

Report on the Fifth Meeting on 19 and 20 October 2022

The Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management („**Advisory Board**“ for short) held its fifth meeting on 19 and 20 October 2022. The objective of this meeting was to record first recommendations based on the study results of the inventory (mandate item 1) and to agree on the further procedure and clarify open questions on the legal framework (mandate item 2). In addition, the aim was to define the study design on the level of knowledge and understanding of the public and to continue to develop the participation concept (mandate item 3), as well as to discuss current work on the timetable and roadmap (mandate item 4) and to determine the next steps.

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 to 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 when the current mandate ends in June 2024.

Review

In the fourth meeting, Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf GmbH (NES) presented the inventory of radioactive waste in Austria, which was then discussed. In the course of the discussion, further questions arose that had to be considered in the study. The final report on the study was submitted to all Advisory Board members by NES in summer 2022. In the next step, the Committee on the „Inventory of Radioactive Waste in Austria - Focus on Quantities " worked on the first recommendations and clarified whether additional surveys of current and future radioactive waste were necessary.

During the third meeting the need for further studies and reports was established. The Advisory Board proposed to start with the following studies:

- Legal framework for the disposal of radioactive waste
- Methods for estimating the long-term behaviour and dispersion of radionuclides in the vicinity of a possible disposal site
- Comparison of final repository options
- Proposal for safety criteria and accident scenarios

The study on the proposal for site criteria will be postponed until the interim results of the other studies and the study for mandate item 3 are available. At the fifth meeting, the first results on the legal framework and on the proposal for safety criteria and incident scenarios are to be presented.

In the next step, the Committee on the "Framework for Public Participation" worked out a design for a study on the level of knowledge and understanding of the public and advised the Secretariat on the necessary steps for the call for tenders/commissioning. Building on the previous work, the committee began to implement the second resolution on the understanding of transparency and started work on the participation concept. It is to report on the results in the fifth Advisory Board meeting.

The Advisory Board recommended that the Secretariat take over further work on the table „decision tree“. The developed decision tree is to be compared and completed with the literature on the planning of a repository for radioactive waste according to the state of the art in science and technology. In addition, a report is to be prepared in which the steps and decisions noted as points in the table are comprehensively explained. The first results are to be presented at the fifth meeting.

Results of the Fifth Meeting

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

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

Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf GmbH has compiled an inventory of the radioactive waste in Austria for the Advisory Board and made some additions based on the discussion at the fourth

meeting. These were presented and discussed at the meeting. In addition, the Committee developed recommendations based on mandate item 1, the Advisory Board added to the recommendations as well.

Results

The Advisory Board agrees that the preliminary recommendations will be documented and the Committee will continue to exist. The Committee will continue to monitor the subject of the quantity of radioactive waste in Austria and work on the recommendations for the final report next year.

Mandate Item 2: Analysis of the Options for the Final Disposal

At the fourth meeting, the Advisory Board decided to carry out the studies listed in the review.

The preparation of the study on the legal framework has begun. The interim results were presented and discussed at the fifth meeting by representatives of the Johannes Kepler University Linz. The presentation of the results of the study on safety criteria was postponed to the sixth meeting.

Results

The results of the study on the legal framework are completed and merged with the timetable and roadmap.

Mandate Item 3: Framework for Public Participation

The Committee on the "Framework for Public Participation" presented the current status of the participation concept.

In addition, the Environment Agency Austria presented the research design for the study on the level of knowledge and understanding of the public.

Results

It was agreed to further develop the participation concept, considering the timetable and roadmap as well as the results of the study on the legal framework and the study on the level of knowledge and understanding of the public. In the sixth meeting there will be a status report by the Committee.

The Advisory Board welcomes the fact that representatives of civil society are organising a first meeting with NGOs. The results of this meeting will be presented to the Advisory Board.

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

The Secretariat prepared a first version for the timetable and roadmap, which was presented and discussed at the meeting.

Results

The Advisory Board agrees to set up a committee on the "Timetable and Roadmap". The tasks of the Committee include the evaluation of ongoing additions, suggestions, and unresolved issues for the Advisory Board, as well as the development of recommendations.

The Advisory Board specifies the following next steps: the discussion results of the fifth meeting will be incorporated into the timetable and roadmap. The results of the study on the legal framework will be taken into account as far as possible and in coordination with the relevant Committee. In addition, the open points of the timetable and roadmap will be prepared by the Committee on the "Timetable and Roadmap" for the next Advisory Board meeting.

The next meeting of the Austrian Board for Radioactive Waste Management will be held on 1 and 2 February 2023.

Participants

Advisory Board

Roman Beyerknecht (Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf)

Philipp Bohatschek (Federal Ministry of Finance)

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

Bernhard Haubenberger (Association of Austrian Municipalities)

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)

Christina Raith (Federal Ministry of Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection)

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

David Reinberger (Ombuds Office for Environmental Protection Austria)

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

Sabine Schneeberger (Federal Chancellery)

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

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

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)

Verena Ehold (Federal Ministry of Climate Action, Environment, Energy, Mobility, Innovation and Technology)

Rudolf Engelbrecht (Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety GmbH)

Secretariat

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

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Christian Katzlberger (Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety GmbH)

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Konrad Lotter (Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety GmbH)

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Wolfgang Neckel (Nuclear Engineering Seibersdorf, Speaker)

Sonja Rosenitsch (Austrian Agency for Health and Food Safety GmbH)

Maria-Theresia Semmelrock-Picej (Johannes Kepler University Linz, Speaker)

Erika Wagner (Johannes Kepler University Linz, Speaker)

Daniela Zanini-Freitag (Environmental Agency Austria)

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