

FORATOM welcomes UK Energy Review's push for new nuclear fleet

FORATOM, the trade association representing the European nuclear industry, welcomes the conclusions of the British government's recently published Energy Review and, in particular, its historic decision to support the building of a fleet of new nuclear power plants in Britain. The decision on nuclear new build, which is part of a strategy that includes a major boost for renewable energies and a drive for greater energy efficiency in the home, is aimed at helping address a projected 30% shortfall in the country's energy needs following the impending closure of coal, gas and nuclear power plants. It recognises the need to ensure security of energy supply in the face of the UK's increasing dependency upon imports (the UK imported 10% of its gas last year and this figure could rise to 90% by 2020). It also acknowledges nuclear energy's role in combating climate change and helping the government to reach its target of reducing carbon emissions by 60% by 2050. Trade and Industry Secretary, Alistair Darling, emphasised that a mix of energy supply is essential and that the UK should not be over-dependent upon one source. He then underlined the government's new approach to nuclear as a central part of the overall energy mix: "New nuclear power stations could make a significant contribution to meeting our energy policy goals...nuclear does mean we can generate electricity without carbon emissions."

The UK Energy Review that was presented to the British Parliament yesterday promotes a basic three-pronged strategic approach:

- *The building of a fleet of new nuclear power stations:* The private sector will "...initiate, fund, construct and operate new nuclear plants and cover the costs of the decommissioning....and their full share of waste management costs." The exact number of plants to be built will be determined by market forces because, as the latest studies have proven, subsidies for nuclear power are not necessary – making it one of the most economic of all energy options. The government will also ensure that the planning process for new power plants is speeded up
- *An increase in the total amount of energy produced in the UK from renewables from 15% to 20%.*
- *A fundamental push to promote greater energy efficiency in British households by cutting "the 7% of electricity currently used by domestic appliances left on standby"*

Responding to the Energy Review, Keith Parker, Chief Executive of the NIA (Nuclear Industry Association), stressed that the strategic document represents a turning-point in Britain's approach to resolving the twin problems of security of energy supply and climate change: "The decision to support new nuclear plants is a timely recognition of how the UK urgently needs more nuclear generated electricity to meet rising energy demand in the UK, to help combat climate change and to counter the threat of increasing dependency upon imports. It is also a major boost for the UK's nuclear industry and shows that the government has confidence in its capacity and readiness to deliver a new generation of safe, state-of-the-art and profitable nuclear plants."

Setting the UK decision within the overall European context, Santiago San Antonio, Director General of FORATOM, emphasised how the decision taken by the British government has special significance: "We applaud the groundbreaking decision of the British government to support the building of a new generation of nuclear power plants. It is a highly significant step since the UK was the first country to go nuclear, back in 1956 and is now reinvesting in nuclear again. It also reflects the nuclear revival that is taking place across Europe, where some countries like the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany are openly questioning the validity of their nuclear phase-out policies and others - like Bulgaria, Finland, France and Romania - are expanding their nuclear activities. Nuclear energy also plays an important role in combating climate change by reducing the overall level of CO2 emissions. It would be inconceivable for the future energy policy of the EU to move forward without nuclear as one of its pillars. Nuclear is not the only solution, but there is no solution without it."

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