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Nuclear safety in Europe following the nuclear accident in Japan

Greens/EFA motion for a resolution

The European Parliament,

– having regard the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, in particular its Articles 153 (Social), 168 (Health), 192 (Environment) and 194 (Energy) thereof;

– having regard to the Council Directive 2009/71/Euratom of 25 June 2009, on establishing a Community framework for the safety of nuclear installations;

– having regard to the Regulation (EC) 178/2002 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 28 January 2002 laying down the general principles and requirements of food law, establishing the European Food Safety Authority

– having regard to the nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in Japan,

– having regard to Rules 110(2) and 120 of its Rules of Procedure,

A. whereas the major nuclear accident in the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, subsequent to the devastating earthquake and resulting tsunami, has far reaching consequences impacting health, environmental and foodstuffs contamination, the full extent of which will not be known before years;

B. whereas the tragic events in Fukushima show once more that the 'risk zero' does not exist for nuclear, although the 'risk zero' is one of the preconditions to acceptability of nuclear given the huge consequences in case of accidents; whereas implementation of any 'stress tests' will never result in attaining such a 'risk zero';

C. whereas, in the light of the current nuclear disaster in Japan, it is imperative for the EU and its Member States urgently to move towards a fully energy efficient renewables based economy;

D. whereas both the IAEA and Euratom are committed to the promotion of nuclear industries whilst having the antagonist role of being at the same time responsible for the setting of nuclear safety standards worldwide and in the EU respectively;

E. whereas WHO is the international health authority upon which the world's people rely to establish guidelines and health standards in all areas of health; whereas the agreement WHA 12-40 signed on 28th May 1959 between WHO and the IAEA actually prevents WHO from providing essential information, from undertaking appropriate action and fulfilling its constitutional role in the area of health and radiation;

F. whereas some Member States and neighbouring countries have built - or had planned the construction of - nuclear facilities in areas of high seismic and floods risk;

1. Expresses, after the earthquake, the tsunami and the nuclear catastrophe, its complete solidarity with the Japanese people and presents its sincere condolences to the victims of this threefold disaster; commends the mobilisation, courage and determination of the Japanese people, workers in Fukushima and of the authorities in response to this disaster;

2. Notes that the Fukushima major nuclear accident is the most recent of many other nuclear related incidents and accidents, which occur year after year all over the world -including in the EU, in all types of nuclear facilities and in all reactor designs (e.g. Three Mile Island (USA), Chernobyl (Ukraine), Windsccale (UK), Tihange and Fleurus (BE), Civaux 1 and Blayais 2 (France), Phillipsburg, Krümmel and Brunsbüttel (Germany), Kozloduy 5 (Bulgaria), Paks (Hungary), Forsmark and Barseback 2 (Sweden), Kashiwazaki (Japan), etc.);

3. Notes that, although three of the six reactors in Fukushima Daiichi plant were not in operation at the moment of the earthquake of 11 March 2011, their spent fuel rods in the storage ponds were seriously damaged and contribute to the radioactivity contamination; notes also that similar events already happened in the Europe (e.g. in Paks, HU, in 2003)

4. Acknowledges that so long as nuclear plants and facilities continue to operate there will always remain a residual risk; since the possibility of a future severe accident cannot be entirely excluded, acknowledges further that it is unwise to dismiss the possibility of any undesirable accident occurring on the grounds of its remote probability alone or of the results of any 'stress test';

5. In this context, urges Member States and EU neighbouring countries to abandon their commitment to the high-risk technology of nuclear power and, for those which already use nuclear power, to start a progressive phase-out now. This implies:

- No new build of any nuclear facility, including the termination of those projects already planned or under construction;
- In the process of a progressive nuclear phase out, reactors and other nuclear facilities posing greater risks must be shut down immediately, i.e. all nuclear reactors and other nuclear installations in seismic regions or coastal areas with significant risk for rising sea level or a possibility for tsunamis, all reactors without secondary or full pressure containment, all nuclear boiling water reactors (BWR) with a single cooling system and storage of spent fuel outside of the containment and all nuclear installations built before 1980;
- An immediate ban on spent fuel reprocessing in the EU;
- The elaboration before the end of 2011 of a strategy to move all spent fuel out of pools into dry storage as soon as the residual heat level allows;
- An immediate ban on the production and use of mixed oxide nuclear fuels (MOX);

6. Asks further the Commission to enforce the implementation by Member States and EU neighbouring countries of full accidents and long-term waste management third party liability of nuclear operators and nuclear waste licensees in relation to any damage caused by such activities, including damage to the

terrestrial, water and marine environments;

7. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to urgently set out implementation plans and vigorous measures to move towards a low-risky energy economy with intermediate concrete targets to make the goal of a nearly 100% energy efficient, renewable energy based economy by 2050 a reality; insists on the upcoming 2050 Energy Roadmap to reflect this objective;

8. Calls, on the way to this energy efficient economy, to adopt and implement an ambitious energy efficiency and energy savings legal framework in order to reduce our absolute energy consumption by at least 20% in 2020, 33% by 2030 and 50% by 2050 compared to the current EU energy consumption.

