



Statement by the National Action Committee against Nuclear Power following statements by Minister of State Luc Frieden :

Too dangerous, too expensive and too slowly available - nuclear power is not a solution!

The Luxembourg government must continue to campaign vehemently against nuclear energy at national and European level!

Luxembourg, 26 March 2024

In Europe and beyond, the nuclear lobby is currently stepping up its efforts to promote nuclear power as an important part of a sustainable energy mix due to the climate crisis. Some pro-nuclear states in the EU, above all France, also want nuclear energy to be subsidised by EU funds.

The arguments put forward for this on the political stage, in the press and on social media are as follows: Nuclear power is safe, cheap, climate-friendly and indispensable for a rapid decarbonisation of the energy supply. Nuclear power would also make Europe less dependent on gas imports.

In contrast, the actual practice of using nuclear power for civilian purposes over the last few decades proves that such a path would be associated with considerable problems and risks and cannot fulfil the intended goal either today or in the future. As with the climate crisis, the risks and costs associated with both the production of nuclear power and the processing and final disposal of nuclear waste are being passed on to future generations.

Too dangerous: Catastrophic accidents with large releases of radioactive pollutants are possible at any time in nuclear power plants. This is demonstrated not only by the so-called super-GAUs, e.g. the Chernobyl and Fukushima disasters, but also by a large number of smaller breakdowns and accidents. The follow-up costs of the Fukushima disaster continue to rise and are now estimated at between 223 and 758 billion US dollars, depending on the study! There is also a permanent risk of weapons-grade fissile material (highly enriched uranium or plutonium) being misused for terrorist purposes and for illegal nuclear bomb programmes in some countries.

In addition, the final disposal of long-lived, highly radioactive waste from the reactors - regardless of whether large or small quantities are involved - must be safely guaranteed for over a million years (!). A thing of impossibility!

* Mouvement Ecologique, Greenpeace, OGBL, LSAP, déi gréng, Forum, déi jonk gréng, DP, FGFC, LCGB, Lëtzebuurger Guiden a Scouten, Fairtrade Lëtzebuerg asbl, déi Lénk, Klima-Bündnis Lëtzebuerg, Eurosolar, Syprolux, natur&ëmwelt, Ligue CTF, Piraten, JSL, déi jonk Lénk.



Too expensive: Despite immense financial support from public funds in the past, the commercial utilisation of nuclear energy has never made the leap to a competitive energy source. Even the ongoing operation of existing nuclear power plants is becoming increasingly uneconomical. In addition, there are considerable and currently largely unknown costs for the dismantling of nuclear power plants and the aforementioned "eternal" final disposal of radioactive waste, which must be borne by the public. The costs for new nuclear power plants have risen steadily since the 1960s and economic viability has not been achieved despite "nuclear-friendly" laws, state subsidies and guarantees.

Analyses of the energy industry show that meeting ambitious climate protection targets (global warming of 1.5° to below 2°C) is not only possible without nuclear power, but is also significantly more cost-effective and more citizen-friendly with renewable energies.

Too slow: In view of the stagnating or declining construction of nuclear reactors (except in China), a planning and construction period of two decades (and more), cost explosions of up to x4 and x5 (EPR in Flamanville and in Finland) and foreseeably little technical innovation over the next 15 years, nuclear power cannot play a role in the period relevant to combating the climate crisis. Nuclear power covers only 10% of global electricity demand and only 4% of primary energy.

The number of reactors would therefore have to be multiplied from the 420 or so nuclear reactors currently in operation to several thousand, including costs, risks and uranium supply. In reality, however, the 53 ongoing construction projects worldwide will be offset by around 200 shutdowns by 2030.

The SMR concepts ("Small Modular Reactors") and nuclear power plant concepts of the "4th / 5th generation" that are currently being hyped are still technically immature and a long way from commercial deployment. For a comprehensive study commissioned by the German Federal Office for the Safety of Nuclear Waste Management, researchers recently analysed various reactor types under development. The clear conclusion: the well-known problems (too expensive, too much nuclear waste, too vulnerable to the climate crisis ...) will probably not be solved by the new reactor types either. Which is why the argument of wanting to invest in further research "open to all technologies" is merely a very expensive dead end.

Too short-sighted: nuclear power plants need enormous amounts of cooling water when they are in operation. Nuclear power plant sites are therefore always located near rivers or coasts. If the temperature of the water rises during prolonged periods of heat, this becomes problematic - because the water is then simply too warm for cooling. Another problem during heatwaves is the falling water flow rate of rivers. In France, for example, nuclear power plants have already had to be shut down several times because the neighbouring river no longer carried enough water. Nuclear power plants are therefore not immune to the climate crisis.

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Too unwieldy: The greatest challenge in the necessary restructuring of our energy supply lies in overcoming the resistance ("lock-in") of the old system dominated by fossil-fuelled power plants. Nuclear energy is not suitable for supporting this transformation process, but actually blocks it: by blocking innovation and investment. In addition, the nuclear turnaround is also a necessary condition for a successful search for a final storage site.

Conclusion: Nuclear energy is not in a position to make a meaningful contribution to the development of a climate-friendly energy supply in view of the climate crisis and the ever-shrinking response window. Nuclear power is too dangerous, too expensive and too slow to become available; it also blocks the necessary socio-ecological transformation process, without which ambitious climate protection targets cannot be achieved. The argument that the expansion of nuclear energy would make Europe's energy supply more independent does not stand up to closer analysis either, as the necessary raw materials also come from politically unstable and undemocratic regions and states such as Niger or Kazakhstan.

For all these reasons, nuclear power cannot be a solution to the energy and climate crisis. We therefore appeal to the Luxembourg government not to recklessly jeopardise the national consensus against nuclear power of recent decades, but to continue - in the tradition of past governments of all party political colours - to oppose nuclear power plants in neighbouring border regions AND the promotion of nuclear energy with the help of European public funds.

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