



**LIETUVOS RESPUBLIKOS NUOLATINĖ ATSTOVYBĖ
PRIE TARPTAUTINIŲ ORGANIZACIJŲ VIENOJE**

**PERMANENT MISSION OF THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA
TO THE INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS IN VIENNA**

Response by Ambassador Rytis Paulauskas, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Lithuania to the OSCE, with regard to the issue raised by the Ambassador of Belarus

**OSCE Permanent Council meeting No.569
Vienna, 15 September 2005**

At the outset let me make one remark on the announcement of this issue under the agenda item “current issues”. In order to reflect the subject better we would prefer it to be formulated as “plans to build a low and intermediate level short-lived radioactive waste storage facility in Lithuania”.

We noted the statement of the ambassador of Belarus and in response to it we would like to underline the following.

In the early spring of 2005 Lithuania informed the government of Belarus on its plans to build a low and intermediate level short-lived radioactive waste storage facility.

On May 14, 2005 the meeting of Lithuanian and Belarussian experts took place in Vilnius. Eight representatives from relevant institutions of Belarus participated and they were briefed at length on the legal basis with regard to decommissioning of the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant, including management of radioactive waste as well as on concrete projects connected to this. At this meeting Belarus was officially informed that the environmental impact assessment process with regard to the planned facility would commence in November 2005. In accordance with its international commitments as well as acting in the spirit of transparency, openness and neighborly relations, Lithuania will inform Belarus on the results of this assessment.

Moreover, at the bilateral high-level consultations between the Ministries of Foreign Affairs held at the end of June 2005, Belarus proposed establishing a contact group for exchange of information on all relevant environmental issues. We supported this proposal. Having all this in mind, it would be more than safe to say that all necessary bilateral instruments to address environmentally related issues are already in place. Let me note that all this is well known for the authorities in Minsk.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.
