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EU nuclear industry analysis

EU Commission outlines high risk strategy, with reactor lifetime extensions of up to 60 years

The European Commission today presented a paper setting out its analysis on the future of nuclear power in Europe (the Community Nuclear Illustrative Programme - PINC). It is the first paper of its kind by the Juncker Commission and the first since the Fukushima accident in Japan. The Greens criticised the paper for setting out an unrealistic and over-optimistic assessment of the sector, as well as playing down the costs involved, with Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** stating:

"This paper shows that the EU Commission's thinking is still influenced by nuclear supporters in key positions. The paper is a bizarre mixture of illusion and propaganda. It is alarming that the Commission sees the greatest potential for the future of the nuclear sector via the extension of reactor lifetimes by up to 60 years. This approach is grossly irresponsible for such a high risk technology.

"The Commission seriously plays down the costs of nuclear power, whether as regards new construction, security upgrades, decommissioning and waste. The emerging details of the proposed reactor at Hinkley C in the UK have made clear that nuclear new build is simply not competitive, by a significant margin. The Commission must also acknowledge this."

Greens/EFA energy spokesperson **Claude Turmes** said:

"The EU Commission is simply ignoring the reality that nuclear power can no longer compete with renewable energy sources (like wind and solar power) when all costs, including decommissioning, are taken into account. The Commission estimates a mere €623 million for decommissioning a nuclear plant, compared with the €1.7 billion estimated by the French Court of Auditors.

"The Commission acknowledges that billions of Euro required for decommissioning nuclear plants and dealing with nuclear waste are missing but makes no proposals for how this gap should be addressed. The only answer given is to prolong the lifetime of nuclear reactors. This is at odds with the EU treaties and the principle that those responsible for such costs should foot the bill."

The Greens/EFA group presented an alternative study to the Commission's PINC paper last month. The study and a summary can be found at: www.greens-efa.eu/pinc-2016-15348.html

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