

ASN's feedback of Fessenheim nuclear power plant shutdown

The year 2020 was marked by the final shutdown of Fessenheim nuclear power plant (NPP) that comprises two pressurized water reactors (PWR). As those two reactors are the first being shut down amongst the 58 PWR reactors of the French fleet, their decommissioning will provide EDF with considerable experience feedback.

Pending the decommissioning license, EDF is carrying preparatory operations in order to gradually reduce risks. Besides fuel and hazardous substance evacuation, the main operation consists in the decontamination of primary systems, a first of its kind in France. This operation has already been run in several countries, allowing ASN to benefit from other regulators' feedback.

At Fessenheim, first challenges for the licensee have started before the final shutdown. This involved the organization of staff departures and the reorganization of services while maintaining a high level of safety. ASN has performed inspections to ensure both that final operating activities were achieved in serenity and that post operational clean-out phase was properly planned and carried out. Although the situation observed during these inspections was satisfying, it was noted that the insufficient anticipation of the final shutdown decision has led to severe constraints on the planning of decommissioning preparation.

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