

MEASURES AGAINST ILLICIT TRAFFICKING OF NUCLEAR MATERIAL AND RADIOACTIVE SOURCES IN THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

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The Republic of Belarus strives to take an active part in international cooperation in the field of prevention and interception of illicit uses of nuclear material and radioactive sources through:

- multilateral international agreements and bilateral interagency treatments;
- information exchange within the IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database;
- participation in different international seminars, workshops, conferences including those under the IAEA auspices etc.

Belarus is constantly improving regulatory, legal and technical aspects of activities aimed at:

- accounting, control and ensuring of physical protection of nuclear material and security of radioactive sources;
- exercising efficient control over their export and import;
- detecting cases of their illicit uses and illegal cross-border movements and informing of such cases through the IAEA Illicit Trafficking Database;
- developing and providing training opportunities for personnel.

Through Resolution "On Measures for Physical Protection of Nuclear Materials" issued by the Council of Ministers in 1993, Committee for Supervision of Industrial and Nuclear Safety (PROMATOMNADZOR) was appointed as the authority responsible for ensuring physical protection of nuclear materials and facilities.

Through Resolution "On Measures for Fulfillment of Provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty" issued by the Council of Ministers in 1993, Promatomnadzor was designated as the national competent authority responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the State System of Accounting and Control of nuclear material. The system accounts all the nuclear material meeting the criteria defined in the Safeguards Agreement with the IAEA. The system includes two levels: i.e. on-site accounting and control and state accounting and control exercised by Promatomnadzor. Apart from reporting to the Agency, the system also provides for national tasks being accomplished: control over uses of nuclear material, its physical protection, access control etc. Promatomnadzor is also a central communication point in the case of a loss, unauthorized use or seizure of nuclear materials.

The State System of Accounting and Control of ionizing radiation sources was set up and commissioned through Resolution issued by the Council of Ministers in 1999. The system consists of 2 levels: primary accounting by users and state accounting and control by Promatomnadzor. Promatomnadzor laid down requirements for submitting information on a source itself, its owner, timing of reporting. All the sources meeting the established criteria are registered in the database of Promatomnadzor irrespectively of their ownership.

The database allows both tracing a concrete source, and acquiring information on a single user. Promatomnadzor informs the Ministry of Internal Affairs so that control over the guarding system and requirements for security of ionizing radiation sources is ensured. Promatomnadzor, Ministry of Health and, if needed, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Labor are informed of any radiation incident including a loss or occasional detection, unauthorized uses of nuclear and radioactive material. Following such cases a special commission is established. Headed as a rule by an official from Promatomnadzor, the commission makes a narrow inquiry into the facts and compiles an act of investigation. Based on the act, measures are taken to address the case and to prevent it from recurring. If needed, the Prosecutor's Office is approached to commence prosecution.

Should an incident occur at the customs border, the customs authorities themselves investigate the case, which may result in taking criminal proceedings. Representatives of Promatomnadzor generally take part in the investigation.

Export-import measures also belong to those aimed at preventing and intercepting illicit trafficking of nuclear material and radioactive sources. Thus, in order to cross the customs border a user of an ionizing radiation source is to get a permit from Promatomnadzor. Pursuant to the Law "On Export Control" adopted in 1998 a license from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is also needed when nuclear material is concerned.

One can suggest the following measures to upgrade the existing infrastructure in the field:

- to improve the national system of mutual notification of incidents involving ionizing radiation sources by setting uniform requirements for information to be submitted and through establishing a computer database to register all the incidents;
- to upgrade the laboratory under Promatomnadzor conducting primary measurements and identification of detected ionizing radiation sources;
- to explore a possibility of setting up a national laboratory capable of conducting complex measurements for identification of revealed nuclear material, including destructive analysis; such a lab can be founded at existing research institutes and scientific centers;
- to train and retrain personnel;
- to develop technical capacities of customs check-points.