

# European Petition Against Nuclear Energy

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## **MORE THAN HALF A MILLION EUROPEANS HAVE SIGNED ALREADY!**

*In order to fight the comeback of nuclear power, we have already collected half a million signatures against nuclear power in Europe. Support the campaign: by signing the petition below, by spreading the word and by collecting signatures from friends and colleagues!*

## **The petition**

We, the undersigned, urge the European Commission, the European Parliament and all EU member states to:

1. Stop or prevent the construction of new nuclear power plants and facilities in the European Union;
2. Launch a plan to abandon nuclear power within the European Union;
3. Invest massively in energy saving and the development of renewable energies; and
4. End the Euratom Treaty which massively supports nuclear power in Europe by means of public funding.

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## **We continue collecting signatures!**

You can sign the European Petition against nuclear power on this website [see above link] or on paper. The total number of signatures counted so far is shown on this site, and every day new filled-in signature lists come in. Thank you so much for all your work!

We will continue collecting signatures until the 50<sup>th</sup> birthday of the Euratom Treaty, the EU Treaty to promote nuclear energy, in March 2007. Please make sure to send us the signatures you have collected before March 1, 2007.

You can send your full petition lists to:

1 Million Petition - Atomstopp  
Landstrasse 31/II/223 4020

Linz -Austria

*This campaign is organised by Atomstopp, Friends of the Earth Europe, Global 2000, Sortir du Nucléaire, WISE, Women for Peace; supported by more than 600 NGOs.*

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## **Nuclear power is the problem, not the solution!**

Europe must stop wasting taxpayers' money to protect a dangerous and expensive technology. 20 years after the Chernobyl disaster, nuclear power remains the most dangerous mechanism for electricity generation. Nuclear energy is also no solution to climate change. And, globalised terrorism makes nuclear power stations and the uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear material a serious security hazard. MORE ABOUT NUCLEAR POWER [see below]

Governments across Europe turn a blind eye on the fact that the majority of the Europeans is opposing nuclear energy. By collecting one million signatures against nuclear power in Europe, we will make sure that the voice of the citizen will be heard.

**One million signatures against nuclear power!**

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## **WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NUCLEAR POWER**

Don't forget to tell your grandchildren to make sure they let their grandchildren know how to instruct their grandchildren to show their grandchildren how to clarify to their grandchildren in what way their grandchildren could enable their grandchildren to look after our nuclear waste.

Europe must stop wasting taxpayers' money to protect a dangerous and expensive technology. 20 years after the Chernobyl disaster, nuclear power, despite its widespread use also in Europe, remains the most dirty and dangerous form of energy.

Instead of nuclear power, Europe needs massive investments in energy efficiency and renewable energies. Any sensible energy policy must have these two elements at its heart.

When collecting signatures for the 1 Million against Nuclear Power campaign, you will meet all kinds of arguments in favor of nuclear energy. In this double-paged sheet of Questions and answers we explain why these arguments are invalid.

The nuclear industry hopes for a nuclear come-back — despite its dangers, despite its astronomical costs. A disaster like the Chernobyl accident, now 20 years ago, can happen anytime anyplace, and since Chernobyl, there were 22 serious nuclear accidents around the world.. A solution for the long-term storage & treatment of radioactive waste has yet to be found. Radioactive material from nuclear power generation can be used to build nuclear weapons. And, globalised terrorism makes nuclear power stations and the uncontrolled proliferation of nuclear material a serious security hazard.

And nuclear power is economically insane. Not a single nuclear power plant was ever built without direct or indirect subsidies, paid by taxpayers and increasing the profits of the nuclear industry. Nuclear power is also no solution to climate change: each Euro invested in nuclear energy would save ten times more greenhouse gases if it was invested in energy efficiency measures instead.

Despite this, and despite the fact that many EU Member States and the majority of their citizens are not in favour of nuclear energy, the so-called EURATOM Treaty officially obliges all EU countries to promote nuclear power. Clearly, this treaty must be abolished, it being an old relic that has no role to play in a modern Europe.

