

# Report on the Second Meeting on 13 and 14 October 2021

The Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management („Advisory Board“ for short) met for its second meeting on 13 and 14 October 2021 to specify the tasks of the Advisory Board and to decide on the next steps. In addition, the members visited Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf GmbH to gain insight into the treatment and intermediate storage of radioactive waste in Austria.

The Advisory Board **develops a basis for decisions and recommendations for the Federal Government on the safe disposal of radioactive waste** produced in Austria. It includes representatives of the Federal and State Governments, scientists, NGOs, and from the public. The Advisory Board is chaired by Silvia Benda-Kahri from the Environment Agency Austria.

The mandate of the Advisory Board is valid for three years and ends in June 2024. The objectives of the Advisory Board are defined in this mandate. The recommendations formulated by the Advisory Board are forwarded to the Federal Government and serve as a basis for decisions on any future steps. 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.

In the first meeting of the Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management in June 2021, the main tasks of the mandate were introduced through presentations and discussions. A Committee was formed on the subject of "Participation and Involvement of the Public in the next three years". By the time of the second meeting, this Committee was to develop a proposal on the subject of "Participation and Involvement during the Advisory Board period".

The aim of the second meeting of the Advisory Board was to deepen the understanding of the mandate, to get a common picture of the existing expertise and to clarify which additional insights should be gained. In addition, the next steps to fulfil the mandate were supposed to be determined.

The meeting started with a report on the results of the Committee on "Participation and Involvement of the Public in the next three years ". It presented general thoughts on the topic of participation and integration of the public as well as various ideas regarding public involvement during the three-year period of the Advisory Board's mandate.

The Federal Ministry for Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology then presented options for the exchange of information in this phase. Besides the websites of the Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management and the BMK, the website [www.participation.at](http://www.participation.at) offers information on the topic of participation in general and on individual projects. The Advisory Board will therefore also be represented on this website in the future. In addition, the Radiation Protection Platform will take place on 29 November 2021 this year and topics related to the disposal of radioactive waste will be presented.

Next the four tasks of the mandate were addressed. They were discussed in small groups and the members deliberated which further information (surveys, research, studies, committees, etc.) the Advisory Board would need to fulfil the mandate and what the next steps would be.

An expert from the Environment Agency Austria gave a presentation on the current status of the repository search in other countries as well as a comparison of different participation models that were used in selected countries.

At the end of the first day, an AGES expert presented a survey on the inventory of radioactive waste in Austria. He gave an overview of the origin of radioactive waste (such as decontamination, decommissioning, industrial processes, contaminated sites, etc.) and described the legal basis for the disposal of radioactive waste in Austria.

On the second day of the meeting, a tour of Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf GmbH (NES) took place in order to give the board members insight into the collection, processing, conditioning, and storage of radioactive waste in Austria.

Following the tour, an AGES expert gave a presentation of possible technical options for a final repository. The different legal frameworks were explained on the basis of international repositories. Furthermore, the differences in the site selection and licensing processes and the estimated costs of the presented repositories were considered.

Finally, the Advisory Board defined the next steps of the individual mandate points:

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

In order to clearly define the already existing prognosis of the radioactive waste that will accumulate by 2045, a questionnaire is to be developed and the persons to be questioned should be determined. In addition, other data required to characterise the radioactive waste inventory are to be determined and evaluated (e.g. volume, radiological, chemical and physical characterisation, origin).

## **Results**

A Committee on "**Radioactive Waste in Austria - Focus on Quantities**" was established. Its task is to deal with the above-mentioned points.

The Committee will present the questionnaire at the next meeting.

## **Item 2: Analysis of the Options for the Final Disposal and Item 4: Development of a Timetable for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste**

In order to be able to carry out an analysis of the disposal options, the Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management requires further information in the form of studies or reports. For example, on the subjects of safety and site criteria. The next steps build on this information.

Mandate item 2 "Analysis of the Options for the Final Disposal" is closely linked to mandate item 4 "Development of a Timetable for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste", since the key steps in the process essentially depend on the analysis of disposal options.

Timetables that show which decisions are to be made by which people and who is involved should be compiled.

### **Results**

There will be a committee on the "**Pathway to the Evaluation of Options for the Final Disposal**" for these two mandate items (2 and 4). This Committee has the task to develop a system for evaluating repository options. In addition, it will also propose to the Advisory Board a structure for the content of the questionnaire and define the prerequisites for the required reports and studies.

At the next meeting, the Committee will present a draft of a possible flowchart/decision tree, which will visualise the system for evaluating the options. In addition, the necessary information and reports (e.g., safety and location criteria, presentation of options, etc.) must be structured.

## **Item 3: Framework for Public Participation**

The efforts to involve the public during the next three years, as well as public relations and communication of the Advisory Board's work are to be continued. In addition, the expectations regarding the participatory process should be clarified and the basis for future work should be established.

### Results

A committee will be set up on the subject "**Framework for Public Participation**". This Committee is to continue and expand on the work that has already been done.

At the next meeting, the Committee will present a proposal for a common understanding of transparency and participation, the results of a short inquiry into the public's knowledge on the subject, preliminary work on a stakeholder map and key points for public relations and communication about the work of the Advisory Board.

The next meeting of the Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management will take place on 26 and 27 January 2022.

The members of the Advisory Board are appointed for three years and serve to fulfil the tasks of the first mandate. The members of the Advisory Board may change in the context of future mandates, depending on the tasks at hand.

**Members entitled to vote (in Alphabetical Order):**

Roman Beyerknecht (Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf)

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

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

Bernhard Haubenberger (Association of Austrian Municipalities)

Isabel Lamprecht-Pühra (Federal Ministry of Finance)

Günter Liebel (Federal Ministry for Agriculture, Forestry, Regions and Water Management)

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, Representation 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)

Wolfgang Renneberg (University of Natural Resources and Life Sciences, , Institute of Safety and Risk Sciences)

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

Sabine Schneeberger (Federal Chancellery)

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

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

Christoph Urbanek (Lower Austria, Representation of the Federal States)

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

Silvia Benda-Kahri (Environment Agency Austria), who is a trained mediator and art-of-hosting expert, accompanies the Advisory Board as a chairperson to help it fulfil its objectives.

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