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Chernobyl confernce - Day 2

On Tuesday, the conference "Chornobyl+20 – Remembrance of the future" started with a plenary session on sustainable energy. **Dr R. Loske,** Green member of the German Bundestag gave a presentation on the way towards a renewable energy future. He underlined the considerable expense involved with the nuclear alternative and pointed out that it only increases dependency and is not the answer for climate protection. For example, to double the global proportion of nuclear power, it would be necessary to build between 800 and 1000 additional nuclear power stations, which is impossible. **Petra Opitz**, form the German energy agency (DENA), emphasised how the current German law is important for the development of renewables. She then outlined the Ukrainian case. The share of renewables in Ukraine hasn't changed in the last 15 years although there is enormous potential for geothermal and biogas. She identified energy saving and energy efficiency as key factors for phasing out nuclear as well as reducing Ukrainian energy dependency. Ukraine currently consumes 2.6 times more energy for every unit of GDP than the world average. If it were reduced to the world average level, it would eliminate about a 65% of the today's national energy consumption. Should this happen, all Ukrainian nuclear power plants could be closed down and gas imports from Russia could also be reduced.

Some conclusions were then drawn after one and half-day of our alternative conference. **Rebecca Harms,** German Green MEP, gave some preliminary conclusions to the two-day conference with some clear follow-up actions points at EU level. She said: "*The 1986 Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe was followed by an information catastrophe. And in a way both catastrophes are still ongoing. Back in Brussels, we will try to force the European Commission and also the Member States to comment on the misleading figures from the IAEA, which seek to downplay the health consequences of the disaster. We have to make sure that there will be truly independent scientific research on the consequences of Chernobyl.*

Furthermore, I am convinced that the people of Belarus and Ukraine need the financial support from the international community, especially from EU Member States but, vice versa, we need the information about what is really going on around the Chernobyl Shelter Implementation Plan. I was quite shocked when I learned already one year ago that none of the interim storages, none of the waste processing facilities is going to be delivered in time. As a consequence, the fuel rods in both reactors, shut down some years after the catastrophe, still remain in the reactors. We will urge the EU Commission to organise a hearing on the unsolved problems, including the new sarcophagus."

Ralf Fucks, from the Heinrich Böll Foundation, reminded the conference that civilian and military uses of nuclear energy are just two sides of the same coin. Governments and international organisations cannot promote increasing nuclear power capacities at the same time as trying to prevent proliferation. He added that *"[ ] these vulnerable and hazardous nuclear sites represent an additional target for unscrupulous terrorist forces. Nuclear terrorism is a nightmare can be turned into reality every moment".* The economics of the nuclear option talk act as an argument against nuclear power as well: *"cheap nuclear energy is Voodoo economics".*

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