

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1130/04

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to the Commission

Subject: Findings of the AQG/WPNS Peer Review of Nuclear Safety in Bulgaria and revision of the closure conditions of Kozloduy NPP Units 3 and 4

The AQG/WPNS Peer Review Report on Nuclear Safety in Bulgaria (Doc. 7536/04), finalising the nuclear safety monitoring process in connection with Bulgaria-EU accession negotiations, has recently been published.

The European Parliament takes the view that the Council and Commission should study the report on the Council's Peer Review of safety carried out on 16-19 November 2003 at Kozloduy 3 and 4 and calls for steps to be taken to guarantee the maintenance and development of energy resources so that Bulgaria can meet her future requirements.

The Report acknowledges the effective and comprehensive upgrading of Units 3 and 4, their safe operation by competent personnel and the existence of an independent and strong regulator, that all the recommendations of the AQG/WPNS made in 2000-2002 have been adequately addressed and that further monitoring activity on any of them is not required.

Electricity generation in Bulgaria, about 12% of which is provided by Units 3 and 4, is of crucial importance for the security of electricity supply in the Balkans: last summer, during the Europe-wide heat wave, Bulgaria was the only country in the region capable of supplying the requisite power to neighbouring countries as hydroelectric sources failed.

Bulgaria plans to build replacement capacities which cannot be ready until 2010. Accordingly, shutting down Kozloduy 3 and 4 in 2006 would destroy the energy balance in a region that is still frail, both economically and politically.

Would the Commission indicate how, when it finalises the negotiations with Bulgaria, it will take into account the AQG /WPNS findings and the evidence of the efficient and comprehensive upgrading of Units 3 and 4, their safe operation by competent personnel and the existence of an independent and strong regulator?

Would it also review the closure conditions set for these units, approving their operation until 2011, as a step towards guaranteeing the conditions for the maintenance and development of Bulgaria's energy resources and the smooth bridging of an imminent energy shortfall in the Balkans during the 2006-2011 period?