings in due course to further comply with the Committee's recommendation (c).

Department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy
April 2017