Lessons to be drawn for nuclear safety in Europe following the nuclear accident in Japan

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The European Parliament finally rejected in plenary a draft resolution tabled by the EPP, S&D, ALDE, Greens/EFA and GUE/NGL group on lessons to be drawn for nuclear safety in Europe following the nuclear accident in Japan. The resolution received only 264 votes in favour. There were 300 votes against and 61 abstentions.

To recall, the draft resolution, which followed several Council and Commission declarations on the same subject, called on the Commission to present by the end of the year a proposal to re-examine the directive on nuclear safety in view of the results of risk and safety assessments on European installations currently under way, in view of a detailed analysis of the nuclear accident in Japan. Members, in particular, wanted this proposal to focus on the application of the most stringent nuclear safety standards.

The initial draft resolution also called on the Commission to ensure that Europe-wide risk and safety assessments for nuclear power installations ('stress tests') would cover all kinds of conceivable risks in a European realistic scenario such as earthquakes, floods or unexpected events like terrorist and cyber attacks or plane crashes. The proposed resolution also called on Member States which did not satisfy the crisis simulation tests in a nuclear installation to suspend temporarily its activities or even to definitively close them down.

Following the debate that took place on these questions on Wednesday 6 April and the various amendments adopted or rejected at the time of the final vote, reflecting the range of differing points of view between political groups, a majority of Members rejected the final text.