

Directorate General
Director General

Nuclear Transparency Watch
To the attention of [REDACTED] Head of
Office
Edinburgstraat
1050 Brussels

Your letter of	Your references	Our references	Appendix(es)
		2019-01-15-FHAR-2-1-002-EN	

Concern: request for information regarding the INES 1 incident at IRE on 30/11/2018

Cc:

Dear [REDACTED]

the Federaal Agentschap voor Nucleaire Controle (FANC) received your letter of December, 17 2018 in which the following information was requested:

1. the procedure to perform the measurements in such situation, who performed the measurements on and off site;
2. the full results of the measurements performed with interpretation of the impacts on human and environment in relation to the constrains or limitations;
3. how the information about the event was given to the public (what, when and how).

In order to answer your questions, please allow us to describe the facilities of the IRE:

the process used at IRE to produce iodine for medical use takes place in what can be described as a "circuit", consisting of piping, bubblers and other elements necessary for the purification of iodine. This circuit is placed in an armoured cell composed of thick concrete walls, a steel insulation and what is called a "biological protection" consisting of 25 cm of lead. A ventilation and filtration system realises the confinement of the contamination and the purification of gaseous effluents.

On November 30, a leak occurred on the circuit mentioned above. Iodine escaped from the circuit and was confined to this cell. The present filters were able to recover this iodine and none of the measurement points downstream of these filters indicated a presence of iodine.

It is therefore important to understand that the impact of the event was limited to the IRE facilities and that the IRE facilities were designed to manage such an incident. The incident was closely monitored and followed up by the FANC but considered that the nuclear

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emergency plan never had to be triggered: the management of the event remained in the hands of the operator.

These clarifications allow the FANC to provide Nuclear Transparency Watch with the following answers:

1. The measurements in the installations have been carried out by the operator. Several measurement points are indeed present in the cell and throughout the ventilation system onto the chimney of the site. Outside the site, the TELERAD network (www.telerad.be) operated by FANC enabled the FANC to confirm the absence of radioactivity. In addition, a sample was taken from a surface deposit bin located in the wind direction for immediate analysis.
2. With regard to this specimen in particular, after 900 seconds of counting, no presence of iodine was detected (the MDA reached is 9.5 Bq/m²). The count continued nevertheless for 15h. After 15 hours of counting, no presence of iodine was detected (the MDA reached is 1.2 Bq/m²). These measurements confirm that no discharge limit imposed upon the IRE has been reached. Similarly we can confirm that the event did not cause dangerous release of iodine into the atmosphere and that the impact on the population and the environment is negligible.

For more background information on the discharges (and their possible dose impact) of class I nuclear facilities in Belgium, please refer to the annual reports available on the FANC website: <https://afcn.fgov.be/fr/publications/rejets-deffluents-radioactifs-des-installations-nucleaires-de-classe-i>.

3. As you know this event took place on Friday, November 30, 2018. Following a weekend's work by our experts, an INES level of 1 was determined and communicated on our website on Monday, December 3rd. This approach is in line with the communication policy of the FANC. The content of the publication is exactly that of your letter.

By the reply, the FANC considers to have met your request.

If you do not agree with this answer, please note that you can appeal to the Federal Appeals Commission for access to environmental information (Articles 35-40 of the Law of August, 5 2006 regarding public access to environmental information). Such appeal should be submitted to the Appeals Committee in writing within a period of sixty calendar days from receipt of the current letter. "

Yours Sincerely,

Frank Hardeman
Director-general