



Resolution 1087 (1996)¹

Consequences of the Chernobyl disaster

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly recalls that 26 April 1996 is the 10th anniversary of the explosion of one of the reactors at Chernobyl nuclear power station, which triggered the biggest nuclear disaster ever and had tragic immediate, medium- and long-term consequences for the population and for the environment.
2. This tragic incident also proved that all countries, whether they were directly concerned or not, were totally unprepared to cope with this kind of disaster.
3. In this connection, the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency provide a welcome opportunity for contracting parties to create machinery to guarantee rapid, concerted and transparent action under such circumstances.
4. Similarly, the Assembly believes that public access to clear and full information on this subject - and many others for that matter - must be viewed as a basic human right.
5. It is only now, ten years on from the disaster, that increasingly comprehensive data is becoming available and providing irrefutable proof of the true scale of the consequences and the new risks generated by the inappropriate management of the accident.
6. Furthermore the latest information on the state of the "sarcophagus", the structure designed to seal the damaged reactor, shows that there are real major threats which may well cause fresh damage or even another accident.
7. In view of the need for practical and rapid action to repair this structure, and in the light of the alarming report by the consortium carrying out the feasibility study on stabilising the sarcophagus, the international community must rapidly join forces to provide the funding needed to carry out this work.
8. Moreover, the striking increase in thyroid cancer in children and the actual or potential - often incurable - illnesses attributable to the radiation to which many people were exposed, in particular the 800 000 who worked in relays at the site, compel the international community to take concerted action on a major scale to help save lives and care for the sick.
9. The environmental situation - the evolution of which is still largely unknown today - also calls for action based on an objective survey of the damage to date and on the worrying potential risks of the huge amount of radioactive waste stored in a haphazard fashion and the presence of irradiated foodstuffs in the food chain.
10. The Assembly also wishes to stress that the 10th anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster should serve as an opportunity to reflect on the fact that all the discussions over the years about the dangers inherent in the majority of power stations in central and eastern Europe, and more specifically [Recommendation 1209 \(1993\)](#) on nuclear power plants in central and eastern Europe, have only rarely been followed up with practical steps to avert or at the very least reduce such risks.

1. Assembly debate on 26 April 1996 (16th Sitting) (see [Doc. 7538](#), report of the Committee on the Environment, Regional Planning and Local Authorities, rapporteur: Mr Staes). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 April 1996 (16th Sitting).



11. As a result, urgent action is imperative and must be viewed as an overriding priority for the international community.
12. In this connection, the Assembly welcomes the fact that, at the G7 meeting held in Moscow on 18 and 19 April 1996, Ukraine formally undertook to shut down the Chernobyl nuclear power station before the year 2000.
13. That presents Ukraine, along with all the other countries which will be faced with the same situation, with a choice as to replacement energy sources, and under such circumstances it is important to make available to these countries all the resources required to carry out an in-depth review of their new energy policies, which must give precedence to safety, efficient energy production, environmental protection and curbing demand.
14. On the other hand, it should also be borne in mind that shutting down a nuclear power station does not immediately eliminate all the risks - proof of this being the sarcophagus - but should instead be viewed as the starting point for a series of measures to be carried out rapidly and under the safest possible conditions.
15. In the light of the above, and with particular regard to Chernobyl, the Assembly calls on Ukraine:
 - 15.1. to abide by the agreement it has reached with the G7 and to close the site before the year 2000, taking all necessary steps to neutralise all the risks the power station might pose, even when decommissioned;
 - 15.2. to ensure that the two new nuclear reactors whose construction forms an integral part of the above-mentioned agreement comply with the current standards of the International Atomic Energy Agency;
 - 15.3. to set up - in co-operation with organisations and institutions competent in this field - a research project in order to analyse the present and future consequences of the accident;
 - 15.4. to take immediate steps to rapidly improve safety awareness, notably in connection with the training of personnel.
16. With regard to the problem in general, the Assembly requests member states with high-risk nuclear power stations:
 - 16.1. to close down such plants and give top priority to the safety of nuclear power stations which continue operating;
 - 16.2. to review their energy policy in such a way as to give priority to non-polluting and safe sources of energy, efficient energy production and energy saving, and not automatically opt for nuclear plants
17. In addition, the Assembly calls on all member states:
 - 17.1. take part in all initiatives aimed at reducing as quickly as possible the risks posed by the structure covering the damaged reactor at Chernobyl;
 - 17.2. to encourage through adequate funding all health assistance programmes to improve the state of health of the tens of thousands of people exposed to radiation from Chernobyl, and also to analyse the present and future ecological consequences of this accident;
 - 17.3. to give high priority to bilateral or multilateral initiatives to dismantle certain nuclear power stations or to rehabilitate others, provided such rehabilitation offers comprehensive safety guarantees;
 - 17.4. to make plans for twinning arrangements between nuclear power plants in the countries of central and eastern Europe and those in western countries, with a view to jointly developing safety awareness;
 - 17.5. if they have not already done so, to sign and ratify the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, and to take all the administrative and legislative steps needed for the actual implementation of these conventions.