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PRESS RELEASE

No economic and environmental justification for new nuclear power plant in Ignalina

NGOs urge Baltic States and Poland to start dealing with the real energy issues and stop their fixation on nuclear

In connection to new declaration to be signed on July 6 by prime ministers of Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Poland, environmental NGOs from these countries express strong disappointment about the way how decisions on new Ignalina NPP are taken. Instead of looking at different options, including ones that are necessary for abating climate change while addressing the energy service needs of our region on the basis of decentralised energy systems, energy efficiency and renewable energy, our governments are fixated on nuclear energy only.

Despite NGOs have repeatedly demanded for more openness in the whole discussion, no improvements can be observed. Since 2006 when the proposal on building of new NPP in Ignalina appeared, no discussions have been taken place either neither in Government nor in Parliaments in these three countries. Since public utilities – energy companies are backed up by national governments, Latvia, Estonia and Poland should not commit their support and involvement in new Ignalina NPP before discussing the issue in the whole government at least or national parliaments.

The feasibility study on new Ignalina NPP has not been disclosed to the public and hence there is no detailed information on cost-benefit analyses available. Experience drawn from the implementation of the most recent nuclear projects in Europe has shown that the development of nuclear power plants is more expensive in comparison with other options and is also economically uncertain. This is worrying knowing the fact the prices for nuclear fuel have rapidly increased over last few years. Nuclear waste arising from NPP should be managed for thousands of years and the world scientists have not yet found a permanent solution. Moreover such risks as possible terrorist attacks or risks related to low safety culture in Ignalina have not been reviewed at all.

Preliminary cost assessment of new NPP fails to consider available alternatives that are economically feasible and would contribute to increase of energy independence of the Baltic region. Strengthening of decentralised energy structures and increases in energy efficiency in both the industrial and the household sectors can cover a large part of the needed capacity against strongly competitive costs. Detailed assessments of available renewable energy sources in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia have showed that increasing of biomass use and developing wind energy would be efficient choices from environmental and both financial and economic point of view as the use of renewable energy sources contribute to local employment.

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