Parliamentary Assembly
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Resolution 1127 (1997)[1]

Health effects of the Chernobyl nuclear accident

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Assembly recalls its Resolution 1087 (1996) adopted on the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident and dealing with its effects.

2. It notes that in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine the growth in the incidence of thyroid cancers, principally in children, is now a proven fact; this phenomenon, which appeared as from 1990, is more or less pronounced depending on the region and will persist for several years; the average frequency of this cancer is ten times greater in children.

3. This effect of the Chernobyl accident was foreseeable owing to the absence or very marked inadequacy of administration of stable iodine to the populations, furthermore suffering from chronic iodine deficiency, in the contaminated regions.

4. The Assembly observes that despite large-scale international aid, local treatment resources are blatantly inadequate with regard to the number of persons irradiated. The hospitals cannot carry out isotope treatment because of inadequate supplies of iodine 131 and an almost total absence of isolation wards. The deteriorating economic situation in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine means that these states are dependent on donations from abroad.

5. Given the current state of knowledge, it is difficult to assess accurately the other possible health effects of the Chernobyl accident.

6. However, the psychological damage to children is patently clear (poor memory, pessimism, proximity of death, anxiety, etc.). They live in a hostile environment where much is forbidden.

7. The Assembly invites the international community to display solidarity with Belarus, Russia and Ukraine and to draw lessons from Chernobyl for the protection of public health.

8. It invites the member states and the various international organisations, particularly the European Union:

8.1. to maintain or increase their financial aid and technical assistance to Belarus, Russia and Ukraine, giving priority to local treatment of patients and ensuring health checks for the evacuated populations, especially children having lived or still living in the contaminated regions;

8.2. to see that aid is well co-ordinated, strategically planned and implemented, and furthermore that it is allocated equally to the three countries according to their needs;

8.3. for the moment, to admit to their hospitals more sick children requiring urgent treatment not available in Belarus, Russia and Ukraine;

8.4. to support the humanitarian action of the various non-governmental organisations involved;

8.5. to develop a policy on provision of information to the public and prevention of nuclear health risks;

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1. Assembly debate on 24 June 1997 (19th Sitting) (see Doc. 7680, report of the Social, Health and Family Affairs Committee, rapporteur: Mr Jacquat; and Doc. 7751, opinion of the Committee on Science and Technology , rapporteur: Mr Tiuri). Text adopted by the Assembly on 24 June 1997 (19th Sitting).

8.6. to train doctors and improve their knowledge in this field;

8.7. to implement a child psychology research programme to determine the most appropriate approach for children who are victims of a nuclear disaster;

8.8. to improve the knowledge of people living in contaminated areas about the health effects of nuclear radiation caused by an accident or by natural sources;

8.9. to encourage international co-operation in continuing studies of "liquidators" in order to gather more exact data about their radiation doses and possible health effects;

8.10. to encourage international co-operation in the continuing studies of radioactive radiation in contaminated areas and monitor the radiation doses of the people living there;

8.11. to encourage continuous development and improvement of safety culture at all European nuclear power plants;

8.12. to inform people in all member states of the health effects of accidental and natural radiation;

8.13. to inform people of the health and environmental problems of the various systems of energy production;

8.14. to continually monitor, along with the Council of Europe, the execution of the aid given to the countries concerned.