9. Calls, on the way to a nearly 100% renewable economy by 2050, to increase the 2020 legally binding renewable energy target to 30% and to set a new 45% intermediate target to be achieved by 2030 for these energies to be taken advantage of;

10. Reminds that the Commission missed, in its 2008 proposal setting up a Community framework for nuclear safety[1], a clear opportunity to propose the establishment of common standards guaranteeing a high level of nuclear safety; recalls this proposal was falling under the Euratom Treaty under which the European Parliament has no co-legislative power; deplores that the EU institutions rejected at that time binding safety standards[2]; deplores further that the Member States did not even take the European Parliament's opinion of April 2009[3] into account by making the mere safety principles of the IAEA a legal rather than a voluntary requirement;

11. Welcomes the Commission intention to review the existing legal and regulatory framework for the safety of nuclear installations; asks the Commission to present its review under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union. In this context, asks the Commission to enforce the implementation by Member States and EU neighbouring countries of comprehensive, binding and effective safety standards that reflect state of the art practices on the regulatory and operational level and Best Available Technology (BAT) in all nuclear facilities until these installations are finally shut down;

12. Deeply regrets the weakness of the European Council conclusions of 25 March 2011as regards the so-called nuclear "stress tests", in particular making them voluntary;

13. Notes the Commission's proposal to introduce a complete risk and safety assessment ("stress tests") on all nuclear installations; asks, in this context, the Commission together with the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) to enforce the implementation by Member States and EU neighbouring countries of:

- A review of the safety of all exiting and planned nuclear installations, including radioactive waste and spent fuel pools, by the end of 2011 at the latest. In this context, it calls on a transparent, comprehensive and independent driven process leading to mandatory complete risk and safety assessment ("stress tests");
- Criteria, parameters and overall content shall be developed in full collaboration with independent experts mandated by all stakeholders; European Parliament and the public need full access to all documents used for those tests and regular updates; asks in this context the Commission to present by 15 April at the latest a concrete and precise timeline together with the names of the independent bodies and experts who will participate to the development of the precise criteria that will apply to these "stress tests";
- Those stress tests must not only rely on probabilistic safety analysis (PSA, PRA), but also on deterministic ones. This means to prove that any individual nuclear installation can withstand even an accumulation of rare events, including human failure.
- Every single nuclear facility which will not fulfil these tests, including the risk of a commercial

aircraft crash, a terrorist attack and cannot exclude the risk radioactive releases into the environment (PSA level 2) and for the population (PSA level 3) will be shut-down at the latest on 1 January 2012;

- Extension of the thirty year technical lifetime of nuclear facilities will be forbidden whatever the results of the "stress tests" could be;

14. Regrets the lack of and imprecise information and the slowness in informing the public and its continuous underestimation of the level of the catastrophe at Fukushima by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and by the Fukushima nuclear plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO);

15. Regrets further the dual and antagonist role of the IAEA, in promoting nuclear and in setting nuclear safety standards globally; calls on the IAEA States Members to ensure the total independence of the Agency from the nuclear industry; calls further on the UN General Assemblyto decide a clear separation between the role of promoting nuclear power and of nuclear safety;

16. Notes the importance of the dissemination of serious and independent information on the health and environmental consequences during and after nuclear accidents such as the catastrophic events in Fukushima Daiichi and Chernobyl; acknowledges that the dual role of the IAEA and the WHO/IAEA agreement signed in 1959 (agreement WHA 12-40) have prevented the dissemination of such information; calls on States Members of the WHO to put the termination of the WHO/IAEA agreement WHA 12-40, which prevents WHO of taking any initiative or action to achieve its objectives, i.e. the preservation and the improvement of health, to the vote at the coming WHO General Assembly;

17. Notes with deep concerns that increasing significant air, soil, water, food and foodstuffs contamination are reported day after day after the Fukushima accident;

18. Urges the Japanese government to enlarge the 'exclusion zone' to the regions were highly radioactivity is being measured; calls further for more transparency about the levels of radioactivity and contamination and to provide the public with regular transparent data and information on further risks, in particular as regards food and foodstuff contamination from not only iodine and caesium but also from other radio-nuclides like strontium and plutonium;

19. Asks the Commission and the Member States, under the EU regulation governing measure on contaminated food in case of nuclear accident, to immediately adopt maximum permissible levels at EU level that ensure protection of the most vulnerable population and according to scientific advances in the assessment of exposure doses and health impacts; asks further the Commission and the Member States to ensure that the main principles of regulations in this field is the high level of protection of human health and not the preservation of commercial interest or the internal market;

20. Calls on the Commission to withdraw the provisions in Commission Implementing Regulation No 297/2011 of 25 March which allow the imports of contaminated food- and feedstuffs originating in certain Japanese provinces up to the maximum levels set in Regulation 3954/87, and instead ban the import of certain categories of food and foodstuff that are imported from the contaminated regions of Japan. At the same time, compensation measures for Japanese farmers and fishermen from economic losses due to these import bans should be established;

21. Asks the Commission and the Member States to fund independent scientific programmes in the contaminated zones, be it around Chernobyl or Fukushima, in order to improve the knowledge on short and long-term consequences of irradiation and contamination of the people and the environment; asks to make the results of these programmes fully public;

22. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to an immediate and profound energy policy shift leading to a fully European energy efficient renewables based economy by 2050 at the very latest;

23. Calls on the Commission, the Member States, the European Investment Bank (EIB), the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) and other public banks to freeze public funding for nuclear fusion, including ITER, or fission, except for the decommissioning of nuclear facilities;

24. As a matter of democracy, involvement of the European Parliament, transparency and full public access to information, calls on the EU and its Member States to treat nuclear power as any other energy source under the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union; therefore asks to repeal the Euratom Treaty;

25. Asks the Commission to a separation of the tasks of its energy policies, including nuclear promotion, from its safety tasks; asks the latter to be under the responsibility of its directorates-general for Environment and Health.

26. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Commission, the Council, the governments and parliaments of the Member States, EURATOM and ENSREG.

[1] COM(2008)0790

[2] Report of the proposal for a Council Directive (Euratom) setting up a Community framework for nuclear safety – Rapporteur Gunnar Hokmark - A6-0236/2009 –3.4.2009

[3] *Ibid footnote 2*

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