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Bulgarian nuclear referendum

Greens/EFA co-president Harms to join campaign in Sofia against nuclear new build

Ahead of Bulgaria's forthcoming referendum on whether to allow construction to resume at the Belene nuclear power plant (27 January), prime minister Boyko Borisov has made a surprising shift, calling on his cabinet and Bulgarian voters to vote "no" (1). European Greens have expressed support for the Bulgarian Greens (Zelenite) and those campaigning for a "no" vote and Greens/EFA co-president Rebecca Harms will visit Bulgaria from 23-25 January in support of the "no" campaign. Commenting ahead of her visit, **Rebecca Harms** said:

"The sensible about-turn by prime minister Borisov in calling for a vote against nuclear new build in Bulgaria is a welcome surprise. It is not enough to reject the future expansion of nuclear power however: the decommissioning of current nuclear power plants is also an essential step for safety in Bulgaria. Bulgaria must opt out of this high-risk technology and enter into a secure, future-oriented energy strategy. This means focusing on renewables and efficiency, creating new jobs through technical innovation, rather than risky old nuclear plants."

(1) The referendum to authorise the resumption of construction of a new reactor at the Belene nuclear power plant was announced by the opposition socialist party last October. Faced with rising costs and public protests against the construction in a high-risk earthquake zone, the government had put the project on hold in early 2012. Initially, the government was to campaign for a "yes" in favour of the construction of more nuclear power plants in Bulgaria.

Important events ahead of the referendum and linked with the visit of Rebecca Harms:

18 January, 11.00: Press conference of Zelenite on the announcement by prime minister Borisov in Sofia
- Georg Tuparev, co-chair of Zelenite, can be reached for comments at: +31655798196

Events with Rebecca Harms:

23 January, 18.00: Panel discussion on European energy policy at the Goethe Institute in Sofia

23 January, 19.30: Reading from Rebecca Harms' book "A Day in Fukushima, a week in Japan", Goethe Institute in Sofia

24 January, 11.00: Press Conference with Rebecca Harms and Gueorgui Kastchiev on the nuclear referendum in Bulgaria, Bulgarian News Agency (BTA) in Sofia

24 January, 18.00: Closing ceremony rally at Knyayheska Gradina park in Sofia in front of the Russian Army monument

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Rebecca Harms

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