

Nuclear security

The European Liberal Democrat and Reform Party, convening in Stockholm, Sweden, on 30th and 31st October 2008:

- Recalls the nuclear catastrophe in Ukraine in 1986. On 26 April reactor number four at the Chernobyl plant exploded, resulting in a fire that sent a plume into the atmosphere resulting in radioactive fallout over an extensive geographical area. This covered parts of the western Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, Western Europe, Northern Europe and North East America.

- Notes that it is hard to assess the exact extent of the catastrophe. The authorities of the former Soviet Union, which had embarked upon Glasnost, were quick to revert to their old style of secrecy and forging figures. This Soviet-era cover-up, which to some extent, has been continued by Russian authorities, makes it difficult to identify the number of victims.

- Furthermore notes that the grim account emerging from the meltdown is approximately 20,000 dead and 200,000 severely disabled out of the 500,000 ordered to the emergency site. Approximately 8 million live in contaminated areas today, suffering from alarmingly high rates of thyroid cancer, child deformation, mutations and miscarriages. These are only some of the grave health related issues stemming from the catastrophe.

- Calls upon all its members not to forget the ultimate sacrifice made by many ordinary Ukrainians, Russians and Belarusians in order to reduce radioactive pollution. Due to their efforts, Western Europe and other areas have been spared some of the worst consequences of the catastrophe.

- Reminds all its members that nuclear power plants, however attractive they may seem in the short term in reducing CO2 emissions and increasing security of energy supply, could, if the modernisation efforts undertaken are not pursued, constitute a risk to humans and the environment. This risk has been substantially reduced since the mid-1980s, but it will not be completely eradicated in the foreseeable future. In addition, efforts to develop renewable sources of energy and to conserve energy and improve efficiency should thus be reinforced in order to meet the future demand of energy in a sustainable and safe way.

- Acknowledges that the use of nuclear power raises safety and security concerns. Chernobyl and other nuclear accidents show that transparency must be assured in order to enhance safety at nuclear installations, safety for the environment and to provide exposed populations with correct information crucial to their safety. However, it may be necessary to curb transparency in order to enhance security from terrorist attacks and abuse

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of radioactive material. Striking a sound balance between these concerns poses a challenge to open and free societies that are based on fundamental liberal values.

- Acknowledges that more research has to be done for the fourth generation nuclear power, by which reactors produce less nuclear waste and therefore security can be assured more easily.

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