Press release | 06.03.2012

Fukushima anniversary

Lessons must be learnt from ongoing catastrophe

On 11 March last year, a massive earthquake and tsunami hit Japan, resulting in thousands of tragic deaths, and causing a nuclear disaster. With the consequences of the nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima still ongoing, the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament is organising an event with participants including experts and citizens from Japan and Fukushima, to assess the ongoing disaster and the implications for Japan and Europe (1). Speaking on the eve of the conference, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said:

"One year on, the situation in Fukushima is not 'under control'. Recent temperature rises show the Fukushima facility remains unstable and highly vulnerable, with the surrounding region - beyond the arbitrary 20km 'exclusion zone' - subject to high-levels of radioactive exposure and the population left feeling abandoned.

"Japan should heed calls to open up: an international task force would be better equipped to comprehensively deal with the consequences of the catastrophe, whether as regards stabilising the reactors, protecting the local communities or decontamination. As of yet, only the International Atomic Energy Agency has been given access and it is doing Japan a disservice by playing down the consequences of the accident. Painting the catastrophe as a simple problem of Japanese technology and safety culture, as the IAEA is trying to do, is a cheap trick that is only in the interest of the nuclear industry. The IAEA should instead be concerned with the safety of the people. The EU should also be acting in the interest of its citizens' safety, rather than pandering to irresponsible industry.

"Japan is currently almost nuclear free, with only 2 of its 54 nuclear reactors currently operating. This should be used to shift to a safe and sustainable energy system. The EU can be of assistance based on its experience.

"We in Europe also need to properly learn the consequences of Fukushima. The EU nuclear stress tests have done nothing to diminish the risks of nuclear power and are instead part of a strategy to ensure the nuclear industry can continue with business as usual. Only once this high risk technology is finally abandoned can we be sure that there will be no more nuclear catastrophes like that in Fukushima."

(1) The conference takes place on 7 March. See more details: http://www.greens-efa.eu/one-year-after-311-5200.html

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Rebecca Harms

Member

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