

LESSONS LEARNED — SESSION II: GREENING BY NUCLEAR

VIII Conference — European and Western Balkan Cooperation in Energy Law

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OPENING

Before I begin, I would like to thank UPES for the excellent organisation of this conference, our panelists for their thoughtful contributions, and all of you for your attention. Let me try to sum up this afternoon's discussion in five key lessons.

LESSON 1

History is not background — it is the substance of the problem.

Dr. Bondžić showed us that Yugoslavia had genuine nuclear ambitions and that all of it was abandoned within just three years of Chernobyl, not because the technology failed, but because political consensus collapsed. That matters today, because Serbia lifted that very moratorium in 2024 — and we are, in a sense, inside that history right now.

LESSON 2

The legal and institutional foundation must come before the technology decision.

Both Italy and Norway have concluded that the conditions for a responsible nuclear decision do not yet exist in their countries — and that rebuilding an independent safety authority, a licensing framework, and a waste management plan are prerequisites, not details to be resolved later.

LESSON 3

Both the technical and the social dimensions of nuclear require planning from the very start.

Nuclear plants must increasingly modulate their output as renewables grow, which has real cost and legal consequences; and at the same time, public trust in nuclear energy is ultimately trust in the institutions which govern it — and that trust takes years to build and can be lost very quickly.

LESSON 4

Readiness must come before urgency.

The Vinča Institute identified ten prerequisites for a functioning nuclear programme: a regulatory framework, safety arrangements, financing structures, grid integration, human resource development, waste management, and more. Serbia has the scientific heritage, the institutional base at Vinča, and a legislative starting point from



2024. The question is whether those ten prerequisites will be addressed honestly, in sequence, before the project moves forward.

CLOSING

So what does all of this add up to?

Nuclear energy is back on the European agenda, driven by decarbonisation and energy security. But re-engaging with it is not a shortcut — it requires law before politics, institutions before contracts, and patience before urgency.

The technology has improved, however the fundamentals have not changed. Without serious timelines, serious capital, and the sustained trust of society, enthusiasm alone is not enough.