

Major step in unique engineering project as Chernobyl arch slides into place

New structure shields destroyed reactor 4



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Contact EBRD: Axel Reiserer

Tel: 0207 338 6741

Email: axel.reiserer@ebrd.com

Contact EBRD Kiev: Anton Usov

Tel: +380 50 352 1106

Email: anton.usov@ebrd.com

Contact VINCI: Press department

Tel: +33 1 47 16 31 82

Email: media.relations@vinci.com

Contact BOUYGUES CONSTRUCTION: Matthieu Carré

Tel: +33 1 30 60 66 39

Email: m.carre@bouygues-construction.com

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One of the most ambitious projects in the history of engineering passes a major milestone today as the arch shielding radioactive waste caused by the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear power station accident has started sliding into place.

Chernobyl's New Safe Confinement (NSC) is the largest moveable land-based structure ever built, with a span of 257 metres, a length of 162 metres, a height of 108 metres and a total weight of 36,000 tonnes equipped.

It will now be moved into its resting place over Chernobyl's reactor 4 which was destroyed in the accident 30 years ago.

The sliding is done with help of a special skidding system that consists of 224 hydraulic jacks to push the arch 60 centimetres each stroke. It is anticipated that the total skid time will be around 40 hours of operation spread over a period of up to 5 days.

The NSC was constructed in a clean area near reactor 4 of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant and will be slid over 327 metres to seal off the unit. It will make the site safe and allow for the eventual dismantling of the aging shelter currently housing the reactor and the management of the radioactive waste within the structure.

Ostap Semerak, Minister of Ecology and Natural Resources of Ukraine, said: "The start of the sliding of the Arch over reactor 4 at the Chernobyl NPP is the beginning of the end of a 30-year long fight with the consequences of the 1986 accident. The credit for construction of this one-of-a-kind technological structure goes to an expert team of engineers and builders. This is a historic step towards the improvement of environmental safety throughout the world, as well as in the Chernobyl exclusion zone. And it has only become possible thanks to immense international support. The fact that more than 40 contributing countries and donor countries united around the goal of protecting humanity from the radioactive consequences of the tragedy is another demonstration that environmental safety remains a priority for global policymakers. And I believe that the transformation of the exclusion zone into a safe area will demonstrate the change in Ukraine's overall environmental policy, too."

Igor Gramotkin, Director General of the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, commented: "For us the arch is not just 36.000 tonnes of prefabricated metal. It is 36.000 tonnes of our belief in success, of trust in our site, our people and in Ukraine."

Vince Novak, EBRD Director, Nuclear Safety, added: "This is the culmination of many years of hard work by Ukraine and the international community. The New Safe Confinement project would not have been possible without the support of the over 40 donor countries who are contributors to the Chernobyl Shelter Fund. The new structure illustrates what is possible in a spirit of determined and coordinated joint effort and thanks to the generous support of EBRD shareholders."

Nicolas Caille, project director for Novarka – the French construction consortium formed by VINCI Construction and Bouygues Construction – said: "This is a one-of-a-kind project serving the aims of the Ukrainian authorities. We are immensely proud of what we together with our partners have achieved. The New Safe Confinement shows what is technically possible. At the same time, given the circumstances, we must all hope that never again will a similar structure have to be built on the site of a nuclear accident and in a contaminated environment."

The construction of the New Safe Confinement by Novarka started in 2012 after extensive preparatory works on the ground. Because of its vast dimensions the structure had to be built in two halves which were lifted and successfully joined together in 2015. The arch-shaped structure is fitted with an overhead crane to allow for the future dismantling of the existing shelter and the remains of reactor 4. The New Safe Confinement has a lifespan of at least 100 years and will cost €1.5 billion.

MEDIA ADVISORY

High resolution photographs of the works at Chernobyl, including archive pictures, can be downloaded from this [Flickr](#) album. **Mandatory credit to EBRD**

High resolution video from Chernobyl, including drone and time-lapse footage, interviews with key players, archive and rushes from inside Reactor 4, plus a shotlist, can be downloaded from the **Chernobyl** folder on the [EBRD FTP server](#). **Mandatory on-screen credit to EBRD/Novarka**

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We will update the video folder and Flickr album with fresh material as soon as it is available to us. For any further questions, please contact Chris Booth - boothc@ebrd.com