

Nuclear Power Development in the Republic of Belarus

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Annual scientific conferences held at the BNTU gives the students a lot of opportunities to commence and continue their researches. The chair of the English Language №2 encourages the first-year students to make their first steps in scientific work. The teachers assist their students in choosing urgent issues and guide them in the report preparation. This paper represents the results of the student's research in the field of nuclear power development.

Under its 2011-2020 energy strategy, Belarus is seeking to reduce its reliance on foreign countries as energy suppliers. The plan calls for a 1000MWe coal-fired plant and a 2400MWe nuclear plan, as well as four hydropower stations with total capacity of 120 MW. The proposed 2400MWe nuclear plant is expected to reduce gas imports by 5 billion m³ per year.

In November 2007 the organizations responsible for preparing for the construction of the country's first nuclear power plant and budgeted money for engineering and site selection were defined. In June 2009 the government announced that Atomstroyexport would be the general contractor, with Russian and Belarussian subcontractors. Operation of the first unit of the Ostrovets plant is scheduled for November 2018 and the second unit in July 2020. Nuclear and radiation safety is in the line with the recommendations of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). As for the construction of the Belarussian nuclear power plant, the Energy Ministry has a technical cooperation project with the IAEA in personnel training. The latest IAEA mission was in Belarus in June 2012. According to the mission, our infrastructure is well-developed for the construction of the nuclear power plant. It was stressed that our country has reached the adequate level of nuclear infrastructure development across the majority of 19 points, like NPP construction site, environmental safety of the facility, NPP integration into the Belarussian energy system.

Public opinion monitoring conducted by the Ministry of Energy jointly with the National Academy of Sciences shows a sustainable growth of support to nuclear power over the period September 2005 to May 2012. The number of nuclear power supporters increased from 28.3% to 53.5% over that period, while the number of opponents decreased from 46.7% to 21%. Slight fluctuations were observed in 2012 after the accident at Fukushima, which triggered "a new outburst of anxiety." An important result of the studies is the fact that they "unambiguously recorded" positive shifts in public attitude to "calm and reasoned perception," despite the fact that Belarus was very affected by fallout from the Chernobyl accident, with resultant evacuations.