

## **Nuclear Power Grab?**

### **Corporate Lobbyists and MEPs Working in Tandem to Spin Nuclear Energy as Sustainable**

*By Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), December 2006*

The threats posed by climate change and diminishing energy supplies are high on the EU's political agenda. Meanwhile, a European nuclear industry group, FORATOM, is working with a committed group of pro-nuclear MEPs, to push the European Parliament to label nuclear energy as sustainable. Their strategy is to spin nuclear energy as the solution to the current energy threats, so that MEPs will vote on 14 December to greatly expand the EU's nuclear energy activity as a mean to reduce CO2 emissions.

Energy is a hot issue in Brussels. In less than a month, the Commission will publish its Strategic Review on Energy (scheduled for 10 January 2007). This is preceded by a critical vote in the European Parliament (EP) on 14 December on the so-called Morgan report on the Green Paper on Energy.<sup>1</sup> The rapidly growing and dramatic effects of climate change leave no doubt about the need to reduce dependency on fossil fuels. This need for action has unleashed a new phase in the tug of war between nuclear and renewable energy. This is supplemented by grand political talk linking broader trends in geopolitics with continuing energy supply needs. This combination creates a situation ripe for heavy lobbying

The need to fight climate change is not a new argument for the nuclear lobby, often labelled as its best friend. For 15 years the nuclear industry has been using the argument about the need to reduce CO2 emissions as a last chance attempt to lever itself back as a strong policy choice. Since the disaster at Chernobyl in 1986, nuclear energy has become an unpopular option amongst the public, within an increasing number of governments, as well as among most EU decision-makers. For example, at present, only 12% of the European citizens are in favour of nuclear energy.<sup>2</sup>

With the threat of climate change the nuclear industry has grasped an opportunity to campaign to be regarded as a solution. Yet, they lost a first big battle when the parties to the Kyoto Protocol banned nuclear energy as part of the so-called flexible mechanisms: clean development mechanism (CDM) and joint implementation (JI). However, new circumstances offer fertile ground for the re-launch of the nuclear industry in the EU. These include, the decision by the Bush administration to stay out of the Kyoto Protocol; the hardening of climate positions by European industry such as the employers' organisation UNICE; the entrance in the EU of new Eastern European members with a heavy reliance on nuclear energy; the expansion in Brussels of radical right-wing think tanks from the US who advocate reactionary climate policies. Nuclear energy remains banned from the Kyoto market-based mechanisms (the CDM and JI) until 2012. However, all options remain open post-2012, in the context of ongoing negotiations.

FORATOM, the Brussels-based trade association of the European nuclear industry, is doing its best to exploit these new openings. One key target is the European Parliament, where FORATOM has developed strong collaboration with a steady group of pro-nuclear MEPs. In October 2005, most of those MEPs signed a "Declaration on Climate

Change and Nuclear Energy”. Indeed, written into this declaration is the fact that it is the result of an initiative “launched by the European Atomic Forum (FORATOM)”.<sup>3</sup> It calls for recognition of ‘the vital contribution made by the nuclear industry to reducing CO2 emissions [...] All low carbon-intensive power generation technologies will need to contribute [...] However, we strongly believe that the increased use of nuclear energy, as the largest single contributor to the fight against climate change, is essential.’ The Declaration explicitly calls for nuclear energy to be included in the Kyoto Protocol’s market-based mechanisms, CDM and JI. Some of the 27 MEPs who signed were UK Socialist Terry Wynn, UK Conservative Geoffrey van Orden, Spanish Conservative Alejo Vidal-Quadras, Slovenian Conservative Romana Jordan Cizelj, German Conservative Herbert Reul and Finnish Conservative Eija-Riitta Korhola.

#### **FORATOM: A history of MEP collaboration**

The cooperation between FORATOM and pronuclear MEPs has proved very successful in the past. For example, in November 2005, FORATOM scored a major victory by convincing sufficient MEPs to reject an amendment during a vote in the EP. The amendment said that ‘reducing global emissions must not lead to other threats’ and ‘CDM/JI must continue to exclude nuclear activities’. This amendment had already been approved by the environmental committee.<sup>4</sup> At the time, according to the European Nuclear Society’s news (ENS, which shares its secretariat with FORATOM), “FORATOM’s Secretariat has been working to remove the anti-nuclear reference.”<sup>5</sup> Their report goes on to explain the two ways in which FORATOM could win: “lobby for a political party to put forward an amendment deleting the sentence..” or “lobby for at least 32 MEPS regardless of their political affiliation to co-sign an amendment deleting the sentence.”

