

Press Release

Nuclear and fossil gas are unsuited to tackle rising energy prices in the EU - renewables and energy efficiency are the only true solution

Brussels, 26 October 2021

According to the most recent 2021 World Nuclear Industry Status Report, the share of nuclear energy in global electricity generation continued its steady decline, decreasing from a peak of 17.5 percent in 1996 to 10.1 percent in 2020.

While there is some net nuclear capacity increase globally in 2020, but “the 0.4-gigawatt increase was minuscule in comparison with the gains made by renewable energy” (Dawn Stover | October 1, 2021). Yet, the clear conclusion of the 2021 World Nuclear Industry Status Report is that “nuclear is irrelevant in today’s electricity capacity new-build market.”

The Global Energy Review 2021 of the IEA concluded that “the share of renewables in global electricity generation jumped to 29% in 2020, up from 27% in 2019.” Nuclear energy in almost 70 years of existence could never reach such a share.

“Yet, the nuclear industry is like a turbo vacuum cleaner of monstrous dimension when it comes to “hoover” public financing from cradle to - still not really existing - graves and a harmful legacy of nuclear waste for thousands of years to come”, underlines EREF Director Dörte Fouquet.

Against this background it is a very bad joke, that France, Finland and Member States from Central and Eastern Europe - and maybe Sweden - are calling again today during the extraordinary Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council in Luxembourg to include nuclear (as well as fossil gas) in the options for sustainable financing under the currently discussed draft delegated acts of the EU Commission under the Taxonomy Regulation of the EU.

EREF President António Sá da Costa: “EREF welcomes that the Commission proposed social recommendation and tax measures in order to ease the stress for European citizens and SMEs to cope with the current increasing gas and electricity prices” - (“Tackling rising energy prices: A toolbox for action and support”).

This import dependency crisis shows the necessity to go much faster in order to change our societies and activities towards renewable energies. It is not the hour to change the market mechanisms. EREF fears that a complete ambush of the energy market legislation would rather be a cow-tow to a speculative and political pressure from outside the Union and might endanger the stepping up of the Fit-for-55 package, a programme for change towards decarbonisation and sustainability which we urgently need and with much more vigour.

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