

Report on the twelfth Meeting on 29 and 30 January 2025

The Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management (“Advisory Board” for short) met for its twelfth meeting on 29 and 30 January 2025. The objectives of this meeting were to present and discuss the results of the committees, the first results of the studies and to plan further work.

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.

Review

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

In order to continue the work of the Advisory Board, its mandate has been extended until the end of 2025. The committees were reconstituted and they decided on their work schedules for the period of the mandate extension.

Results of the twelfth meeting:

At the twelfth meeting of the Advisory Board, the initial results of the conducted studies were presented and discussed.

The remaining results of the twelfth 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 study on “Chemical substances in radioactive waste and assessment of their release” is currently being prepared. First results are expected in spring 2025.

Results

The study on “Chemical substances in radioactive waste and assessment of their release” will be prepared in accordance with its outline.

Mandate Item 2: Analysis of the Options for Final Disposal

The study on the “Derivation of reference values for long-lived radionuclides in the Austrian repository” was presented and discussed. Based on the discussion, it is now being revised.

Results

The study on the “Derivation of reference values for long-lived radionuclides in the Austrian repository” is being finalized by the study author based on the feedback from the Advisory Board.

Mandate Item 3: Framework for Public Participation

The Committee on the “Framework for Public Participation” presented further considerations on the participation concept. The study “On the inclusion of socio-economic location criteria” was presented and discussed. In addition, a detailed concept for the Information Centre was also

presented and discussed. The study and the detailed concept are to be finalized following the meeting.

Results

The study “On the inclusion of socio-economic location criteria” and the detailed concept for the Information Centre will be finalized by the authors of the study based on the feedback from the Advisory Board.

Point 4: Timing and planning

The established timetable and roadmap will be continuously updated by the Secretariat.

The 13th meeting of the Advisory Board will be held on 4 and 5 June 2025.

Participants in the meeting

Waste Management Board

Rene Albert (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology)

Roman Beyerknecht (Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf)

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

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

Bernhard Haubenberger (Association of Austrian Municipalities)

Patricia Lorenz (Global 2000)

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

Monika Mörth (Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management)

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)

David Reinberger (Ombuds Office for Environmental Protection Austria)

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)

Erik Tajalli (Federal Chancellery)

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

Barbara Hofbauer (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology)

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)

Henriette Herzog (Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety GmbH)

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Imprint or Inquiry information or data security

Media owners, publishers, and editors:

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Status: 30 January 2025

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Created on: 30 January 2025