FORATOM decided to go for the second option, as “the compromise amendment was supported by the EPP-ED (European Conservative Group) – at least according to their voting list”. The ENS report goes on: “Over the past two weeks, FORATOM’s Secretariat successfully obtained the 32 MEP signatures needed to table an amendment at the upcoming November Plenary Session. In fact, it secured over 50 MEP signatures during a two-day visit to Strasbourg for the Parliament’s October Plenary Session – with the lobbying support of some Brussels-based nuclear representatives.”

Those signatures allowed Spanish conservative MEP Alejo Vidal Quadras to table a new amendment without the anti-nuclear reference. When asked about the fact that was FORATOM who collected the signatures, Vidal-Quadras replied: “It is easier for us to have the helping hand of the lobby presenting the issue to give us feedback on the multiple meetings they have with other MEPs if they agree to cosign the amendments. It is usually the assistants of MEPS who try to collect the signatures of the MEPs who wish to cosign the amendments but they always appreciate if someone can give them a hand at it – considering that the deadlines we deal with are extremely tight.”<sup>6</sup>

According to ENS, “Getting the 32 MEP signatures was the easy part of the process [...] The more difficult part, however, is getting a majority of the 732 MEPs to support the amendment during the vote.” Yet, the nuclear lobby set to work and again, reporting at the time: “FORATOM’s Secretariat will continue to urge MEPs to support this amendment by, for example, urging them to speak to their colleagues, right up until the vote takes place in November. The Secretariat will also help organize meetings

with key MEPs to discuss the matter further. Whatever the outcome, everything possible will have been done to get the amendment accepted.”<sup>7</sup> Their efforts certainly bore fruit and Vidal-Quadras’ amendment was passed by the plenary on the 16 November 2005.<sup>8</sup>

The nuclear industry with their allies in the EP can use two institutionalised channels for their work: a MEP-business club called the ‘European Energy Forum’ (EEF), and a cross-party group, the Forum for the Future of the Nuclear Energy (FFNE). Business members of EEF include Shell, Total, ExxonMobil and nuclear energy giants British Energy, EDF and Areva. A confidential source who regularly attends their meetings confirmed that discussions which start at the EEF usually end up at the Parliament. He went on to describe the EEF as “the submarine of the energy industry.” The EEF’s Director General, Jean-Claude Charrault, was the former Head of the Commission’s nuclear policy division. Most of the EEF’s funding come from business. When asked by CEO about their funding the Secretariat refused to answer but according to an informed source their annual budget is over a million euros. EEF’s work is mainly around events at the invitation of business. Apart from dinners, conferences and seminars, the Forum often organises all-paid-for (by the organising companies) trips for interested MEPs to visit nuclear power plants.<sup>9</sup> A regular of those trips is British conservative MEP Giles Chichester. Chichester is both chair of the EEF and the EP Committee on Industry, Research and Energy (ITRE), which decides the energy policy proposals that will be taken to the EP plenary. Chichester has taken part in at least six visits to nuclear sites and has always supported nuclear expansion.

The ‘Forum for the Future of Nuclear Energy’ was founded in 2003 by UK Socialist MEP Terry Wynn, a long-standing pro-nuclear campaigner who strongly advocates the benefits of nuclear energy in the fight against climate change. Since the retirement of Terry Wynn from the European Parliament earlier this year, the Forum is being chaired by Hungarian Socialist MEP Edit Herczog. The FFNE is open to MEPs, nuclear industry and the interested public, and it is described as an informal body whose aim is to “provide MEPs and civil servants with a platform for an open and objective discussion on nuclear energy”. But in practice, the agenda is determined by FORATOM, whose members are usually speakers at the Forum’s events. FORATOM’s Guy Parker explains: “FORATOM suggests potential topics of discussion and speakers to Mrs Herczog.”<sup>10</sup> Mrs. Herczog told CEO that “the working programme and the logistics are discussed and arranged between the involved MEPs, their assistants, and the potential participants (speakers) who either themselves wish to come to the forum, or are proposed to do so by Members.”<sup>11</sup> In 2006, only one event was on the initiative of Herczog, whereas two came from nuclear industry representatives (Vattenfall and CEZ); another event is programmed for January 2007 on the initiative of nuclear giant Areva. Mrs Herczog describes her chairmanship of FFNE as “totally honorary and in fact more a question of practicality, since someone has to send out the invitations and chair the meetings.”

