

No justification for Hinkley subsidies, says South West Green MEP



Green Party

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Molly Scott Cato, MEP for South West England where Hinkley is sited, has responded to the decision by the European Court of Justice on whether UK government support for construction of Hinkley Point C constitutes illegal state aid.

Austria and Luxembourg had appealed against the decision of the European Commission to allow subsidies worth billions of euros towards the construction of the new nuclear reactor [1].

The ruling comes as a new report by the National Infrastructure Commission has concluded that the UK is capable of generating at least half its entire energy needs by renewable sources by 2030, and can do so without adding to consumers' bills [2].

Molly Scott Cato MEP, a Green MEP who has long campaigned against Hinkley and in favour of renewables, said:

"This decision is hugely regrettable. There can be no justification for EU subsidies to be thrown at nuclear. Hinkley Point is a particular tragedy for the South West when we are blessed with exciting renewable energy alternatives. The region has huge potential for both onshore and offshore wind; for tidal and geothermal energy and is the region best suited in the whole of the UK to capture the power of the sun.

"Sadly, today's ECJ ruling will only serve to reinforce the government's ideological obsession with nuclear. But in the South West we could provide at least 100% of the region's energy needs from renewables, if done in combination with ramping up efforts to improve energy efficiency and insulation to reduce overall energy demand [3]. The National Infrastructure Commission agrees that nuclear is not the way forward for the UK and that we should seize the golden opportunities that renewable energy technologies provide."

Molly Scott Cato also warned that Brexit could have devastating impacts on the UK's ability to generate nuclear power:

“Brexit could leave nuclear power in the UK in meltdown. There is on-going uncertainty around our membership of Euratom. Whilst this EU body may be a relic of the past that gives unfair privilege to nuclear power, it none-the-less governs procedures, regulations and safeguards for nuclear power across the EU. This includes the transportation of nuclear materials around Europe. Unless new arrangements are agreed the UK could run out of nuclear fuel within two years, meaning nuclear power stations would be unable to produce energy. The threats posed by Brexit further reiterates the importance of going all out for renewable energy.”

Notes

[1]

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2015/jan/21/austria-to-launch-lawsuit-hinkley-point-c-nuclear-subsidies>

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