

Social acceptance and acceptability

European SMR pre-partnership
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- The world in 2023 has never consumed more fossil fuels,
 - despite poverty induced by prices of gas... despite coal effects on health... despite energy wars... despite money spent aiming at the unreachable dream of 100% renewables (it was 800 billion € at the European level a couple of years back over the past 20 years, so probably nearly 1 trillion € now).
 - Here is the public acceptance you need, sharing this reality will convince all that remain to be convinced to try a new path without abandoning the progresses made.
 - Let's try this new path. One with more, rather than less, nuclear – one such as the demonstration Olkiluoto 3 is making as we speak: the striking drop in electricity prices for individual consumers, the drop in carbon emissions, the drop in levels of dependency, the improvement of the trade balance for decades.
 - We have been able to make this “nuclear path” work before, we have decades of experience feedback, demonstrated performances: we will make it work again.

- SMRs will enjoy an improved public acceptance,
 - not because they will be positioned away, and hidden from people, but because they are going to be brought closer. They will become a familiar sight. And a familiar topic.
 - and it will be so, because we would have made the sincere, bipartisan effort to provide populations with facts, and with an as objective as possible information.
 - My, long now, experience in this matter is that people tend to decide much more rationally than what we tend to grant them with. They do have their interest at heart, and they know how to best serve their own interests and concerns ... that is when they are given the facts, and not some fantasized version of them.

- This last point also means that, as SMR/AMRs are specifically concerned about the fact that the communication should be sincere,
 - The industry does not need to mischaracterize SMR/AMR to make them acceptable.
 - ➔ They are not of benefit to the populations because they are small, but because they make sense: plenty of specific uses are legitimate reasons enough to largely justify going forward in this direction.
 - ➔ Size should not be a measure for acceptability, size should make sense according to the uses and needs we want to fulfil. Much will flow from this, the economics will make sense, the measures accompanying populations surrounding will be coherent with the initial message and with the reasons put forward to justify this new piece of infrastructure.

 - The industry does not need to over-sell SMR/AMR either.
 - ➔ They already bring to the table many advantages, and the industry and the research are doing their best to enhance performance, accelerate planning and reduce cost.
 - ➔ This will help

- avoid what happened with third generation large reactors: having to make political claims we know were over-optimistic for political purpose and to ease public acceptance.
- avoid what is happening today with intermittent renewables which unfortunately face opposition because of the same over-optimistic claims.

Surely, it is our responsibility as well, as civil society, to participate to create a rational environment around the industry so the projects may have the right and stable environment to come out. I am not escaping from it.

- We, the Voices of Nuclear, for example, probably need your help to do so as well.
- There are very few NGOs who take the responsibility to inform the population, to inform the voters but also the future generation of workers or decision-makers, while at the same time not having in their agenda to kill nuclear energy in Europe... The Voices for example are only volunteers, as I am as well. How long do we think it can last? → Level-playing field starts there as well.

Finally, to the legislator,

- we do not ask for special by-pass or special rights to be granted to the nuclear industry.
- but we do expect the regulator to ensure a level-playing field between low carbon energies: net zero industry act, taxonomy, financing..., as the surest way to optimize the EU's, the members' states', as well as our own resources, as citizens
- we also expect that the legislator' responsibility be to ensure transparency in costs of deploying the different energy solutions for the European Union budget – we know now how some indicators, such as LCOE, do not provide a true picture of the full cost to the overall system of producing a kilowatt hour of power when it is needed.
- we would, as citizens valuing the democratic tradition of the European Union, ask that European sovereignty and energy independence be included as a decision-making factor. We suggest this issue is addressed up front, without waiting for the situation to go astray, too far and then lead to huge costs just to backtrack.

Nuclear, the current generation designs and the future generation designs of nuclear, is popular. And it will increasingly be. This popularity will come with two necessary collateral effects:

- **the recognition of nuclear' benefits from those who have been opposing it for years,**
- **the responsibility for the industry to live up to the expectations it already contributes to create.** Where the opponents to nuclear energy and myself as a supporter will agree is that the expectations from citizens need to be managed with care and respect, and hence the nuclear industry needs to be careful to show responsibility for the claims it makes. We have to recover from a perception in the public that has been fed with wrong claims, even fake news, for more than thirty years, the only way to recover from it is to communicate with benefits and strengths while not create distrust. No need to overdo it: nuclear already checks all the right boxes, and works hard and well to mitigate the disadvantages it has left, even though they don't compensate, by far, for its benefits.