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Press release | 23.06.2015

Hinkley Point

Austria to bring legal challenge against the European Commission

The argument concerning the construction of two nuclear reactors in the UK, at Hinkley Point in Somerset, has moved to the next round. The Austrian Government today publicised its intention to submit a formal complaint next Monday to the European Court of Justice on the UK government's plan to finance the reactors with state subsidies. The Austrian government considers this to be unlawful state aid and a distortion of competition. Greens/EFA MEP **Molly Scott Cato** welcomes the news:

"The Austrian government recognises that the European Commission is in breach of its own rules on state aid and this cannot be left unchallenged. This deal would waste vast sums of public money on a dated and dangerous technology, when we should instead be promoting a safe and sustainable energy future for Europe. The South West of England has some of the best renewable energy resources in Europe, and the region is capable of producing in excess of 100% of its energy needs through renewables alone, creating around 122,000 jobs in the process [1]. Yet the focus on Hinkley means spare grid capacity is being earmarked for nuclear. This is undermining the ability of renewable energy companies to develop alternative sources of electricity generation by denying them access to the grid capacity they require."

Greens/EFA Co-president **Rebecca Harms** comments:

"The Austrian Government is right - the European Commission has no right to be meddling on the European energy market through the use of such funds. Subsidies for nuclear zombies such as the French Areva group are economically absurd and dangerous. Without generous amounts of state aid, the high-security technology of the atom is no longer viable. The nuclear industry is clearly losing out to competition from renewable energy sources. Already today, wind and solar power are far cheaper than nuclear power. The EU's energy transition can only be possible if we promote renewables and energy efficiency rather than backing an outdated and dangerous technology."

[1] http://mollymep.org.uk/2015/04/17/power-to-transform/

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