## **6 REASONS AGAINST NUCLEAR ENERGY**

Europe does not need nuclear power. As various scenarios show, Europe's future energy needs can be met from other sources while still drastically reducing greenhouse gas emissions in order to limit climate change. Europe needs massive investments in renewable energies as well as in cutting back energy waste through increasing efficiency. The technology is available & affordable — and creates many more jobs than any nuclear power scenario.

### **1. Nuclear power is dangerous, safety is a myth**

Nuclear power remains the most dangerous form of energy. A disaster like the Chernobyl accident, now 20 years ago, can happen anytime anyplace. The history of the Nuclear Age is a history of accidents. 20 years after Chernobyl, people are still suffering from health problems caused by the accident. An accident can occur at any nuclear reactor, causing the release of large quantities of radioactivity into the environment. Even during normal operation, radioactive materials are regularly discharged into the air and water. Transports of large quantities of low and intermediate level wastes are also increasing the risks to populations.

Although nuclear power is a hazardous business, the nuclear industry hardly has any financial liability. In the case of a nuclear disaster, most of the damages will be paid by society and not the companies' insurances. None of the various international conventions on nuclear damage currently in force are designed to make operators, or owners, of nuclear facilities liable for damage they cause.

### **2. Nuclear power is a deadly legacy for our children**

A solution for the long-term storage & treatment of radioactive waste has yet to be found. Highly radioactive spent fuels need to be isolated from the biosphere for hundreds and thousands years. Nuclear waste is produced at every stage of the nuclear fuel cycle, from uranium mining and reactors to the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel. Radioactive waste remains dangerous for hundreds and thousands of years and radiation can lead to cancer and birth defects.

There is not a single safe disposal option for the highly radioactive waste produced by nuclear power stations worldwide. In almost all countries waste is stored in bunkers, below surface or above ground, while the world desperately researches ways to safely store it for thousands of years to come. These 'intermediate' storages are expensive and require safety measures that are not comparable to any other waste or industrial process. As there is no safe way to store these wastes for the necessary periods of time, this alone should be enough reason to abandon nuclear power as a viable energy source.

#### FURTHER READING

Radiation Basics; Nuclear Information and Resource Service

### 3. Nuclear power is financially insane

If the European energy market was a level playing field, where energy pricing would reflect the true costs of producing energy from different sources, nuclear power would be economically insane. All countries using its technology have seriously underestimated the full costs of nuclear power. Not a single nuclear power plant was ever built without direct or indirect subsidies, paid by taxpayers and increasing the profits of the nuclear industry. Also, nuclear power will not be able to compete with renewable energies without huge amounts of state aid. That nuclear power today produces on third of Europe's electricity is due to political that created favourable market conditions: Over the last 30 years, the EU's governments spent more than €45 billion for nuclear research.

As already said, Most of the costs of a (however likely) serious nuclear accident will be borne by society and not by the plant operator's insurance. There is a huge gap between the expected costs of decommissioning and waste storage of the currently operating plants in the EU and the money set aside for that purpose by the operators. The hidden costs of waste disposal, decommissioning of plants at the end of their lifespan (the decommissioning costs alone could be as high as 500 billion Euro for the power stations currently operating within the EU) and provisioning for accidents have never been adequately accounted for, and will result in a massive burden on future economies and generations.

#### FURTHER READING

Unfair Aid: The Subsidies Keeping Nuclear Energy Afloat; Nuclear Monitor; WISE 2005 [PDF]

EU Nuclear Liabilities: The failure to uphold the polluter pays principle and the case for effective state aid control through new internal market legislation; Briefing Paper by Friends of the Earth Europe; July 2005 [PDF]

### 4. Nuclear power is no solution to climate change

In order to avoid the most catastrophic effects of global warming, the world will have to cut back its emissions of heat-trapping greenhouse gases by around 50% by 2050. Since by far the most of emissions happen in the energy sector, the nuclear industry hopes to use the climate crisis to stage a nuclear revival, arguing that nuclear power is cheap, emission-free and thus has a role to play in securing low-emissions supply of energy.

