

Report on the eleventh Meeting on 2 and 3 October 2024

The Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management (“Advisory Board” for short) met for its eleventh meeting on 2 and 3 October 2024. During the meeting, the report of the Advisory Board was handed over to Federal Minister Gewessler. The Advisory Board was commissioned to continue its work until the end of 2025.

The objectives of this meeting were to establish the framework for further work, to obtain an overview of the work plan and to decide on the execution of necessary studies. The aim was also to define the composition, tasks and next steps of the committees.

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 tenth meeting, the report of the Advisory Board to the Federal Government with all previous recommendations and the associated annexes was adopted.

Results of the eleventh meeting:

At the eleventh meeting of the Advisory Board, the report with the recommendations was handed over to Federal Minister Gewessler, on behalf of the Federal Government.

The Advisory Board continues its work and has decided to have three committees.

The remaining results of the eleventh meeting of the Advisory Board will be presented based on the mandate items.

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

The Committee on “Radioactive Waste in Austria - Focus on Quantities” was reconstituted and its tasks and work schedule were defined.

The Advisory Board discussed the possible risks of chemotoxic properties of radioactive waste and the availability of information on them.

Results

The Advisory Board decided to commission a study on "Chemical substances in radioactive waste and assessment of their release".

Mandate Item 2: Analysis of the Options for Final Disposal

The Committee on “Pathway to the Evaluation of Options for the Final Disposal” was reconstituted and its tasks and work schedule were defined.

The Advisory Board discussed the classification of long-lived and short-lived radioactive waste in relation to the Austrian inventory.

Furthermore, international and European research projects on bi- and multinational solutions for the disposal of radioactive waste were presented.

Results

The Advisory Board decided to commission a study on the “Classification of radioactive waste: long-lasting versus short-lived”.

Mandate Item 3: Framework for Public Participation

The Committee on the “Framework for Public Participation” was reconstituted and its tasks and work plans were defined. Possible socio-economic location criteria are to be developed as exclusion and weighing criteria in addition to the previous study. Furthermore, the preparation of a detailed concept for an information centre was discussed.

Results

The Advisory Board decided to commission studies on "Socio-Economic Location Criteria" and a "Detailed Concept for an Information Centre".

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

The created timetable and roadmap are updated by the Secretariat on an ongoing basis.

The twelfth meeting of the Advisory Board will be held on 29 and 30 January 2025.

Participants

Advisory Board

Roman Beyerknecht (Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf)

Manfred Ditto (Federal Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection)

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)

Benedikt Montag (Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport)

Gabriele Mraz (Austrian Institute for Ecology)

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

Anna Muner-Bretter (Federal Chancellery)

Wolfgang Piermayr (Upper Austria, Representation of the Federal States)

Ewald Plantosar (Styria, Representative of the Federal States)

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

Ursula Rosenbichler (Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, Civil Service and Sport)

Volker Schaffler (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology)

Gerhard Seifritz (Lower Austria, Representative 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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