

Report on the tenth Meeting on 15 and 16 May 2024

The Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management (“Advisory Board” for short) met for its tenth meeting on 15 and 16 May 2024. The aim of this meeting was to finalise and to approve the report.

Background

Based on “The National Programme for the Management of Radioactive Waste” (2018), the Advisory Board **develops a basis for decisions and recommendations for the Federal Government regarding the safe disposal of low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste** accumulated in Austria. Radioactive waste is generated in Austria through applications in medicine, research, industry and through the dismantling of facilities that are no longer required (decommissioning).

The mandate of the Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management defines its tasks. It is valid for three years and ends in June 2024. The four tasks according to the mandate are:

1. Radioactive Waste in Austria: Survey of the Status Quo

The aim is to survey and collect information and data on radioactive waste management, to discuss the inventory of radioactive waste in Austria as well as to evaluate the studies on the Federal Government’s previous activities with respect to final disposal. As part of this, plans are to provide a tangible overview of the existing situation. The data collected in this survey describes the starting point in detail and provides the basis for the work of the Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management.

2. Analysis of the Options for Final Disposal

The aim is to provide an overview of all possible options for the final disposal of radioactive waste in the form of a single document. It should include the option of cooperation with other countries and outline the requirements, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and risks, as well as an initial cost estimate for each option.

3. Framework for Public Participation

The aim is to develop a framework for the public to participate (including cross-border measures) during the process of establishing a final repository for radioactive waste in Austria. The concept should consider technical, economic, and social aspects. Moreover, it should contain recommendations on how and when the public should be informed, involved, and included in the decision-making process.

4. Development of a Timetable for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste

The aim is to define a timetable and roadmap for the disposal of radioactive waste accumulated in Austria. This draft should include, where possible, relevant intermediate stages ("milestones"), key performance indicators and precise timelines for reaching these stages.

The recommendations worked out by the Advisory Board on the individual mandate items are forwarded to the Federal Government and serve as a basis for decisions on future steps.

The Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management includes representatives of the Federal States and Governments, scientists, NGOs, and from the public. The Advisory Board is chaired by Silvia Benda-Kahri from the Environment Agency Austria. The members of the Advisory Board may change in the context of future mandates depending on the tasks at hand.

Review

At the ninth meeting on 31 January and 1 February 2024, the recommendations regarding the four mandate points were presented, discussed, and approved. In addition, the report "Proposal for Site Selection Criteria" was presented by the authors and discussed by the Advisory Board.

In the second extraordinary meeting held on 4 April 2024 the remaining recommendations for the report were finalised and most of them have been adopted. Open points were identified and the next steps for further action were discussed.

Results of the tenth meeting:

The results of the tenth meeting of the Advisory Board are presented on the basis of the mandate items.

First the overarching recommendations that do not directly belong to a specific mandate item are listed.

Results

The Advisory Board has decided on the overarching recommendations regarding the topics of role allocation and the site selection process.

Mandate Item 1: Radioactive Waste in Austria: Survey of the Status Quo

Results

The Advisory Board has already completed its work on this mandate item.

Mandate Item 2: Analysis of the Options for Final Disposal

Results

The Advisory Board has already completed its work on this mandate item.

Mandate Item 3: Framework for Public Participation

The Committee on the "Framework for Public Participation" presented its recommendations, including the participation concept.

Results

The Advisory Board has finalised and decided on the recommendations for Mandate Item 3 regarding the topics of participation, information centre and monitoring committees. The participation concept was also approved.

Mandate Item 4: Development of a Timetable for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste

The Committee on the "Timetable and Roadmap" presented the timetable and roadmap.

Results

The Advisory Board approved the timetable and roadmap.

During the tenth meeting the Advisory Board's report to the Federal Government was approved including all recommendations and associated appendices.

The 11th meeting of the Advisory Board will be held on 2 and 3 October 2024. The plan is to hand over the report with the recommendations to the responsible federal minister during this meeting.

Participants

Advisory Board

Roman Beyerknecht (Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf)

Ulrike Felt (University of Vienna, Department of Science and Technology Studies)

Eva Festl (Federal Ministry of Finance)

Bernhard Haubenberger (Association of Austrian Municipalities)

Patricia Lorenz (Global 2000)

Frank Melcher (Montanuniversität Leoben, Chair of Geology and Economic Geology, Applied Geosciences and Geophysics)

Gabriele Mraz (Austrian Institute for Ecology)

Nikolaus Müllner (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, Institute of Safety and Risk Sciences)

Ewald Plantosar (Styria, Representative of the Federal States)

Horst Reicher (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology)

David Reinberger (Ombuds Office for Environmental Protection Austria)

Sabine Schneeberger (Federal Chancellery)

Gerhard Seifritz (Lower Austria, Representative of the Federal States)

Sigrid Sperker (Upper Austria, Representation of the Federal States)

Angelika Spieth-Achtnich (Institute for Applied Ecology)

Johannes Sterba (Technical University of Vienna, Atomic and Subatomic Physics)

Hannelore Weck-Hannemann (University of Innsbruck, Department of Public Finance, Faculty of Economics and Statistics)

Other Participants

Silvia Benda-Kahri (Environment Agency Austria) Chair

Sabine Kranzl (Environment Agency Austria) Co-Chair

Claudia Ackerl (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology)

Christina Raith (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology)

Roman Zöchling (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology)

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