

PRESS RELEASE

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Full Danish Parliamentary Support for EURATOM Reform

On April 4th, all the political parties in the Danish Parliament passed a resolution, demanding EURATOM reform [1]. For decades, the EURATOM Treaty has been criticised by Danish MPs, who have introduced proposals on EURATOM reform. The Parliament's new position is well timed, considering that the European Commission just released a paper on the future of EURATOM [2].

For more than sixty years, the EURATOM Treaty has protected European nuclear power against competition from other energy sources. However, following the lead of Danish and European green NGOs, energy industry organisations, and EU member states such as Sweden, Germany, Austria, Ireland and Hungary, all the members of the Danish Parliament now want a level playing field for renewable energies in the European electricity markets.

"It's a victory for the environmental movement that a united Parliament no longer wants EURATOM to promote nuclear power, but only focus on safety and decommissioning of old and run-down nuclear power stations", says Hans Pedersen from SustainableEnergy. "During the parliamentary procedure, it was documented that electricity from new nuclear power is much more expensive than electricity from solar panels and wind turbines. Without government subsidies it is impossible to build new nuclear power plants and the EURATOM Treaty legalizes government support". [3]

The Danish Parliament wants to reduce the EURATOM budget framework and make it more beneficial to non-nuclear states such as Denmark. In total, the EURATOM program has an annual budget of 1.5 billion euro and the Danish contribution is 27 million euro. However, according to the Parliament's Energy, Utilities and Climate Committee, it is impossible for EU to unilaterally withdraw from the research fusion project ITER, which is the biggest budget item.

"It's a good thing that the Danish Parliament will try to get EURATOM's research budget integrated into the budgets for other energy technologies in EU's Framework Programme for Research and Innovation", says Palle Bendsen from NOAH's Uranium Group. "Also that it wants to investigate, whether the European Parliament can get influence on EURATOM issues. As it is now, EURATOM is beyond democratic control".

“Even though only a minority in Parliament currently wants to make the government cooperate with EU member states intent on reforming or abolishing EURATOM, it is difficult to imagine how it can be avoided, if – as the Commission anticipates - a constitutional amendment procedure is initiated”, says Niels Henrik Hooe from NOAH’s Uranium Group. “The Commission’s recommendations are far from enough, but a constitutional reform that provides a stable framework for the long-term deployment of renewables in Europe could benefit the environment as well as Danish export interests”.

UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF THE DANISH PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION:

<https://noah.dk/sites/default/files/2019-04/Unofficial%20translation%20B%2054.pdf>

Link to conference website on EU constitutional reform with presentations and debates:

<https://noah.dk/energy-transition-europe>

International conference website on EURATOM-reform:

<http://energyintelligenceforeurope.dk/documentation.html>

Notes:

[1] The adopted report on Proposal for Resolution B 54 on Stop for Support for Nuclear Power:

https://www.ft.dk/ripdf/samling/20181/beslutningsforslag/b54/20181_b54_beretning.pdf

The question and answers, on which the report is based:

<https://www.ft.dk/samling/20181/beslutningsforslag/B54/spm.htm>

Overview of the parliamentary procedure:

<https://www.ft.dk/samling/20181/beslutningsforslag/B54/index.htm>

[2] Communication from the Commission: A More Efficient and Democratic Decision Making in EU Energy and Climate Policy, April 2019: <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regdoc/rep/1/2019/EN/COM-2019-177-F1-EN-MAIN-PART-1.PDF>

[3] For a description of what EURATOM reform might look like, see: Dr. Dörte Fouquet: Legal Opinion - Pathways to a Euratom Reform, Short legal evaluation and strategy approach for the Green Group in the European Parliament, 2018: <https://www.greens-efa.eu/files/doc/docs/817f6b3caaa70a93ef112c562851485b.pdf>

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