



PRESS Release - Kyiv, 11 April 2006

New report on health and environmental effects of the Chernobyl disaster suggests a significantly higher number of casualties

“The Other Report on Chernobyl (TORCH)” by Ian Fairlie and David Sumner offers a critical analysis of last year’s report by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

A new report on health and environmental effects of the Chernobyl disaster, launched on 11 April 2006 by German Green MEP Rebecca Harms in Kyiv, estimates a significantly higher number of casualties. Commissioned by MEP Rebecca Harms, the report by the two leading UK scientists Ian Fairlie and David Sumner clearly sets out the continuing noxious effects of Chernobyl and describes what else might happen in the future. It takes into account not only the directly affected area around Chernobyl but the worldwide effects, particularly in Western Europe.

Key findings of “The Other Report on Chernobyl (TORCH)” include:

- Belarus, Ukraine and Russia were heavily contaminated, however more than half of Chernobyl’s fallout was deposited outside these countries.
- Fallout from Chernobyl contaminated about 40% of Europe’s territory.
- About two third of Chernobyl’s **collective dose** were spread to populations outside Belarus, Ukraine and Russia, especially to Western Europe.
- About 30,000 to 60,000 **excess** cancer deaths are predicted, 7 to 15 times more than IAEA/WHO’s published estimate of 4,000.

Speaking at the launch of the report in Kyiv, Rebecca Harms said:

“We commissioned TORCH to counterbalance claims made by the IAEA in the media last year ((i) which played down the lethal consequences of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl and failed to make a meaningful analysis of its wider effects on Europe and the world. The much-publicised IAEA-estimate of a mere 4,000 excess cancer deaths provoked an outcry among the scientific community and environmental NGOs, and was a dishonour to those who have and will suffer as a result of Chernobyl. This is one of a number of underestimates that TORCH sets out to rebut. There must be no mistaking the catastrophic dangers that are still very much associated with nuclear power.”

Ian Fairlie and Rebecca Harms will take part in the international conference “Chernobyl+20: Remembrance for the Future” which will be held in Kyiv from 23 to 25 April on invitation of the Heinrich Boell Foundation (Berlin), The Greens/EFA in the European Parliament, the parliamentary group of the German Green Party Bündnis 90/DIE GRÜNEN (Germany), Ecoclub (Rivne, Ukraine), the Nuclear Information and Resource Service (Washington, DC), the World Information Service on Energy (Amsterdam), Earth Day Network, and IPPNW (Germany).

The conference is to commemorate the 20th anniversary of the Chornobyl disaster and will present arguments why the deadly nuclear option cannot be considered as an answer to Europe's current energy supply problems.

Speaking for the Heinrich Boell Foundation, the director of the Foundation's Warsaw Office, Agnieszka Rochon, underlined at the press conference in Kyiv: "Together with our international and Ukrainian partners, we want to initiate a public debate on nuclear energy and viable alternatives 'in situ'. For Europe and Ukraine, nuclear energy primarily remains a high-risk technology, specifically considering that there are technologically and economically viable alternatives. Moreover, a transparent public debate on energy policy is a fundamental element of democratic culture, definitely also in Ukraine, one of the countries that suffered most from the devastating social, economic and health consequences of the Chornobyl disaster." Rochon referred to a series of reports and studies published by the foundation (ii) on these issues which will also be available in English and Ukrainian at the conference.

On Saturday, 22 April, there will be a tour to the restricted access area around Chornobyl and the nuclear power plant for speakers at the conference and European politicians. A limited amount of places has been reserved for journalists.

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Links/ Downloads:

TORCH: www.greens-efa.org

Conference: www.ch20.org

Heinrich Boell foundation: www.boell.de , www.boell.pl

Editor's note:

(i) The claim was made following the publication of reports last year: IAEA/WHO 'Health Effects of the Chornobyl Accident and Special Health Care Programmes'. Report of the UN Chornobyl Forum Expert Group "Health" (EGH) Working draft, 26 July 2005. IAEA/WHO Environmental Consequences of the Chornobyl Accident and their Remediation. Report of the UN Chornobyl Forum Expert Group "Environment" (EGE) Working draft, August 2005.

(ii): "Nuclear Power – Myth and Reality" is a series of papers on nuclear energy written by an international team of experts. For more information: <http://www.boell.de/en/nav/275.html>.