



Adopted resolution on Nuclear Phase-Out, on Reducing Europe's Dependency on Oil, on Climate Protection and Sustainable Energy-Supply¹

Introduction

Austria is one of the 12 EU countries that do not have nuclear power plants on their territory. The other 11 are Greece, Ireland, Denmark, Portugal, Luxembourg, Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Cyprus, Malta and Italy; another five countries have made a political decision for nuclear phase-out: Sweden, Spain, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany; only eight of the 25 EU-countries want to keep on using nuclear power: France, Great Britain, Finland, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Hungary.

By a referendum in 1978 the Austrian public decided to phase-out nuclear power in the country before the relevant Austrian plant had even been switched on. By now all Austrian political parties support the Austrian no-nuclear-strategy and have officially declared on several occasions that their goal is a nuclear phase-out in Europe. Austria also has a comparatively high rate of renewable energy sources (approx. 23 % of overall energy use).

With that in mind the Austrian EU-Presidency in the first half of 2006 should be used to start a new European Initiative to phase-out nuclear power plants and to increase the use of renewables and energy-efficient-technologies.

Reducing Europe's dependency on oil

A number of studies have recently highlighted the impact of rising oil pricing on economies – the so called oil-GDP effect. The International Energy Agency (IEA) estimates that every 10% increase in the price of oil causes a loss of 0.5% of global GDP. The price of oil has risen more than 50% in the last year alone. If the impact of high oil prices is serious on the most developed economies, it is even more damaging on less developed countries. For less developed economies high oil prices consume foreign currency reserves and can rapidly lead to social disorder.

Today's high oil prices are a consequence not only of higher demand by emerging economies like India and China and geopolitical instabilities in oil-producing countries. Among geologists an intense debate on the so-called 'oil peak' has begun. The peak theory is based on the presumption that at a certain date in the future the demand for oil will outstrip production. When this happens the price of oil will rocket with dramatic consequences on the world economy. Experts estimate Peak Oil could happen as early as 2008, the more optimistic geologists from the big oil companies maintain that it will not happen before 2025. Even if the truth lies somewhere in the middle, an oil peak around 2015 is such a threatening possibility that politicians must act now. Uncertainty about the real state of oil supply is, in any case, grave enough to lead Goldman Sachs to claim that we can soon expect oil prices of over \$100 a barrel.

Europe's dependency on oil-imports will raise till 2030 up to 90% according to EU-commission. Reducing this dependency must be a top-priority for EU and member states.

Nuclear Phase-Out

¹ Based on the report by Claude Turmes, Rebecca Harms and Michael Cramer (Greens/EFA MEPs for Luxembourg and Germany): „Reducing Europe's dependency on oil: A contribution to the jobs, innovation and sustainability challenge“, April 2005

European Nuclear Industry often argues, that nuclear Power is a solution for energy-supply and climate change. The Greens have the clear opinion that nuclear not the answer but a threat. Since the accident at NPP Chernobyl it is clear, that the enormous risk through NPP is not to be justified. The lack of economic justification and the growing knowledge and transparency on the environmental and social effects of NPP are strong arguments for a nuclear free European future.

The promotion of nuclear energy has an exceptional position within the EU due to historical reasons. The EURATOM -Treaty is one of the founding treaties of the European Union. The EURATOM-Treaty says little or nothing concerning nuclear safety or disposal facilities. Despite the fact that over the last 50 years public opinion towards NPP has changed dramatically, the treaty is still valid. The activities of the nuclear-industries have been displaced to Eastern Europe, where old and unsafe NPP stay in operation longer due to upgrading-programmes financed by Western countries and companies.

The European Parliament has suggested to phase out the Euratom Treaty after 50 years in operation (2007), the same time scale as for the ECSC and to coincide with the start of the 7th R&D Framework programme. Austria was one of the countries proposing on a new Intergovernmental Conference dealing with this issue.

