

Resolution on risk and safety assessments ('stress tests') of nuclear power plants in the European Union and related activities

2012/2830(RSP) - 14/03/2013 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 414 votes to 116, with 83 abstentions a resolution tabled by the Committee on Industry, Research and Energy on Risk and safety assessments of nuclear power plants in the European Union ('stress tests').

Parliament notes that 145 reactors in the EU and 20 reactors outside the EU were subjected to the stress-test procedure and that an action plan was agreed between European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG) and the Commission for follow-up of the peer-review recommendations. It recommends **confirming the leading role of ENSREG** to report annually on nuclear safety.

Scope: Members recall that the stress tests were limited in scope and were primarily intended to assess the robustness and preparedness of nuclear power plants (NPP) in the face of extremely severe external events. Accordingly, the **stress tests are incomplete** since risks such as secondary events, material deterioration, human errors, specific flaws inside the reactor vessels and many other deficiencies were not taken in to account. Therefore, even if successful, Members consider that **stress tests will not guarantee the safety of a nuclear plant**. They further recall that in the EU, 47 nuclear power plants, with 111 reactors between them, have more than 100 000 people living within a 30-km radius and they **regret the fact that the scope of the stress tests was not extended to off-site emergency preparedness. Site-specific improvements:** whilst national regulators concluded that there are no technical reasons requiring the shutdown of any NPP in the EU, Members emphasise that the stress tests did demonstrate that **practically all NPPs need to implement site-specific safety improvements**, and they call for the urgent implementation of the necessary upgrade measures, pointing out that measures relating to nuclear safety **must not be affected by the austerity measures imposed by Member States**.

Costs to be borne by operators and insurance: Parliament wants a **more detailed cost analysis** of the estimated total cost of safety improvement measures recommended following the stress tests for the 132 reactors operating in the EU (EUR 10 to 25 billion over the coming years). It states that, whatever the costs of such improvements, the latter **must be borne entirely by the nuclear operators and not by the taxpayer**, and the Commission is called upon to monitor this issue closely. Members consider further that nuclear operators and waste licensees should be required to have **all financial means in place, through insurance and other financial instruments**, to enable them to fully cover all costs for which they are liable in respect of damage caused to people and the environment in the event of an accident. The Commission is asked to **submit proposals** on the matter by the end of 2013.

Nuclear safety directive: Members welcome the proposed revision of the Nuclear Safety Directive, which should be ambitious in nature and should result in the opportunity to introduce major improvements in areas such as safety procedures and frameworks. They ask the Commission to **make recommendations on cross-border and in-country off-site emergency preventive measures**.