

Adopted resolution

European Greens challenge the decision to build a new NPP in Belarus

At the beginning of 2009, the Belarusian government announced its decision to go ahead with the construction of a nuclear power plant (NPP). This decision has been adopted without any previous public consultation. Last summer construction works were launched in the Grodno area (Astrovets region), as planned in the abovementioned decision.

Independent researchers have checked the accuracy of the environmental impact assessment (EIA), and have further collected information and data, which prove that the planned NPP, during both its construction and its operation, will pose serious environmental and health risks, which have not been taken into account. Hence, the decision, based on such an EIA, to build a nuclear power plant in the Astravets region is illegal.

More particularly, the Statement of the EIA gives an incomplete and misleading assessment of the impacts of construction and operation works on local residents and the surrounding environment, potential accidents and incidents. Information about the main characteristics of the project parameters, including the use of natural resources, waste generation, physical parameters, the technology used, is more often than not untrue or, at best, misleading. One of the most serious misrepresentations is that emissions of radionuclides in case of potential accidents are underestimated by hundreds and even thousands times. Furthermore, the area which may be affected both in case of ordinary NPP operation and in case of accidental releases, is defined incorrectly.

Under a non-democratic regime, such as that of Belarus, citizens' scrutiny and control of the operation of the future NPP will be non-existent. Lack of transparency poses further questions as to the actual safety standards to be applied throughout the NPP lifetime. The officials responsible for the security of NPP can hide the true situation and emergencies from the higher authorities, as was the case at the Chernobyl NPP.

There were already a number of violations of the Aarhus Convention recorded during the decision-making process concerning the Grodno NPP, namely that the public was not allowed to participate fully throughout the different stages of the process, as the Convention requires. It is indicative that the majority of the Belarusian population, according to numerous opinion polls, rejects nuclear power.

European Greens

- argue that the Government's arguments in favor of nuclear power plant construction in Belarus were not substantiated, and this, in a country that suffered so much from Chernobyl, is particularly irresponsible and shameful.
- recall that the share of radioactive contamination as a result of the Chernobyl accident accounted for 70% in Belarus.

European Green Party calls upon the Belarusian authorities to immediately stop the development of nuclear programs.