Climate Protection

With climate change, there are two main items on the agenda for 2006:

- the preparations for the 2nd phase of the EU Emission Trading Scheme
- international negotiations for commitments beyond the Kyoto Protocol

Furthermore, the period 2008-2012 is coming nearer, and much needs to be done inside the EU to achieve its own Kyoto target. According to Commission's 2004 Review, 12 of the 25 Member States are not on their linear path towards their individual Kyoto target. The main reason why this figure is not even higher is that 7 New Member States are "profiting" from a steep decline of emissions in the nineties, which however is not at all due to moving towards an energy-efficient society model.

Sustainable Energy Supply

Efficiency improvements in transport and housing sector are the key responses to the oil crises in the next years. If 80% of the oil consumed in EU is in the transport sector, then it will be no surprise that the most urgent solutions to the problem of high oil prices will come from that sector. Whereas measures like speed limits and rationalising of gasoline – as proposed by the IEA – might be employed if the oil price crisis gets even more serious, there are less radical medium term measures that will have more impact. Because the lifespan of cars in the EU is relatively short (four to five years on average), the most important single need in the transport sector is a set of measures to curb the fuel consumption of new cars. Both fuel standards and a higher share of bio-fuel as short term measures will have to be accompanied by a mid term policy to optimise the efficiency of transport systems. Reducing the demand for transport by rethinking the urbanisation of our big cities, and develop innovative logistical solutions for goods will have be complemented by investment in a shift in the transport mode from car, lorry and air plane to public transport systems.

New investments in upgrading the public transport systems within and between big towns would not only reduce the dependency of Europe's economy on oil, but are also necessary to curb our climate change emissions and to reduce the health risks caused by air pollution. Such a win-win-win policy could also lead to higher employment – not only in the construction of infrastructure – but also coming from more transport service oriented approach to mobility.

Forty per cent of EU energy use is in the housing sector; most of it based on fossil fuel consumption with 20% coming from oil. Europe has an innovation gap in this sector. While it is technically proven that firstly,

new houses can be designed in a way that greatly reduces the need for heating and cooling and secondly, that this energy can be easily covered by renewables, most of the new build and the vast majority of the existing building stock does not make the most of modern technology.

As part of its 'energy package', the Commission in December 2003 tabled a proposal for a directive on energy efficiency and energy services. The draft is designed to increase savings up to the point when energy is sold to end-users - whether private households or the public sector. It proposes that all member states save at least one per cent more energy per year, leading to around six per cent annual energy savings in 2012. The proposal is part of EU attempts to reduce its dependency on imports and is expected to contribute to climate change mitigation efforts made under the Kyoto Protocol. The Parliament on 7 June backed mandatory targets for savings in energy sold and distributed to final consumers, whether public or private. MEPs have voted for more ambitious targets than those initially planned by the Commission, proposing that a total of 11.5% savings be achieved between 2006 and 2015. The Commission had proposed an overall annual average target of 1% only - a 9% overall cut by 2015. But on June 28th national governments scrapped every binding element of a related earlier proposal aimed at increasing energy savings on the retail side. The ministers rejected the proposals and replaced them with indicative targets only. In some way though, member states would be "obliged to take measures" to achieve a 6% reduction in energy consumption over a six-year period starting at an undisclosed date. Moreover, ministers also scrapped the Commission's suggestion to set higher targets for the public sector - at 1.5% per year - and replaced it with an assertion that governments ensure the public sector plays an exemplary role in fulfilling the directive's requirements.

While energy efficiency is the area with the biggest potential for reducing oil consumption in the next 15 years, Europe should not neglect the development of renewable energies. The costs of supporting faster market penetration of renewable energies are largely offset by the societal benefits they generate.

RESOLUTION

The European Greens,

- calling for a shift in the energy policy of the EU-countries towards renewable energy sources, efficient energy use and energy saving,
- calling for a leading role of the EU in worldwide climate protection,
- support nuclear phase-out within the European Union and will make strong efforts at the level of the European Commission and the European Parliament for the below measures to be implemented,
- call upon the Austrian EU-Presidency to organise preliminary discussions on reform of the Euratom treaty,
- call upon the European Commission to stop granting further Euratom loans and to withdraw the proposal from 2002 to increase the loan ceiling from currently 4 billion Euro to 6 billions.

