



16 June 2006 / News N°126

Agreement Extends Lifetime Of Netherlands' Borssele Plant To 2033

16 Jun (NucNet): A 20-year lifetime extension agreement for the Netherlands' Borssele nuclear power plant was signed today.

The agreement formalises the announcement made by the Dutch government in January 2006 and means the single unit, 450-megawatt (480 MW gross) pressurised water reactor unit, will operate until December 2033 – a total of 60 years.

The agreement was signed by Pieter van Geel, the state secretary responsible for environmental issues, the directors of Dutch utility EPZ (Borssele's operator) and EPZ shareholders Delta and Essent.

One of the conditions of the agreement is that Delta and Essent must invest a total of around 250 million euros (302 million US dollars) in sustainable energy – to mainly focus on energy saving, clean fossil fuels (including carbon sequestration) and renewable energy such as biomass. This amount is in addition to EUR 250 million set aside by the government for sustainable energy. The government says this will lead to a saving of around 1.4 million tonnes of CO₂ in the Netherlands per year.

EPZ said today that the agreement opened a "new chapter" and allowed Borssele to concentrate on producing CO₂-free electricity safely and economically.

Borssele started operation in 1973 and is the country's only operational reactor unit. Following a number of procedural delays aimed at preventing the signing of the lifetime extension agreement, final moves against the agreement by Green and Socialist parties were rejected by the Dutch parliament on 12 June 2006.

In addition to Borssele, EPZ has a 405 MW coal-fired power plant, a 12 MW wind park and an 18 MW gas turbine.

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