

Conclusions of the 2nd European Nuclear Energy Forum Prague, 22 & 23 May 2008

The second plenary meeting of the European Nuclear Energy Forum has taken place in Prague on 22 and 23 May 2008, with a high level audience of around 300 participants. In addition to high representatives from Governments, several Members of the European Parliament and the European Economic and Social Committee participated actively, as well as the Presidents and CEOs of major companies, representatives from energy intensive consumers, NGOs and Trade Unions, and other key decision makers and organizations at national and EU level.

The Forum was opened by Mr José Manuel Barroso, President of the European Commission, and by Messrs Mirek Topolánek, Robert Fico and Gediminas Kirkilas, respectively Prime Minister of the Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian Republics. They all welcomed the strong interest in the Forum, which confirms that the decision to initiate this open debate, without taboos, amongst all key actors on nuclear energy in Europe, was particularly timely and appropriate.

The debates in Prague concentrated on the priority issues identified at the inaugural meeting of the Forum in Bratislava last November and were based on the ongoing discussions in the Working Groups of the Forum, which focus on the opportunities, risks and transparency issues of nuclear energy in Europe. In line with the discussions in the Working Groups and the plenary session in Prague, the following aspects and proposals should in particular be considered in the Working Groups of the Forum in the coming months:

1. The opportunities of nuclear energy

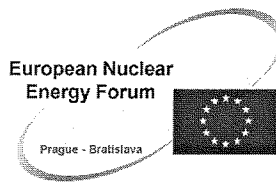
a) Translation of costs of nuclear energy into electricity prices for the final consumer:

In the present context, energy prices are a key element and will become more and more important for our economies and for consumers, both domestic and industrial, who are confronted with always higher energy bills. It becomes crucial to find ways to ensure more realistic and predictable energy prices in the medium and long term. In this context nuclear energy is less affected by price volatility than gas, oil or coal, because of the marginal part of nuclear fuel in the electricity generation cost.

As a consequence, the Forum Working Group needs to further examine ways to translate cost aspects of nuclear into final energy prices, including through negotiations between electricity companies and users, for the benefit of final consumers, both industrial and domestic. In parallel the Forum Working Group should deepen its analysis on the comparative costs of different policy scenarios and resulting energy mixes.

b) Establishing a roadmap for the responsible use of nuclear in Europe, covering in particular legal and financial aspects

Ensuring a level playing field for nuclear energy in Europe - in particular as regards the legal framework – is a key priority in the context of a competitive European energy market. The specificities of financing new nuclear build and innovative approaches in this field also need to be further examined.



The first discussions in the Forum Working Group on the "Legal Roadmap" and "Financing models" should therefore be further elaborated. The results could be integrated in a larger framework which would cover "a roadmap for the responsible use of nuclear in Europe".

- c) Exploring new fields of application of nuclear energy, beyond electricity generation, in particular the desalinisation of sea water and hydrogen production for cars:*

New technological developments may make it possible to use nuclear energy in other fields than electricity generation. In the context of the shift towards a low carbon energy mix and rising energy prices, there is a need to further examine new fields of application for nuclear energy, such as desalination of sea water and hydrogen production for cars, with all parties involved, in particular the European Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform.

2. The risks of nuclear energy

- a) Establishing EU legislation on nuclear safety and waste management, based on common fundamental safety principles for nuclear installations, as well as reinforcing the credibility of the international non-proliferation regime:*

While fully respecting each Member State's sovereign right with regard to the use of nuclear energy, the Commission should remain committed to develop in the EU an even more advanced framework for nuclear energy meeting the highest standards of safety and security.

The adoption of EU legislation on nuclear safety and waste management - based on common fundamental safety principles for nuclear installations - received strong support from the Forum. In particular for new build, the reference should be the highest standards of safety and security available, based upon Best Available Technology (BAT) and best practices in this field, including Best Regulatory Practice (BRP). In this context it is also important to reinforce in each Member State the independence and capacity of nuclear regulators to intervene.

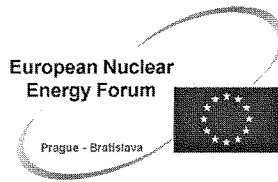
If it succeeds in adopting such a legal framework, Europe could become a real model also for possible nuclear newcomers, ensuring that they take all necessary measures for ensuring the highest safety and security levels before developing nuclear infrastructure.

EU binding rules on nuclear safety and waste management would in this sense complete the existing Euratom safeguards and non-proliferation regime. In this context there is a need for strengthening all aspects of non-proliferation: reinforcing the credibility of the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and developing a common approach at international level vis-à-vis countries which do not respect or are not participating in the NPT.

The Forum Working Group will further examine these aspects, in particular the specific needs for new builds, taking also into consideration the activities of the "European High Level Group on Nuclear Safety and Waste Management" and WENRA.

- b) Implementing nuclear waste management plans:*

The Forum calls for progress on waste management and particularly asks Member States to prepare national plans for managing nuclear waste. A short term objective for the Forum Working Group should be to develop a roadmap to support the process of implementing national waste management plans, including identification of success factors and best practices.



c) Ensuring sufficient qualified human resources in the nuclear field:

The Forum Working Group will further examine and come up with proposals for initiatives to be taken in the field of education and training to ensure sufficient qualified human resources in the nuclear area, including for decommissioning, waste management and medical applications. Actions should be taken at the levels of schools, universities and postgraduate education. Employers and civil society should continue their efforts in this field increasing their cooperation with the educational system. In this context an effective network between universities in Europe should be further developed. Best practices should also be encouraged such as providing a basic nuclear training to existing engineers and other graduates needed in this sector with the support of employers, for instance, through a possible European Trainee Academy.

3. Transparency of nuclear energy

a) Establishing a road map on better information and transparency in the nuclear field:

Public opinion is a decisive factor. Transparency talk is not enough. There is an essential need for an open dialogue at all levels – European, national, regional and local – both institutional and with civil society. The efforts towards establishing an EU roadmap on better information and transparency in the nuclear field should be further elaborated by the Forum Working Group, including guidelines based on best practices.

Facilitating access to information is important. This access should be based on objective and factual information, while respecting the protection of sensitive information on the same level as other EU practice. Transparency principles should apply in particular in the context of new builds, for which the Forum welcomes the Commission's commitment to encourage Member States to publish its opinion on investments.

b) Developing an appropriate consultative process:

Developing an appropriate consultative process - such as public hearings and inter-active, web based consultation - is a key element particularly in the context of new builds and waste management infrastructure. In this regard, contacts will be developed by the Forum Working Group, including with municipalities concerned and/or mandated local actors and wider civil society in order to secure the largest possible and most appropriate participation in the decision-making process.

c) Initiating concrete structured stakeholder dialogues beyond the European Nuclear Forum meetings to broaden the discussion basis:

The Forum meetings should be seen as a first step of a wide ranging dialogue process with civil society and stakeholders. The Forum Working Group will examine how the initiatives discussed in the Forum could be translated in concrete actions addressing all relevant stakeholder groups at EU, national, regional and local levels. The European Economic and Social Committee and other Forum Members from civil society, industry and consumers could play a leading role in such initiatives.

The next plenary session of the European Nuclear Energy Forum will take place in Bratislava on **3 and 4 November 2008**. The subsequent plenary session will be organized in Prague in Spring 2009 during the Czech EU Presidency.