



Dear Commissioner Füle,

Dear Commissioner Oettinger,

In the end of this week on April 26 the Chernobyl catastrophe has its 27th anniversary. Even 27 years after the nuclear accident, the situation in the exclusion zone is still far from resolved. At the same time the Euratom facility is currently preparing to grant financial support for the Ukrainian nuclear power plant safety upgrade programme. The support foreseen amounts to EUR 300 million and another EUR 300 million were already allocated by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)<sup>1</sup>.

The programme foresees upgrades to all 15 Ukrainian nuclear units including those whose design lifetime expires before the programme can be implemented. Those upgrades are a precondition for old reactors to be allowed to operate beyond their design lifetime. While officially billed as a safety upgrade program of existing nuclear units, evidence<sup>2</sup> suggests that Ukraine is using the project as an essential step for the extension of the lifetime of these units.

We, the undersigned MEPs, are concerned about EU financial involvement in the Ukrainian nuclear power plant safety upgrade programme for the following reasons:

1. The EU funding **will help re-start a 30-years old Soviet type reactor that is currently stopped**. Unit 1 of the South Ukraine NPP has been shut down on March 5, 2013 and will not be able to receive license prolongation unless an extensive list of measures is implemented, including 43 from the safety upgrade programme<sup>3</sup> proposed for EU financing.
2. Crucial safety shortfalls at Ukrainian nuclear units identified by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) a decade ago have still not been addressed **and the state nuclear regulating authority (SNRIU) lacks the power to ensure safety modernizations are implemented timely** thus allowing Ukrainian reactors to operate without fully complying with internationally recognized nuclear safety standards.

<sup>1</sup> The EU and EU member states own around 60 percent of shares of EBRD. Decision of the EBRD Board of Directors from March 12, 2013;

<sup>2</sup> Energoatom's Complex (Consolidated) Nuclear Power Plants Safety Upgrade programme (2010) confirms more than half of activities "...are planned as part of the lifetime extension preparatory programme...". All these measures are listed in appendixes to "Ecological Assessment Main Report (version 30.09.2011) prepared as part of EBRD's due diligence process, and among them for example "32302 Elaboration of a work program to monitor reactor vessel metal performances based on specimens to extend power units operation lifetime".

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.snrc.gov.ua/nuclear/uk/publish/article/205102>



3. **The programme in connection with the high voltage transmission lines that also receives EBRD funding will enable nuclear electricity exports from Ukraine to the EU.** In order to import the cheap electricity from old nuclear power plants, the EU exports the risks of the use of nuclear reactors to Ukraine. The ongoing operation of the old Soviet-era nuclear units beyond their design lifetime will increase the possibility of nuclear accidents<sup>4</sup> threatening the health and safety of the Ukrainian citizens, but ultimately also of the citizens of the EU.

Apart from the risks connected to the prolongation of the lifetime of old nuclear reactors, **these measures will do little to reach the goal of reducing Ukraine's dependency on energy exports from Russia** as the Ukrainian nuclear programme is fully dependent on Russia. Technology, fuel, spent nuclear fuel (SNF) treatment, storage of radioactive waste<sup>5</sup> is provided by Russia. The operation of nuclear units beyond design lifetime will prolong and deepen this dependency.

Also strategies for a more sustainable energy system for Ukraine will be hampered by supporting Ukrainian government's plan to keep relying on its aging nuclear reactors fleet. To achieve a safe and secure energy supply, Ukraine needs to put its efforts towards increasing energy efficiency, harvest the possibilities of energy savings and increase its share of renewables instead of clinging to its ancient nuclear reactor fleet.

For these reasons, **we, the undersigning members of the European Parliament, urge you to reconsider EU financial support to the Ukrainian nuclear safety upgrade programme.**

Best regards,

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<sup>4</sup> Meyer, N., D. Rieck, and I. Tweer. *Alterung in Kernkraftwerken*. Greenpeace, Hamburg, 1996 (revised version 1998).

<sup>5</sup> Russia provides SNF treatment and temporary waste storage for 3 out of 4 operating nuclear power plants – Rivne, Khmelnytsky, South Ukrainian NPPs.