

Ukraine's Nuclear Regulatory Leadership Visits Holtec to Confer on Major Safety Issues Related to Monitored Storage and Transport of Used Nuclear Fuel

Ukraine's recently appointed Chairman of SNRIU (nation's regulatory authority), Mr. Sergiy Bozhko, Mr. Igor Shevchenko, President of SSTC (regulator's national consultant), and their aides visited Holtec International's Marlton, New Jersey operations center on July 21 to familiarize Holtec with their reconfigured licensing review structure for increased effectiveness. The visitors also conferred with Holtec's specialists on contemporary issues of generic interest pertaining to the long-term safety of the growing global inventory of spent nuclear fuel. It should be noted that Ukraine, having suffered the catastrophe of Chernobyl, enforces the most stringent dry storage regulations in the world. The country requires all spent fuel to be stored in double wall multi-purpose canisters (DWC). Ukraine also limits the fuel cladding temperature to a lower value than those allowed in many other countries.



Delegates from Ukraine meet with specialists from Holtec International. Pictured in the front row (L-R) are: second from left Mr. Igor Shevchenko (President, SSTC), third from left Mr. Sergiy Bozhko (Chairman, SNRIU), and fourth from left Dr. Kris Singh (CEO, Holtec).

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Holtec is designing spent fuel storage and transport systems for both of Ukraine's ongoing dry storage projects: Chernobyl Dry Storage and the National Central Storage Facility. At the present time, Ukraine lacks an autonomous storage capability and is forced to ship most of its spent fuel to Russia. Both projects have certain elements of uniqueness. The Chernobyl project requires dividing over 21,000 fuel assemblies into 42,000 fuel bundles in a custom engineered "Hot Cell." The Central storage project, which will be located in the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, involves shipping of relatively hot DWCs (approximately 38kW heat load) that include a certain quantity of high burnup fuel. These DWCs will be transferred from Ukraine's three multi-unit nuclear sites to the Ukrainian Parliament's authorized central storage facility in Chernobyl.

In the meeting, the visiting Ukrainian officials outlined sweeping reforms in the country's regulatory review process which will align their modus operandi closely with the USNRC's and sharpen their conduct of safety focused and risk informed reviews. Holtec's specialists predict that the new rules of engagement will be of huge benefit in streamlining the licensing of Ukraine's nuclear projects.

Additional discussion centered around certain contemporary issues of interest such as using forced gas dehydration to protect high burnup fuel from damage during the drying process and the advisability of "canning" it, i.e., enclosing it in additional canisters for increased criticality safety during transport.

The Ukrainian delegation are also meeting with NRC and DOE officials in Washington, D.C. this week.

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