

Spain, Mr. Mariano Vila d'Abadal, AMAC

The situation in Spain in the last 5 years has undergone a radical change. Five years ago, the nuclear future was prolonging the operational life of nuclear power plants (NPPs) and we were envisaging building a centralised interim storage for spent fuel and enlarging the capabilities of the LILW facility El Cabril. Now, all NPP will close. The one in Garoña shut down in 2017 and was decommissioned, the one in Zorita was decommissioned in 2016, by 2027 we will decommission the NPPs in Almaraz and in 2030 Ascó and Cofrentes and 2035 Trillo and Vandellós will be decommissioned. This is the result of the national plan for energy transition (2021-2030). This plan sets an energy mix for 2030 for 50% renewables sources of energy, disappearance of coal and reduction of fuel and maintenance of gas for electrical production. In 2050 there will be 80% of renewables sources and the rest will be gas. Nuclear will disappear as it has disappeared from the national plans.

There is also a decommissioning and dismantling plan which has been agreed upon by the government and the electrical utilities companies. Therefore, the future looks quite irreversible.

For AMAC, this situation entails a great concern for the future of nuclear municipalities. NPPs in Spain are situated in depopulated areas, the NPP has determined very strongly the economic income in these areas and the disappearance of this NPP in the short term (2030 is very close) will entail the search for alternative economic income. The government has approved the national plan for the fair transition and they have set up specific policies at geographical areas where the NPP will be shut down. There will be agreements between the local authorities, State and the different economic actors that may act upon the set areas to foster new economic development activities. These agreements have just started in the coal areas where coal facilities have been shut down. Theoretically the agreements with NPPs should have started but we still do not have a clear agenda from the government. AMAC have, under our initiative, designed plans for alternative economic development, for example in Garoña. We have set up a technical office in order to develop some projects. In Zorita in Guadalajara, AMAC has already developed an action plan in which we are going to set up a technical office but we have not received any direct collaboration from the government. We are in direct contact with the ministry in charge and the safety authority and in principle, this agreement should start soon. Obviously, covid-19 has affected these issues as well.

In parallel, the Spanish radioactive waste management agency, ENRESA, has presented a new plan on nuclear waste management. The new plan does not change that much from the previous one, as it foresees to extend the LILW activity in el Cabril in the municipality of Hornachuelos and the building of an interim centralised storage facility for spent fuel. Hornachuelos has an ongoing dialogue with ENRESA and we have considered steps for enlarging and extending el Cabril. There are many questions regarding the economic advantages of enlarging this facility. AMAC is involved in this dialogue since the very beginning.

Regarding the storage of the spent fuel, we already had a failed process some years ago, in which ENRESA selected the site of Villar de Cañas in Cuenca, which had no prior nuclear experience nor nuclear facility. The decision making process at that time did not respect the principle of participation of the regions and the State was not active enough in its communication policies and led to a failure. Right now the current government has stopped the licensing process for this centralized interim storage facility. The new plan for waste management considers the possibility of a new facility but where to build it is an open process. For AMAC, we have to be on top of this process, to watch the ongoing process and the decisions reached on the location. The government might now take into account the experience of municipalities with prior experience on nuclear but there is no firm official proposal and no procedure on how the decision will be reached. We are facing a lot of uncertainties right now.