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[Press release](#) | 14.01.2016

Belgian nuclear reactors

New study confirms risks remain and reactors must be shut down

The Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament today presented the third study in a series on the Belgian nuclear reactors Doel 3 and Tihange 2, which was commissioned from materials scientist Dr Ilse Tweer. The study presents new information on flaws in the reactor pressure vessels (1) and underlines that continued operation of the reactors would be irresponsible. Commenting on the study, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said:

"Operating these two reactors, which contain thousands of cracks, is irresponsible. This study comes to the clear conclusion that there is no evidence how and when these cracks appeared in the reactor pressure vessels nor if they have changed whilst the reactor was in operation or how they might do so in the future. There is simply no evidence to support the claim by Electrabel that the flaws are 'most likely' hydrogen flakes, introduced during the manufacture of the steel and unchanged since then. The only way to determine this would be by destroying the pressure vessels.

"According to the study, the steel is of such poor quality that the pressure vessels should not have been approved for use in the reactors. To simply brush these concerns away 30 years later is scandalous.

"The study reveals a disturbingly flexible approach of the Belgian nuclear authority (FANC) with regard to test results. Uncomfortable results are declared as exceptions. At the same time, unrepresentative results are unquestioningly accepted as proof of safety. That is not a responsible way to deal with the high risk technology of nuclear power. Treating unexplained problems with a sanitised risk assessment threatens the lives of thousands of people.

"Given the safety of the pressure vessel cannot be guaranteed, the reactors should not continue to be operated. Were the vessel to burst, the consequences for the densely populated region around the reactors would be catastrophic."

(1) In summer 2012, thousands of flaws were found in the reactor pressure vessels of the Belgian nuclear reactors Doel 3 and Tihange 2, forcing their shutdown. In summer 2013, the reactors were once again put online following a positive assessment by the Belgian nuclear authority (FANC) but were again shut down in March 2014. In November 2015, there was a further positive assessment by FANC, which allowed the reactors to be again put online. This study analyses the information on the basis of which this decision was taken.

The full study can be found at www.greens-efa.eu/fileadmin/dam/Documents/Studies/Report_Flawed_Reactor_Pressure_Vessels_Doel-3_and_Tihange-2.pdf

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Rebecca Harms

Member

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