According to FORATOM’s Institutional Affairs Manager Guy Parker, his organisation has been actively lobbying MEPs from all political groups.<sup>12</sup> And the pro-nuclear battalion is gaining ground scoring points in the run-up to the 14 December 2006 plenary vote. On 23 November the Morgan report was voted on in the Industry, Research and Energy committee (ITRE). Thirteen amendments matching the demands of the nuclear industry were tabled by MEPs involved on the FFNE. Nine of these were signed by Mrs. Herczog.<sup>13</sup> The number of MEPs supporting various pro-nuclear and anti-renewable amendments was larger than usual. A major victory was the clearly favourable

reference to nuclear energy after the vote. This was in contrast to the draft report that said “nuclear energy remains a controversial area and that any decision will remain the responsibility of the member states”.<sup>14</sup> After the ITRE vote, the text now to be proposed to the plenary, says that “nuclear energy is a part of the European political debate on the energy mix” and is “a way of avoiding CO2 emissions” and “urges the Commission to investigate the development of nuclear energy in Member States”. This new text paves the way for nuclear energy to be included in the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol after 2012. It also “calls the Commission to continue supporting research into all sources of energy (conventional, nuclear and renewable)”.<sup>15</sup> Currently over 50% of the EU’s energy R&D funding is dedicated to nuclear research.<sup>16</sup> Renewable sources are in need of a significant support in order to simply be regarded as a basic status quo option. Nationally within the EU, the push for nuclear energy is yielding results. For example, UK Prime-minister Tony Blair recently changed his mind in favour of nuclear.<sup>17</sup> In other EU countries new nuclear plants are either being planned or are well under construction.<sup>18</sup>

On the other hand, nuclear lobbyists have failed to prevent a call for binding sectoral targets in the Morgan report that currently excludes them because of the use of the term ‘renewable’. The report proposes a target of 25% of renewable sources in primary energy by 2020. Pro-nuclear MEPs had proposed to replace that call with a target for “60% of the EU electricity demand from CO2 neutral technologies by 2020”. This is in line with FORATOM demands. This failed amendment represents a clever move as bringing renewable and nuclear energy together under the label ‘CO2 neutral’ not only offers nuclear energy the chance to borrow from the positive name of renewable, it also avoids the distinction and therefore decision between that two. Fundamentally, this would leave the door wide-open to a big increase of the share of nuclear energy within the overall EU energy mix. Despite this failure at the ITRE Committee, with the 14 December plenary on the horizon, nuclear proponents have devised another tactic to bring in the change and the target for ‘60% from CO2 neutral technologies. The new attempt will be presented as an amendment tabled by the EPP (European Peoples Party -Christian Democrats) and UEN (Union for Europe of the Nations) groups<sup>19</sup>.

While environmental groups also try to influence the energy debate, their capacity cannot compare to that of the nuclear industry. The nuclear lobby has the financial resources to be active on all fronts. For example, on 8 December 2006, less than a week before the plenary vote, FORATOM organised an ‘educational trip for MEP assistants to a nuclear site in Northern France. Information on the financial resources behind pro-nuclear lobby efforts would shed a clearer light on the (un)balance of influencing forces. A vehicle for this could be the European Transparency Initiative (ETI), expected to be finalised in March 2007 by the European Commission. The ETI aims to regulate and improve transparency around lobbying towards the EU institutions.

The vote on the 14 December in the EP will influence the Commission. If nuclear lobbyists get their demand and nuclear energy is promoted as a way, together with renewable, for the EU to meet their Kyoto commitments and fight climate change, this will send a strong signal to the Commission as it embarks on the Strategic Energy Review. This Review is scheduled to take place in January 2007 and is expected to lead to crucial decisions on energy policy when EU governments meet at the Council’s Spring Summit in March. Should the 14 December vote start the ball rolling towards the return of nuclear energy to Europe, this will have disastrous consequences for people and the environment.

## **The Nuclear Lobby in Brussels**

FORATOM is the main lobby group for the nuclear industry in Europe. It claims to “act as the voice of the industry in energy policy discussions involving the EU institutions”.<sup>20</sup> Apart from 17 national nuclear associations FORATOM’s members include 800 firms, among them the major nuclear interests such as French EDF and Areva; UK BNFL and British Energy; German RWE and E.ON, Belgium Electrabel and Spanish Endesa.

In Brussels, it is located in the same street as the Commission and the Council of Ministers (rue de la Loi), a stone’s throw from the European Parliament. FORATOM shares Secretariat with the European Nuclear Society (ENS, a federation of 26 nuclear organisations). FORATOM’s Director General Santiago San Antonio is also Secretary General of ENS. FORATOM and ENS have each three accredited lobbyists to the European Parliament.<sup>21</sup> In total FORATOM has over 20 people working at its Brussels headquarters.