The European Greens also

- ask the Austrian EU-Presidency to take the lead concerning an initiative with the following measures to be implemented:

I. New Legislation with binding targets on:

- average fuel consumption of cars
- maximum consumption of cars
- a directive on renewables in heating and cooling systems
- setting of mandatory EU targets for renewables for the year 2020

- Furthermore binding targets should be implemented in the ongoing negotiations on the directive on energy end-use efficiency and energy services at least in the form as proposed by the European parliament in June 2005.

2. A European Marshall plan for energy financed by the EIB

Enhancing the system efficiency of transport and housing will need considerable investment in:

- public transport in cities
- train infrastructures both for passengers and goods
- refitting the existing building stock
- modernising and building new central district heating and cooling systems
- renewable energy technologies
- enhancing energy efficiency in existing buildings
- supporting innovative architecture with modern construction and energy technologies (low energy houses)
- putting the EIB in charge of the supply of funding schemes and cheap credit
- coordinating European policy in the building sector to trigger growth and employment. Instead of sending billions of Euro outside Europe to pay for oil and gas these large sums would be invested in European manpower and technology, thus giving a push to EU's economy while reducing the overall energy costs in the long run.

Such an investment program would, in the short term, create thousands of new jobs and in the long term reduce the costs for energy in Europe and thus enhance Europe's competitiveness.

3. Closing the innovation chain through investing in human resources

The knowledge of policy makers at all levels; investors, SMEs, architects and engineers and of the broader public on the technologies which are available on the market to reduce the energy demand and produce renewables, is crucial to speed up the penetration of the best available technologies but also the best organisational methods

This information gap could be reduced through the

- Energy Intelligent Europe Program budget which is a part of the new EU Competitiveness and Innovation Program (CIP)

4. An external policy on efficiency and renewables

The success of the Bonn Renewables Conference in 2004 has shown that Europe has the possibility of positively influencing transport and energy decisions in other parts of the world. A strategic alliance with emerging economies like China, India and Brazil on efficiency and renewables could trigger better results for Europe's security of supply than the current dialogue with oil supplying countries.

5. Promoting Nuclear Phase-Out in the EU-Countries

- Develop an EU-wide concept for a nuclear phase-out programme, aiming at the closure of the last EU-NPP till 2020.
- Change of the Euratom-treaty to a treaty promoting and determining a EU-nuclear phase-out
- Initiate a Conference of the Euratom-member-States to decide upon a reform of Euratom-treaty
- Re-orientate the Euratom-research-programme towards nuclear phase out
- Use Euratom-Funds for nuclear phase-out projects
- No EU-Funds (Euratom, Export credit agencies, etc.) for nuclear programmes in EU, but instead financial support for nuclear phase-out projects
- No upgrading projects and no lifetime extension of NPP
- Undelayed closedown of the most dangerous reactors (Chernobyl, Bohunice, Kozloduy, Ignalina)
- Absolute transparency of nuclear policy (information and involvement of NGOs and citizens in time before decisions)
- Initiative for change of the statutes of IAEA in direction of nuclear phase-out

- No double standards: Higher safety-level for the “West”, and lower for the “East” would inhibit progress in nuclear safety and would extend lifetime of unsafe NPP
- No electricity exports to the EU from high-risk reactors
- Public Participation process and Environmental Impact Assessment has to be conducted before any nuclear project starts
- Environmental and social rules for how uranium fuel is acquired to protect environment and indigenous populations in mining areas

6. Climate Change

- promote EU agreement on an emission trading scheme that, from 2008, will deliver a substantial reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from the involved sectors, within the EU itself;
- ensure that EU will lead the global community in working towards ambitious global reduction targets, on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities, effective to achieve the EU’s ambition of limiting global warming to below 2°C compared with 1990; stresses that the latest research shows that more significant emission reduction is necessary than earlier believed in order to achieve the 2 degrees target
- tackle the increasing impact of transport: the promotion of real measures to reduce the need for mobility as well as environmentally friendly mode shifts