



Federal Ministry for the  
Environment, Nature Conservation,  
Building and Nuclear Safety



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**Resolution endorsed by the Dutch Parliament regarding Belgian NPPs**

Your letter of 6 June 2017; your reference: ANVS-2017/6943

Reference: RS I 4 - 18231NDL/1

Bonn, 29.06.2017

Dear Mr. Kuijpers,

Thank you for your letter of 6 June 2017, informing me about the recent resolution of the Dutch Parliament, which calls on the Dutch government to join Germany and Luxembourg and urge the Belgian government to close the Tihange nuclear power plant.

I greatly appreciate your support in this regard and I am happy to provide you with some background information about the position of BMUB regarding the analyses of the findings in Tihange-2 and Doel-3 by Electrabel and FANC as well as our steps in this regard so far.

Since the discovery of flaw indications in 2012, BMUB has closely followed the evolution of the analysis. In the following years German experts both from the BMUB and from its independent advisory board, the Reactor Safety Commission (RSK) have participated actively in the technical discussion in the frame of several meetings and especially in two international workshops organised by FANC. During the workshops BMUB presented its technical position and raised several technical issues. Based on all officially





Page 2

available information BMUB has commissioned the RSK in March 2016 for their independent position in assessing the soundness of the safety cases with respect to the integrity of the reactor pressure vessels of the Doel-3 and Tihange-2 nuclear power plants. In a bilateral meeting between German and Belgian experts in-depth discussions were held on technical details of this assessment. While acknowledging the conclusiveness of the approach chosen in the safety assessment, the RSK raised unresolved questions. The flaw indications require an integrity assessment using fracture-mechanical calculation models. Regarding the calculations models, there are still unresolved questions especially with respect to the experimental verification of the models and the consideration of the anisotropy of the material. Please find in the annex a detailed explanation of unresolved questions, which were raised with Belgian experts (available only in German). In its conclusion the RSK stressed the need of further proofs, both by experiment and by analyses, to confirm that the required safety margins are complied with.

On the basis of the statement of the RSK Minister Hendricks asked the Belgian Minister of Security and the Interior in April 2016 to shut down those two reactors in the interim, at least until the further analyses have been finalised. The communication took place in a phone call between the Belgian Minister Jambon and our State Secretary Flasbarth acting for Minister Hendricks who was overseas at the time. On various occasions since, this issue has been taken up.

When Minister Hendricks asked for the at least temporary shutdown of the two reactors, this was based on the aforementioned statement of our advisors of the RSK and therefore based on technical concerns. The great public



Page 3

concern, in particular in the bordering region around Aachen, obviously also has political implications.

Please note, that deliberately there was no *demand* for a shutdown. According to our rough legal analysis according to the facts at that time we saw no legal basis to demand a shutdown. Based on the current assessment of the technical facts and the unresolved questions and different technical position of our experts that remain, this assessment is still valid. Besides this legal perspective we have obviously also taken into account the foreign policy aspect and believe that a diplomatic and cooperative approach is preferable.

Finally, I would like to mention that with regard to the unresolved questions and different technical position of our experts, it was agreed at the recent first meeting of the Belgian-German Nuclear Commission that Belgian and German expert of the RSK would meet to discuss the questions and different technical position that German experts still have.

The safety of the two reactor pressure vessels will certainly continue to be a priority issue for us and we would welcome cooperation with you in this regard, possibly even together with Luxembourg. From my point of view a trilateral letter by the Netherlands, Luxembourg and Germany signed by the responsible Ministries could be a good way forward.

Yours sincerely,