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Scientific consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe

Report of the second day of the conference in Kiev

The second day of the conference focused on the scientific consequences of the Chernobyl catastrophe. **Renate Kunast**, house leader of the Greens in the Bundestag, stated from the outset that the disaster at Chernobyl 20 years ago was not just one day, it has been an ongoing catastrophe ever since, with devastating environmental, social, political and economic consequences. She stressed that nuclear power should be confined to 'a museum'.

Dr. **Ian Fairlie**, co-author of 'The Other Report on Chernobyl Torch (TORCH)', gave a comprehensive presentation, pointing out the reasons for this unprecedented and unique accident in the history of nuclear power. He stressed the consequences on human health in Europe. This independent study is 'not rocket science' as Ian Fairlie stated but an easy-reading summary of the existing literature on the matter. The authors of the TORCH report estimated that about 30,000 to 60,000 excess cancer deaths are predicted, 3 to 9 times greater than IAEA/WHO estimate of 9000 deaths. Although most of the Chernobyl radioactivity fell outside Belarus, Ukraine and Russia (BUR), this is where the highest concentration of contamination is found. However, recent reports have predicted an even higher number of excess cancer deaths, with Greenpeace suggesting the number could be as high as 93,000.

Prof. **Dimitry Grodzinsky** of the National Commission on the Radiation Protection of the People of Ukraine raised the consequences of acute radioactivity on flora. He has observed many mutations in plants and animals due to the radioactive environment at Chernobyl.

On the other side of the street, the International Atomic Energy Agency opened its own conference with the aim of downplaying the consequences of Chernobyl. Ukrainian anti-nuclear NGOs demonstrated against the attempts of the IAEA and the Ukrainian government to ignore the lessons learned from Chernobyl and reemphasise the nuclear option.

The future of the nuclear power was the subject of the later session. Chairman, **Tobias Munchmeyer**, Greenpeace Germany, asked four questions to the panel. Where is the nuclear industry in the moment? What are the risks of nuclear power and reprocessing today? How do politicians try to get public support? What are the lessons we could learn from the Finnish situation?

Independent energy consultant, **Antony Froggatt** showed the number of reactors worldwide is stabilising. **Shaun Burnie** of Greenpeace International highlighted the unresolved environmental and proliferation risks of reprocessing. He elaborated the expense of the reprocessing technology in Japan, in particular the Tokai Mura recently opened as the most expensive building in the world. **John Large**, consultant, debunked the myth of how safe and cheap the European Pressurised Reactor (EPR), the third generation of nuclear power plant are. **Satu Hassi**, Green Member of the European Parliament and former environment minister of Finland, concluded with a scathing assessment of the Finnish decision to revive

the nuclear option, at the expense of renewables and clean modern energy options.

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