



JANEZ LENARČIČ

MEMBER OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Brussels, 20. 04. 2020

Honourable Members,

Thank you for your letter of 17 April 2020 concerning the fires in the exclusion zone around the Chernobyl power plant.

Commissioner Simson and I share your assessment of the need to closely monitor the spread of the fires, including from a radiological perspective, but most of all to guarantee the wellbeing of the people living and working in the area.

The Global Wildfire Information System of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) recorded significant wildfires from 3 April onwards in the area of the Chernobyl nuclear facility. The JRC, relying on the information derived from the European Forest Fires Information System, EU Copernicus and on NASA imagery, produced several reports on the extent of the burned areas. A particular focus was placed on those areas which were contaminated by radioactive pollutants after the 1986 accident, as well as on the potential dispersion of fire smoke plumes to nearby inhabited areas, such as Kiev. Two reports were made available to the European Union's Emergency Response Coordinating Centre (ERCC) on the 9th and 15th of April, presenting the information on active fires and the evolution of the fires.

Given concerns about the potential further spread of these fires in close proximity to the Chernobyl nuclear reactor, I have instructed the ERCC to activate, on its own initiative, the Copernicus Emergency Management Service on 14 April in rapid mapping mode. Reference, First Estimate, Delineation and Grading maps were produced to assess the extent of the fires and the damage sustained. These maps were shared with the State Emergency Service of Ukraine, which acknowledged that they were useful.

I was also personally in contact today with the Ambassador to the EU H. E. Mykola Tochytskyi, to reiterate that the EU can provide additional assistance to Ukraine and its people under the Union Civil Protection Mechanism, provided that the Ukrainian authorities make an official request for assistance and that the Member States and/or Participating States (Iceland, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Turkey) in the Mechanism respond with offers.

Specifically with regard to the radiation levels, the Commission is in close contact with our partners in the European Radiological Data Exchange Platform (EURDEP) and via the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). According to the latest information received, radiation levels remain within norms for the area.

The Commission will continue to closely monitor the evolution of the situation.

Yours sincerely,



Janez Lenarčič

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MEP Jutta Paulus
MEP Thomas Waitz
MEP Philippe Lamberts
MEP François Alfonsi
MEP Benoit Biteau
MEP Damien Carême
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