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Nuclear energy

Greens criticise Finnish nuclear power push

The Finnish parliament has given final approval for two new nuclear power reactors. The decision follows scandalous technical and financial problems in the Olkiluoto 3 reactor, which is still under construction, and a process that overlooked many risks, procedural mistakes and economic facts. The government managed to pressure the parliament into a quick approval before the summer, limiting the access to specialist advice.

Commenting on the decision, Green MEP **Heidi Hautala** (Finland) said:

"This hasty decision by the Finnish parliament is a dangerous and potentially costly mistake, which defies much of the evidence presented in the process. There were clear warning signs throughout the process, for example the clear conflict of interest among high officials, while the cosy relationship between the companies involved and the political elite was confirmed by financing scandals during the campaign. The entire process was clearly not guided by good governance."

Green MEP **Satu Hassi** (Finland) added:

"The favourable terms provided to the nuclear industry in Finland are highly dubious. The EU Commission is investigating one of the benefits given to the nuclear companies, namely the fact that power companies can sell electricity to their shareholders below market price. This in practice means reduced taxation for these companies. The electricity not needed by the shareholders can be sold by them to the markets with huge profits. No other industry sector has such a benefit. This is an incentive to invest in nuclear power in Finland."

"Another subsidy to the nuclear industry is the limited liability the companies have to bear: in the case of a severe accident it is the taxpayers and the victims who bear the bulk of the cost. The rules governing liability has not been updated."

"These subsidies give an unfair benefit to an energy model that is unsustainable, creates very few jobs and does not develop our domestic expertise in renewable energy sources, which are rapidly expanding in the world market."

Rebecca Harms (Germany), chairperson of the Greens/EFA group in the European Parliament said:

"It is regrettable that the Finnish parliament does not trust modern sustainable energy solutions. In recent years renewable energies have become a booming business in many countries. Furthermore, while other industries have struggled during the economic crisis, the renewable industry has continued to grow. The decision to invest in a high risk technology of the past instead of focusing on the new"

alternative energies of the future leaves Finland as a developing country in the energy sector. Even more worryingly, Finland will be exporting nuclear energy and will also have to take responsibility for the extra nuclear waste. This is a dangerous move, especially as there is no safe nuclear waste solution available at the moment - if ever."

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