

Nuclear knowledge preservation in Lithuania

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Lithuania operates only one Nuclear Power Plant – Ignalina NPP with two latest RBMK – type design reactors with a nominal capacity of 1500 each. Our Parliament has set a decision to close the first unit before the year 2005, taking into consideration long-term substantial financial assistance from countries of European Union, G7 group, other countries and international financial institutions. The second unit will be closed in 2009.

During fourteen year of independence Lithuania accumulated a lot of knowledge, prepared specialists in nuclear energy sector. It would be unforgivable to lose all that. In connection with approaching decommissioning of Ignalina NPP Lithuania faces few problems: how to keep Ignalina NPP personnel, how to promote nuclear energy between younger generation and how to preserve nuclear knowledge and expertises.

To educate population about processes going on in Ignalina NPP and popularize nuclear power the information centre of Ignalina NPP was founded in 1995. Till 2004, January 1st about 50 thousand people from 20 different countries have visited the centre. Information centre publishes “The Information bulletin” every month, where you can find an information about the plant operational data, reliability and safe operation of Ignalina NPP, radiation situation on the plant site, events on INES, news and events; “The News Sheet”, which contain articles about the most important things and events at the plant and in the nuclear energy; prepares and different booklets, calendars and magazines about Ignalina NPP.

One of the ways to store and preserve knowledge is to make database of all information available. So Lithuania joined INIS (International Nuclear Information System) in 1994 and established it’s own INIS national centre. That is the possibility to add information available in Lithuania to INIS database and share it with the rest of INIS users all over the world and to operate information already existing in database for users in Lithuania.

Kaunas Technological University in Lithuania is specialized in providing nuclear and nuclear related education in Bachelor (2 years) and Master of Science (1,5 year) courses. Steps for promoting nuclear energy between younger generation are taken. University organizes seminars, conferences and different meetings together with the postgraduates of the secondary schools, publishes articles in the popular journals.

Agreement between Kaunas Technological University and Ignalina NPP was made regarding additional scholarships and guarantees of employment for nuclear engineering students. Unfortunately all these actions are condemned to failure because of the early shutdown of the Ignalina NPP. Interest in nuclear energy is decreasing between young people in recent years. The problem of ageing of Ignalina NPP personnel and workforce in nuclear energy sector is arising because young people do not want to choose a specialty without the future in Lithuania.