



MAG. JÜRGEN CZERNOHORSZKY

AMTSFÜHRENDER STADTRAT FÜR
KLIMA, UMWELT,
DEMOKRATIE UND PERSONAL
VON WIEN

President of the European Commission Ms. Ursula von der Leyen
Rue de la Loi / Wetstraat 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

April 23, 2021

Subject: Nuclear energy has counter-productive effects to climate policy

Dear Ms. President von der Leyen,

I am writing to you as the chairman of Cities for Nuclear Free Europe (CNFE). CNFE is a network of cities – some of them capitals or regional capitals – and big local authorities in Europe, who are committed to a new fossil-free, nuclear-free future. With 33 member cities, we are representing a total number of more than 14 million inhabitants.

We have learned that several European states are persistently pleading that nuclear power can make a contribution to a European climate policy and therefore should be supported with European funding.

We as the Cities for Nuclear Free Europe think that nuclear power, just like fossil fuels, has to be excluded from any form of public financing for several reasons. We list these reasons below in this letter.

The most important reason is that research has shown that funding nuclear energy is even delaying an effective climate policy.

In October last year, the University of Sussex has published a study, which can be summarized as follows: If countries want to lower emissions as substantially, rapidly and cost-effectively as possible, they should prioritize support for renewables, rather than nuclear power. This is the finding of an analysis of 123 countries over 25 years by the University of Sussex Business School and the ISM International School of Management. The adoption of nuclear power did not achieve the significant reduction in national carbon emissions that renewables did – and in some developing nations,

nuclear programs actually pushed carbon emissions higher. The study also finds that nuclear power and renewable power do not mix well, when they are applied together: they tend to crowd out each other, because they need different infrastructure.

Using nuclear as a temporary solution, risks setting nations on a path of higher emissions than if they went straight to renewables. The study authors propose that by cutting out nuclear altogether, these renewable gains could be even greater. In certain large country samples, the relationship between renewable electricity and CO₂-emissions is up to seven times stronger than the corresponding relationship for nuclear (<https://www.sussex.ac.uk/news/research?id=53376>).

As stated above, there are more reasons why nuclear energy should be banned from Europe, instead of being financially supported by European funding. Other reasons not to support nuclear energy are:

Nuclear power is by no means carbon neutral.

Regarding the carbon footprint nuclear energy shows no pertinent advantages compared to renewable sources today. With inevitable lower uranium ore grades in the future the relation is going to shift further to the disadvantage of nuclear energy in the years to come.

The City of Vienna conducted a comparison of the scientific literature available on the carbon footprint of nuclear energy accompanied by a calculation of the Austrian Energy Agency (AEA). The results of the project are available in German language on the webpage of the AEA (<https://www.energyagency.at/projekte-forschung/energie-klimapolitik/detail/artikel/energiebilanz-der-nuklearindustrie-ueber-den-lebenszyklus.html>).

For nuclear energy, Europe is heavily dependent on the import of uranium.

2019 Russia- origin uranium supplied 19.8% of the natural uranium delivered to the EU operators, followed by Kazakhstan (19.6%), Niger (15.3%), Australia (14.4%) and Canada (11.6%). European uranium delivered to EU utilities originated in Romania, covering approximately 2% of the EU's total requirements.

Nuclear power is not economically viable.

A study of the DIW (Deutsches Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung) concludes that the average 1.000MW nuclear power plant has an economic loss of 4.8 billion euros. The building of new NPPs is economically not viable and even the operation of existing NPPs can become uneconomic under free market conditions, as shown in the USA.

Nuclear power plants are not safe.

In the densely populated continent of Europe, there is no room for nuclear power plants and the consequences of possible accidents.

Climate emergency.

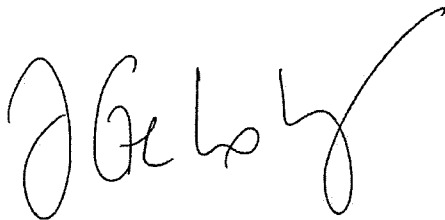
Spending resources on new nuclear, which is unlikely to be built in time and to the amount required in order to have a significant positive impact on climate change, is not an effective use of public money.

Long-term consequences.

The issues of radioactive waste and decommissioning of nuclear plants are still not solved. All reasons mentioned are based on numerous scientific research, which CNFE would be happy to supply if needed.

Considering all these aspects, on behalf of the members of our network I appeal to you to support the pathway leading to an innovative sustainable climate friendly future for Europe and exclude nuclear power from any European lending or funding program.

Yours sincerely,



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