

■ Press Release

European nuclear industry responds to nuclear accident in Japan

15/03/2011

The European nuclear industry representatives that took part today in the European Commission (EC) meeting on the assessment of the Japanese nuclear events agreed on the following statements:

- We sympathise with the thousands of victims of the earthquake and tsunami and with their families. Our thoughts are with them. We praise all the efforts made by the nuclear workers at the Fukushima nuclear power plants and the Japanese authorities to limit the consequences of this accident. We are prepared to provide any assistance upon request.
- We welcome the initiative by the European Commission, which shares competences, together with EU Member States, in fields covered by the Convention on Nuclear Safety, to organise today's extraordinary meeting to discuss the implications of the on-going nuclear events in Japan.
- We can fully appreciate the concerns of EU citizens. That is why today's meeting is an important first step in rebuilding public confidence in nuclear technologies in Europe.
- In this context, until we have a better understanding of the technical implications of the on-going nuclear events in Japan, we need to refrain from making any premature ("knee-jerk") policy decisions that could have significant implications for Europe's energy future.
- Nuclear operators in Europe can confidently claim that all existing power plants in operation are safe.
- In light of the on-going situation in Japan, a number of European utilities have already begun a process to reassess the safety of their nuclear power plants.
- Therefore, it is imperative that an international, or at the very least, an EU level approach, is undertaken to analyse the consequences of the Japanese nuclear accident, and to develop a common framework to reassess the safety of nuclear power plants in the absolute best delay. The European nuclear industry is ready to contribute to this initiative.

- We believe that nuclear energy has been and will continue to be a key element in meeting EU's energy needs, CO₂ reduction and competitiveness objectives. The role of nuclear power must be debated in an objective and non-ideological way.
- Despite this tragic accident, we should continue to maintain nuclear energy's contribution to the European electricity market, whilst incorporating the lessons to be learned from Japan.
- All nuclear stakeholders have a responsibility to ensure the highest-level of safety of all existing and future nuclear installations.

For further information, you can contact Christian Taillebois at FORATOM: Tel: +32 478 21 64 98; Email: christian.taillebois@foratom.org.