

CHORNOBYL
REMEMBRANCE FOR THE FUTURE +20



International Conference, 23-25 April, 2006, House of the Teacher, Volodymyrska 57, Kyiv / Ukraine

**HEINRICH BÖLL FOUNDATION
NUCLEAR INFORMATION AND RESOURCE SERVICE
WORLD INFORMATION SERVICE ON ENERGY
GREENS/EFA IN THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT
ALLIANCE 90/THE GREENS
INTERNATIONAL PHYSICIANS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR (IPPNW)
EARTH DAY NETWORK
ECOCLUB**
www.ch20.org

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Contact: Tetyana Murza, Ecoclub
Mobil: +380975952346
Office: +380444832961
tanyam@nirs.org

More speakers & details announced for the conference “*Chornobyl+20: Remembrance for the Future*”, April 23-25, 2006

Organizers of the Chornobyl + 20: Remembrance for the Future conference today released new details on the program, confirmed speakers and background about this international event to be held at the House of the Teacher in Kyiv, Ukraine, April 23-25, 2006.

The conference

Besides commemorating the 20th anniversary of the Chornobyl catastrophe, the three-day-event aims at debating four different issues that are reflected in the conference agenda:

Firstly, social and ecological consequences of the accident are pointed out and a new independent study will be presented. Secondly, fundamental risks connected with nuclear energy production, usage and storage will be debated. Thirdly, possible future perspectives of energy supply will be discussed, taking specifically into account the current political framework in Ukraine and Eastern Europe. Finally, Ukrainian public and organizations from all over the world will come together and get the opportunity to initiate common steps towards a sustainable energy future.

For the opening of the conference, a cultural program including culturally and socio-politically well-known speakers as well as two award-winning photo exhibitions will be presented to a broad international and Ukrainian public.

Among the confirmed speakers announced today are:

- Dr. Yury Bandashevski, Belarus
- John Large from Large and Associates, United Kingdom

- Satu Hassi, Member of the European Parliament, Finland
- Scott Denman, Co-Director of Collaborations/Comprehensive Strategic Communications Services & Trainings, US
- Dr. Abdul Hameed Nayyar, SDPI, Pakistan
- Ilya Popov from Social Ecological Union, Russia
- Hans-Josef Fell, spokesperson on Energy Policy, Alliance 90/The Greens, National Parliament, Germany
- Prof. Dr. Adam Gula, University of Science and Technology in Krakow, Poland

A full list of speakers can be found at the conference website, www.ch20.org.

Background: Ways to a sustainable energy future

Despite various efforts to economize the use of energy or increase energy efficiency, economic growth, especially in developing countries, will lead to rather increasing than diminishing demand for energy. Equally foreseeable are both the limits of fossil fuels as well as uranium as raw material for the production of nuclear energy. While consequences of climate change already become clearly noticeable, international treaties such as the Kyoto-Protocol or the Agenda 21 try to set the frame for sustainable energy policies. Efficiency, security of energy supplies and the danger of global warming are cornerstones for the way to more responsible energy policies.

The argument that nuclear energy provides the seminal solution for tackling the danger of climate change can be questioned and disputed. Rather, international efforts for utilization of renewable energy sources deserve much closer consideration, along with various best practice examples that are already available in different countries. In addition to extending renewable energy sources, increasing energy efficiency should play a much more emphasized role, as both private and industrial use of energy provide huge potential for energy conservation.

However, anchoring ambitions towards renewable energy can only succeed if current socio-political needs as well as political conditions obtain sufficient consideration so that sustainable energy strategies can be implemented without losing touch with reality. Ukraine, where the recent natural gas dispute with Russia is still present, may be a good example that besides economic or climate reasons, national security of energy supplies must be a critical factor for shaping future energy strategies.

Alternatives to nuclear power are multi-faceted and offer not only a huge potential for minimizing the risks of further nuclear catastrophes and climate-harming Co2-emissions, but open as well the scope for energy independence, which is especially important for countries in central- and eastern Europe. Energy independence, in combination with energy-diversity, add up as well to more democracy.

While most countries depend on coal, oil, gas or nuclear fuel – and import these resources for their energy needs--increased utilization of renewable energy provides the opportunity to increase energy-independence.

The Chornobyl catastrophe obviously contributed to the collapse of the Soviet Union and generated a democracy- and environmentally-conscious public. 20 years after Chornobyl, the opportunity can be seized to tie up to this movement and to effectively strengthen the (often still young) democracies in central- and eastern Europe through designing a sustainable energy future.