



Stop the Akkuyu Nuclear Plant

The European Green Party (EGP) is against the use of nuclear activities for energy security and/or low carbon energy production. Already the EGP and the Greens/EFA Group in the European Parliament have called for the European Commission to keep nuclear activities outside of the EU Taxonomy, the new green language for environmental sustainable economic activities. Even though nuclear energy emits relatively little CO₂ per kWh, it does not pass the EU law's requirement to avoid significant harm to other environmental objectives, like sustainable use of water or prevention of pollution. This becomes clear in the case of the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant. The control mechanisms in the contract, between Turkey and Russia, are not clear.

The impact of a failure in the safety systems at such a plant or an earthquake is a high risk with inevitably catastrophic consequences for the region. The Russian- financed Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant in southern Turkey sits on a major plate tectonic fault line. The Akkuyu-Mersin region is particularly subject to earthquakes and has repeatedly experienced earthquakes of a size of over 6 on the Richter scale; the power station is to be sited only 25 km from an active seismic fault which has provoked strong reactions from environmental organisations and experts in the field. In case of a nuclear accident, not only the area of Akkuyu would be in danger, but also Cyprus, the Greek Dodecanese region and the whole of the south-east Mediterranean region. Even the everyday operation of a nuclear plant represents a danger for human beings, aquatic life and the environment in general due to its radioactive waste and the thermal pollution of seawater. Following explanations from the Russian constructing company Rosatom, that owns 51% of the shares and thereby exercises the control over the plant, waste products are supposed to be transported by air to Russia for treatment and brought back to Turkey to be buried. However, further to the technical environmental and safety issues, risks are significantly higher due to the political instability in the region and beyond. To be more accurate, the term 'peaceful use' of nuclear power is practically meaningless, especially in view of the recent revisionist policies of Turkey, which threaten the stability in the Aegean and the Eastern Mediterranean.

Within the perspective of the adequate use of renewable sources' energy potential, Turkey does not need to rely on nuclear power. The environmental impact assessment studies have not been fully documented – having not considered all aspects – and furthermore, have not been carried out using a legally sound procedure. It is noteworthy to mention that a number of accidents and fire explosions have occurred during the construction of the plant. This highlights the inadequacy of the safety measures taken, if any. In addition, hundreds of workers of construction firms downed tools over unpaid wages.

The whole issue now needs to be considered in the light of recent developments in the area, especially in Ukraine, following Russia's invasion of the country. The nuclear power plant in Mersin Akkuyu is built and operated by Russia, which aims to increase its presence and influence and meet its geostrategic goals in the Eastern Mediterranean with this activity. Especially against this background and Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine, which is against international law, the only consequence can be that Turkey stops the Akkuyu project.



At least since the Gezi-movement in 2013 environmental mobilization has been seen as illegitimate, criminal activity. There, the protesters expressing disagreement with the destruction of nature and common spaces as well as with the oppressive regime, the increasingly authoritarian rule, and the restriction of rights and freedoms. Too often environmental activists are targeted and arrested simply for peacefully exercising their right of freedom of expression, association and assembly. While there are enough significant environmental risks to call on the Turkish Government to stop the construction plans for the Akkuyu nuclear power plant, there is another possibility to increase the pressure on stopping further construction. Rosatom, the Russian construction company responsible for building the Akkuyu, has not been part of any EU sanctions. Rosatom provides the equipment, materials and services needed to construct the plant. Phasing out collaboration with Rosatom could put more pressure on Turkey to stop the construction of the Akkuyu nuclear power plant.

The European Green Party, in line with the relevant resolution of the European Parliament of April 2016, **calls** *on the Turkish Government to stop the construction plans for the Akkuyu nuclear power plant.*