

The process of environmental impact assessment is a control procedure that aims to summarize and evaluate the impact of a project on the environment at the stage of project planning and thus to reduce its potential negative impacts in the future. One of the main ideas of the EIA process is to avoid since the very beginning problems and confrontation which would otherwise appear in the future in connection with the planned project. This principle is particularly important in cases of transboundary assessment where communication between countries and joint consultations on the project in its early stages of planning might prevent potential conflicts and disruption of mutual relations in the future resulting from an already implemented plan. The cornerstone of a transboundary assessment is the understanding that the harmful effects of a specific project do not stop at the borders of one state, but can reach a territory of many other countries, mutual cooperation in this subject is thus with regard to environmental protection necessary.

The necessity of such a cooperation on one hand, as well as its pitfalls and difficulties on the other hand, are illustrated in the case of transboundary EIA between the Czech Republic and Austria, that is specifically in the case of the construction of the nuclear power plant Temelín. The Temelín case is interesting not only with regard to the fact that two different legal regulations of the EIA process meet there, but mainly because of the clash between two different energy concepts arises within this project, that is the Czech pro-nuclear on one side and the strongly anti-nuclear conception of Austria on the other.