



Stop the Akkuyu Nuclear Plant

1 The disaster at the nuclear plant in Fukushima (11 March 2011) is a strong example of what we
2 may expect from a nuclear power station. The plant could not resist the impact of a 9-degree (on
3 the Richter scale) earthquake and the consequential tsunami. Can such events be considered as
4 accidents which may always happen? How risky is it to build nuclear plants in seismogenic areas
5 and why not encourage the use of renewable energy resources? This challenge applies in the case
6 of Akkuyu. The European Green Party (EGP) is against the use of nuclear activities for energy
7 security and/or low carbon energy production. Already the EGP and the Greens/EFA Group in the
8 European Parliament have called for the European Commission to keep nuclear activities outside
9 of the EU Taxonomy, the new green language for environmental sustainable economic activities.
10 Even though nuclear energy emits relatively little CO2 per kwh, it does not pass the EU law's
11 requirement to avoid significant harm to other environmental objectives, like sustainable use of
12 water or prevention of pollution. This becomes clear in the case of the Akkuyu Nuclear Power
13 Plant. The control mechanisms in the contract, between Turkey and Russia, are not clear.
14

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

33 Within the perspective of the adequate use of renewable sources' energy potential, Turkey does not
34 need to rely on nuclear power. The environmental impact assessment studies have not been fully
35 documented – having not considered all aspects – and furthermore, have not been carried out
36 using a legally sound procedure. It is noteworthy to mention that a number of accidents and fire
37 explosions have occurred during the construction of the plant. This highlights the inadequacy of the
38 safety measures taken, if any. In addition, hundreds of workers of construction firms downed tools
39 over unpaid wages.
40

41 The whole issue now needs to be considered in the light of recent developments in the area,



43 especially in Ukraine, following Russia's invasion of the country.

44 The consequences of this endless war, including seizing the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power – i.e.
45 Europe's largest nuclear power plant – and blackmail over the use of nuclear weapons, underline
46 the nuclear threat we are all facing. The nuclear power plant in Mersin Akkuyu is built and operated
47 by Russia, which aims to increase its presence and influence and meet its geostrategic goals in the
48 Eastern Mediterranean with this activity. Especially against this background and Russia's war of
49 aggression against Ukraine, which is against international law, the only consequence can be that
50 Turkey stops the Akkuyu project.

51

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

64 **The European Green Party**, in line with the relevant resolution of the European Parliament of April
65 2016, **calls on the Turkish Government to stop the construction plans for the Akkuyu nuclear power**
66 **plant.**