



**Federation of Young European
Greens**

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The Federation of Young European Greens (FYEG) calls for an end to nuclear power

Policy paper as adopted during the General Assembly 2011, Luxembourg.

On April 26th 1986 an explosion and fire occurred at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, in what is today Ukraine. The accident released large quantities of radioactive contamination into the atmosphere, which spread over much of Western Russia and Europe, causing devastation and destruction to the environment and human life over a very wide area and is regarded as the worst nuclear power plant accident in history.

Now, 25 years later, a nuclear crisis in Japan caused by the cutting-off of cooling water supply to several reactors of nuclear power plants located in Fukushima, in the aftermath of the devastating earthquake is keeping the world on edge.

As a result of reduced water, partial melt-down occurred in the reactors, causing a potential nuclear catastrophe, with the workers having to avert this scenario facing incredibly dangerous radiation levels.

The Japanese government and electric company specialists were only reluctantly disclosing information such as potential size of accidents or the level of radioactive exposure. Large areas around the Fukushima I power plant needed to be evacuated and will remain inhabitable for a long time. Radioactive steam was released to the atmosphere, excess-cooling water drained into the pacific ocean. Once again this disaster showed that nuclear risks have no borders.

Both crises demonstrate the folly of nuclear power, a source of energy that is fundamentally unsafe, unsustainable, and expensive. Nuclear fails to meet the global need to fight climate change and find solutions for energy shortages now and in the future. Also, the continued risks of natural disasters or pre-meditated attacks striking the plants mean that even as the technology improves, the safety of those in proximity to these plants as well as of the surrounding nature can never be guaranteed. The Fukushima disaster showed that the nuclear risks cannot be handled safely, and that the accumulation of separate risks was not even foreseen by the operators.

Furthermore nuclear energy is not sustainable in light of the scarcity and potential depletion of necessary resources - primarily uranium. There also remains a very serious problem of how to dispose of the millions of cubic meters of radioactive waste produced. Most of this waste must be stored in interim storage facilities for many decades which raises serious safety concerns.

The handling of the radioactive waste further increases the risks for incidents and accidents, and the exposure of personnel and population to radiation incurred when problems do arise causes irreparable damage to individual health and the environment. Even after more than 50



years of using nuclear energy, no country has developed an implemented and functioning waste management strategy for all kinds of radioactive waste. Moreover, many States continue to ship nuclear waste for reprocessing purpose in another country, exposing the population to any accident or terrorist attack. Last, many hidden costs are not yet taken into account to calculate the overall and true price of nuclear energy: final waste disposal and nuclear power plants decommissioning will lead to an important raise of energy price in the households' budget.

For FYEG and many others, this means that there is simply too much at stake.

FYEG calls for an EU wide nuclear phase out to revolutionise energy production. Several recent energy scenarios show that ambitious energy efficiency and renewables strategies, combined with a modernisation of the energy infrastructure, make a phase out of nuclear as well as coal possible by 2030.

This involves an immediate freeze of all new reactors, either planned or under construction. Binding and effective safety standards at the highest level must be implemented across the EU for those reactors that will still operate in the medium term. These standards must be set by the European Commission and not only by national authorities, and be checked by independent regulatory authorities.

In the process of the nuclear phase out, reactors posing heightened risks must be given priority, such as reactors in seismic regions, reactors without a secondary containment, and all those built before 1980. We also demand full transparency on the aftermath of the Fukushima disaster and the permanent consequences of the Chernobyl accident, still affecting the life and health of millions of people living in the contaminated territories. Independent studies must be set to ensure that the highest level of knowledge will be gathered on irradiation and radioactive contamination risks, to improve remediation processes and to prevent any further loss if another disaster occurred.

Crucially, no further EU public money should be spent on nuclear energy and the international ITER project for nuclear fusion must be stopped. Currently almost 5 times as much EU funds are allocated to nuclear research as compared to research for renewables and efficiency, in the Euratom Framework Programme of the EU Commission.

FYEG supports measures to increase energy efficiency, to fairly decrease energy-use and -waste, and investment in research and development of means for renewable energy production.