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Health effects of the Chernobyl disaster in Europe: 20 years after, review and lessons for the future

Motion for a resolution
presented by Mr Jacquat and others

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only the members who have signed it

1. The whole of Europe remembers the Chernobyl disaster on 26 April 1986, its tragic immediate impact on the local population and the fears for the future that arose from the contamination with iodine 131 and caesium 137 throughout Europe.
2. The Assembly has already considered the question of the health effects of the nuclear accident, in particular on children and future generations, in Recommendation 1208 (1993) and Resolution 1127 (1997). In this connection, it undertook to monitor follow-up to the aid provided and the measures advocated by the international community. 20 years after the disaster, it is now time to review the health effects.
3. In 2005, the Chernobyl Forum made up of specialised United Nations bodies published a report that seemed reassuring. The report recognises the seriousness of the accident and its major health consequences for people exposed in the first few days. However, it concludes that, in the end, there was no "widespread contamination that would continue to pose a substantial threat to human health, with a few exceptional, restricted areas."
4. The publication of the report sparked controversy in some circles, which challenged the method of scientific analysis employed and the fact that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is a key member of the forum.
5. Other groups believe that the effects of Chernobyl were exaggerated with a view to obtaining financial assistance, which has produced a culture of dependency among the population concerned. The forum report nevertheless acknowledges the scale of the mental health problems resulting from fear of contamination and highlights the inadequate health standards in force in the region affected, which are harmful to people's state of health.
6. The Assembly has a duty to take part in this debate; it must help to publicise the report beyond expert circles and make sure that there is real public transparency about the impact of Chernobyl, especially its health effects in both the region directly affected and the whole of Europe.
7. The Assembly must also honour its undertakings and assess whether the measures taken have responded to the real needs of the groups concerned, in particular by hearing the views of victims of the disaster and relevant NGOs. In addition, it must draw lessons for the future and foster efforts to provide the European public with reliable information about the real risks of civil nuclear energy.

Signed (see overleaf)

*Signed*¹:

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¹ SOC: Socialist Group
EPP/CD: Group of the European People's Party
ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe
EDG: European Democratic Group
UEL: Group of the Unified European Left
NR: not registered in a group