But nuclear power is not at all emissions free, if emissions in relation to uranium mining, transportation, plant construction and decommissioning and waste storage are included in the calculation. It has been calculated that for example in the UK with its 23 nuclear reactors, doubling capacity would cut emissions by no more than 8% . Globally, tripling nuclear capacity by 2050 might contribute 12.5%-20% to the necessary emission reductions. But such scenarios — one plant every two weeks — have no link to political reality, and the costs would be astronomic.

Compare this to the 20% reduction of energy consumption (and emissions) the European Union can achieve by 2020 (30 years earlier) at zero net costs, as the European Commission has pointed out in a “Green Paper” on energy efficiency. Also, nuclear power comes with high opportunity costs (since every Euro can be spent only once): Every Euro invested in new nuclear power could save ten times more emissions if it was invested in energy conservation measures instead — thus also securing energy supply ten times cheaper.

## **5. Nuclear weapons are the flip side of nuclear power**

Radioactive material from nuclear power generation can be used to build nuclear weapons. The global expansion of nuclear power could well contribute to an increase in the number of nuclear weapons states. So far India, Israel, South Africa, Pakistan, North Korea, and of course the five official nuclear weapons states (United States, Russia, United Kingdom, France and China), have developed arsenals of nuclear weapons using their "peaceful" nuclear facilities.

Nuclear power reactors have produced enough plutonium to build 160,000 nuclear weapons or an even wider range of radioactive materials for use in 'dirty bombs'. The spread of nuclear technology significantly increases the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation. Smuggling of nuclear material, including from civil nuclear programs, also presents a significant challenge. The International Atomic Energy Association has recorded over 650 confirmed incidents of trafficking in nuclear or other radioactive materials since 1993. In 2004 alone almost a hundred such incidents occurred.

## **6. Nuclear power dependent on limited & dirty resources**

Nuclear power plants run on uranium fuel. And uranium - like oil, gas and coal - is a finite resource that will only last a few more decades, at most 50 years (with the current level of use). A significant increase in the use of nuclear power will quickly result in a shortage of nuclear fuel. The reprocessing of spent fuels has already been proven to be no solution. Reprocessing is a complicated and hazardous chemical process that creates an enormous amount of radioactive waste. Besides that, reprocessing is a very uneconomical technology, as past examples have clearly demonstrated. Nevertheless there are two reprocessing units in Europe: Sellafield (UK) and La Hague (France). Both are known to be the biggest sources of radioactive pollution in the European environment through the release of huge quantities of radioactive liquid effluents into the sea and gaseous discharges into the air. And last but not least, the production of weapons from plutonium separated in reprocessing facilities is relatively simple, dramatically increasing the risk of nuclear weapons proliferation.

## **FURTHER READINGS**

To be find on:

<http://www.million-against-nuclear.net/background/6reasons.htm>

“Nuclear Power Fact File” online poster campaign published by WISE

Nuclear Reactor Hazards: Ongoing Dangers of Operating Nuclear Technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century; Greenpeace report; April 2005 [PDF]

A selection of nuclear accidents since the Chernobyl disaster

A Backdoor Comeback: Nuclear energy as a solution for climate change? Nuclear Monitor; WISE; February 2005 [PDF]

Target 2020 - Policies and Measures to Reduce Greenhouse Gases in the European Union; Wuppertal Institute; commissioned by WWF; September 2005 [PDF]

New Energy Policy for Europe: Sticking to the Dirty Dinosaurs? Friends of the Earth briefing on the future energy policy of the European union; March 2006 [PDF]

The Real Face of the IAEA's Multilateral Nuclear Approaches: The Proliferation of Nuclear Weapon Material & Environmental Contamination; Greenpeace report; September 2005 [PDF]

A.Q. Khan, Urenco and the Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons Technology: The Symbiotic Relation between Nuclear Energy and Nuclear Weapons; Greenpeace report; May 2004

View online : [To sign the petition](#)