Their work is supported by the activities of individual nuclear companies. Between them, EDF, Areva, TVO, Siemens, E.oN, RWE, Vattenfall, BNFL and CEZ have 22 accredited lobbyists at the European Parliament. This does not include include consultants, PR and PA firms who are likely to be working on a contracted basis for the nuclear industry to advance their interests. Currently, the lack of mandatory lobbying disclosure makes it impossible to know how much money is invested by the nuclear industry in their lobby effort aimed at EU institutions.

- <sup>1</sup> [REPORT on a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy – Green paper \(2006/2113\(INI\)\)](#), Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Rapporteur: Eluned Morgan, 28 November 2006.
- <sup>2</sup> According to a survey of Eurobarometer, Europeans are very favourable to solar (48%) and wind energy (31%), while nuclear is only supported by 12%. [Attitudes towards energy](#), October – November 2005, p. 9.
- <sup>3</sup> [Declaration on Climate Change and Nuclear Energy](#). The Declaration was released to coincide with the FORATOM seminar “Nuclear Energy: Meeting the Challenge of Climate Change.”, which took place on 19 October 2005 in the European Parliament and was chaired by Finnish conservative MEP, Eija-Riitta Korhola.
- <sup>4</sup> The own-initiative report by Swedish conservative MEP Anders Wijkman, on the Commission’s February 2005 Communication “Winning the Battle Against Global Climate Change” (COM (2005)0035), which presented the Commission’s vision on the EU’s climate change policy for the post-2012 period. [REPORT on Winning the Battle Against Global Climate Change \(2005/2049\(INI\)\)](#), Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety, Rapporteur: Anders Wijkman.
- <sup>5</sup> ENS news: <http://www.euronuclear.org/e-news/e-news-10/winning-the-battle.htm>.
- <sup>6</sup> Email sent by MEP Alejo Vidal-Quadras dated 17 July 2006.
- <sup>7</sup> ENS news: <http://www.euronuclear.org/e-news/e-news-10/winning-the-battle.htm>.
- <sup>8</sup> Plenary vote on 16 November 2005, resolution P6\_TA(2005)0433.
- <sup>9</sup> See [list of events](#) on the website of the European Energy Forum. While it is true that occasionally the Forum covers topics on renewable energy, one MEP shared his view that this is a tactic to protect an image of neutrality. See also [Transparency Boost Needed for European Parliament Cross-Party Groups](#), Corporate Europe Observatory (CEO), October 2006.
- <sup>10</sup> Email from Guy Parker to CEO, dated 4 December 2006.
- <sup>11</sup> Email from Edit Herczog to CEO, dated 4 December 2006.
- <sup>12</sup> Email from Guy Parker to CEO, dated 4 December 2006.
- <sup>13</sup> See amendments: 1, 12, 27, 43, 47, 130, 216, 235, 236, 322, 325, 334, 336:  
[http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/organes/itre/itre\\_20061122\\_0900.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/organes/itre/itre_20061122_0900.htm)
- <sup>14</sup> [Draft REPORT on a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy – Green paper \(2006/2113\(INI\) PROVISIONAL\)](#), Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Rapporteur: Eluned Morgan, 19 September 2006.
- <sup>15</sup> Final [REPORT on a European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy – Green paper \(2006/2113\(INI\)\)](#), Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Rapporteur: Eluned Morgan, 28 November 2006. Tabled amendments: [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004\\_2009/organes/itre/itre\\_20061122\\_0900.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/meetdocs/2004_2009/organes/itre/itre_20061122_0900.htm)
- <sup>16</sup> [Not Moving Forward: Analysis of EU Energy Policy](#), by Antony Froggatt, 9 November 2006, Brussels.
- <sup>17</sup> See for instance: [I’ve changed my mind on nuclear power, admits Blair](#), Matthew Tempest, *The Guardian*, 4 July 2006.
- <sup>18</sup> The construction of a new nuclear plant is underway in Finland; France, Romania and Bulgaria are about to begin new constructions, while Slovakia, Poland, Turkey, Czech Republic and the UK are considering the possibility of building new nuclear plants.
- <sup>19</sup> Amendments on Report by Eluned Morgan “A European strategy for sustainable, competitive and secure energy” — Motion for a resolution (A6-0426/2006), 6 December 2006.
- <sup>20</sup> [FORATOM website](#), visited 10 December 2006.
- <sup>21</sup> ENS registered lobbyists are Laurent Furedi, Hans Korteweg (FORATOM Head of Cabinet and Institutional Affairs Manager) and Guy Parker (who responds to CEO emails to FORATOM as Institutional Affairs Manager). FORATOM registered lobbyists are Caroline Ciuciu (responsible of legal affairs and paid by Areva), Sami Tulonen (Institutional Affairs-Nuclear Generation) and Santiago San Antonio (Secretary General of ENS and Director General of FORATOM).