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State aid for nuclear power

Commission indicates no change in EU state aid rules

The European Commission yesterday indicated it would not come forward with proposals to change EU rules on state aid rules, with a view to facilitating state aid for nuclear power as had been mooted (1) The Greens welcomed the outcome of the Commission's orientation debate, with Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** stating:

"Yesterday's outcome in the Commission will hopefully draw a line under the unsavoury debate on facilitating state aid for nuclear power. Nuclear power has been around for decades and in that time leaned heavily on public funding to guarantee its existence; it should not be now given special status to allow it to receive more taxpayers' money. It is wrongheaded to compare the situation of nuclear power (an established technology) with renewable energy technologies (which have only really emerged in the recent past) when it comes to considerations on national support schemes.

"Nuclear power already benefits from major privileges vis-a-vis other energy sources. Nuclear plant operators do not have to meet all the costs of dealing with nuclear waste; and it is the only energy technology that is not liable for the costs of potential accidents, as the catastrophe in Fukushima again confirmed. Commissioner Oettinger now has to deliver on his promise to come forward with a legislative proposal on nuclear liability."

Green energy spokesman **Claude Turmes** MEP added:

"The change in the Commission's tone with regard to possibilities for promoting and supporting renewable energy is also welcome. Any changes to EU rules on state aid for energy should not undermine existing EU legislation, notably the EU renewable energy directive and its provisions on support schemes. On the contrary, the Commission should be trying to support this. Yesterday's outcome is an important first step in this battle.

"Next week, the Commission will present proposals on state intervention in the energy sector. Based on current drafts, it seems the Commission is seriously underestimating the amount of state support received by nuclear power, notably by playing down insurance costs - this must be increased. The drafts clearly indicate where Commissioner Oettinger's loyalty lies in any case."

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