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MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION

further to the Commission statement

pursuant to Rule 37(2) of the Rules of Procedure

by Paul Lannoye, Nuala Ahern and Claude Turmes

on behalf of the Verts/ALE Group

on nuclear safety 15 years after the Chernobyl accident

European Parliament resolution on nuclear safety 15 years after the Chernobyl accident

The European Parliament,

- having regard to its previous resolutions on the Chernobyl accident,
 - having regard to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) concerning the closure of Chernobyl between the G7 countries and the Ukraine, signed in Ottawa on 20 December 1995,
 - having regard to Directive Euratom 96/29 on basic radiation standards¹,
 - having regard to the report: ‘Exposures and Effects of the Chernobyl Accident’ from the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR)²,
- A. whereas the accident in unit four of the Chernobyl nuclear power station on 26 April 1986 caused the immediate deaths of workers, heavily contaminated the whole region in today's Russia, Ukraine and Belarus, spread nuclear isotopes over most of the globe, and has contributed to ongoing serious health problems in the region, and also throughout Europe,
- B. whereas to date, the officially acknowledged health impact is limited to 33 people dead and 1 800 thyroid cancers in children and teenagers, and whereas the 2000 UNSCEAR report on the matter merely reinforces this attitude, though these claims are heavily and continually disputed by victims, experts and scientists in the field, and whereas official bodies like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and United Nations Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) take a very different position,
- C. whereas the 15th anniversary is to be marked in Kiev by a conference organised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the EU, attended by the relevant international authorities, but without the participation of the WHO, and whereas WHO is to have its own conference in Kiev in June,
- D. whereas the Ukraine has complied with the MOU and closed Chernobyl on 15 December last, and the G7 and EU have agreed to fund the completion of two further nuclear reactors at Khmel'nitski and Rivne, known as K2R4,
- E. whereas reform of the Ukrainian energy market is slow, and the cost of financing K2R4 is predicted to have a significant impact on energy prices and on the nuclear safety budget, in a country already beset by economic problems, not least from the economic consequences of the Chernobyl accident itself, in addition to the health and environmental problems,

¹ Official Journal L 159 , 29/06/1996 P. 0001 – 0114.

² (Annex G) 49th Session of UNSCEAR, Vienna, 2-11, May 2000, published in Vienna, UN, New York and Geneva 2000.

- F. whereas although Belarus has no nuclear power, 23% of its territory was contaminated to a level above 1 Ci/km², where 2 million people lived in 3 668 towns and villages (including 500 000 children), and 1.6 million hectares of land and almost 1.7 million hectares of forest were contaminated with caesium-137; whereas since then only 135 000 people have been evacuated and only 260 000 hectares of land have been excluded from food production; the cost to Belarus is estimated at \$ 235 billion, or 32 times its national budget in 1985; Belarus still spends 20% of its national budget on the consequences, while it is estimated that 300% is needed, so that the state has forced or allowed people back into the heavily contaminated regions, all of which has contributed to the strain on democracy in that country, including the repression of scientists working in this field,
- G. whereas the contamination of regions near the Ukrainian border has further added to the generally difficult environmental circumstances of Russia and the health problems of the Russian population,
- H. whereas the accepted model of radiation was unable to predict the emergence of the illnesses now arising as a result of radiation,
- I. whereas, in particular, new evidence relating to Chernobyl fall-out suggests an error of a factor of 100 in the estimated impact of that fall-out¹,
1. Welcomes the fact that the Ukraine has honoured its commitment to close the Chernobyl nuclear power plant before the end of 2000; urges the EU to support the Ukraine in radically improving its energy intensity, so as to permit it to end its reliance on nuclear power altogether; also urges the Ukraine to improve cash collection, so as to at least distribute the social and economic impact of the inevitable electricity price increases associated with the financing of K2R4, and to ensure that safety funding is not compromised, should that project actually proceed;
 2. Calls for significant EU economic aid to be made available to the Ukraine and Russia, to enable them to cope with the significant health costs arising as a result of the Chernobyl accident, and in the case of Belarus, insists that such aid be made conditional upon the immediate release from house arrest of Prof. Yu. I Bandazhevsky, and the financing of both his work and that of Prof Nesterenko, two of the leading scientists in the country in this field, as well as extensive support for NGOs in this field; that work should include helping the population, especially children, including those with thyroid cancer, as well as reducing the impact of radiation contamination on health;
 3. Calls for continued and increased efforts to restore the environment in the most contaminated regions, utilising the information and expertise of the IAEA and other bodies;

¹ 'Increases in Leukaemia in Infants in Wales and Scotland Following Chernobyl: Evidence for Errors in Statutory Risk Estimates'. Chris Busby PhD, Molly Scott Cato PhD, Aberystwyth, Wales: Green Audit. Occasional Papers No 98/2, June 1998, published in *Energy and Environment* Vol. 11 2000, No. 2 127-139; E. Petridou, D. Trichopoulos, N. Dessypris, et al. (1996), 'Infant leukaemia after in utero exposure to radiation from Chernobyl,' *Nature*, 382: 352-353; J. Mangano (1997), 'Childhood leukaemia in US may have risen due to fallout from Chernobyl', *British Medical Journal*, 314: 1200; Michaelis J, Kaletsch U, Burkart W, and Grosche B, (1997) 'Infant leukaemia after the Chernobyl Accident'; *Nature* 387, 246.

4. Based on the important new scientific evidence suggesting doubts about aspects of the radiation risk model, particularly as concerns the effects of the Chernobyl fall-out, requests the Commission to arrange an epidemiological study of the effects of Chernobyl throughout wider Europe as a whole; also calls on the IAEA and UNSCEAR, as well as ICRP and Euratom, to re-examine the risk model;
5. Regrets the tendency of national and international authorities responsible for nuclear matters to close down debate, to avoid difficult argumentation, to call for peer-reviewed material, while not using it themselves, and regards this tendency as highly irresponsible, given the plight of the victims of nuclear accidents including Chernobyl, and the tendency of this approach to increase the risk of future victims; greatly regrets the reports of IAEA and UNSCEAR, which are based on partial and selected evidence; is particularly concerned about agreements put in place by IAEA with other UN institutions, Euratom and others, with a view to controlling all of their activities concerning the possible adverse effects of radiation;
6. Therefore calls for such agreements to be amended, so as to only oblige those other bodies to keep IAEA informed¹; given that the health aspect of Chernobyl is now the crucial question, appreciates the fact that WHO is holding its own conference in June, and is not participating with the IAEA in the Chernobyl 15th Anniversary Conference;
7. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council, the Health Ministers of the Member States, the Commission, the President and Parliament of Russia, the President and Parliament of the Ukraine, the President and Parliament of Belarus, the Secretary General of the UN, the IAEA, UNSCEAR and the WHO.

¹ e.g.: Resolution on Amending the Agreement between the International Atomic Energy Agency and the World Health Organisation (Res WHA12-40, 28.5.59), passed on October 25 2000 by the Canadian Professionals for Health Association.