

## Session 4: Europe's Response to Fukushima

Eduardo Diez

Argentine Council for International Relations - CARI

### Summary

The nuclear consultant **Dominique Grenêche** started the panel saying that since the birth of nuclear power there have been permanently various debates surrounding the use of this energy, which have been extremely politicized and often affected with national and international security concerns as well as economic arguments.

So, considering the consequences of the Fukushima accident in other national nuclear programs is something vital, especially in the European case. There he said that we need to differentiate 3 aspects: the impact in the public opinion (with an increment in the opposition to nuclear power); energy supplies strategies and political consequences (with cases like France and Germany, where the nuclear issue turned in an important subject in next elections); and the safety of nuclear power plants (all the 143 nuclear power plants in the UE will have “stress tests” programs).

In the case of **Barthélémy Courmont**, from the Institute for International and Strategic Relations (IRISI), Fukushima marks for some the “end of nuclear” more than Chernobyl ever did, mostly because it took place in a very advanced country (and in a democracy). After focusing on the media reaction, he analyzed the political responses in several countries, and the possible impact in the electoral campaign (especially considering the advances of the Green Part in Germany and France, with the possibility of having next year a socialist government in France allied with the Greens).

Something in what Grenêche and Courmont agreed is that, according with the polls, many people supports the possibility of moving away from the nuclear energy, but at the

same time they are opposing the necessity of paying more for the non nuclear energy, what looks like a dilemma that could also impact in the future of the nuclear energy in Europe.

In the case of **Hans-Joachim Schmidt**, from the Peace Research Institute Frankfurt (PRIF), he explained the evolution of the German nuclear program, all the debates and manifestations that that issue created, and how the Green Party increased its influence thanks to that. He believes that will be possibly for Germany to replace the nuclear energy with other technologies, but he accepts that at least in the beginning that will imply to use more carbon and gas, and increase the dependency from the Russians.

But if the change works in Germany, he thinks that will be a good example to other Europeans countries and other regions in the world that it is possibly to renounce to the nuclear energy without important economical cost, something that was put into doubts by some of the assistants to the panel.

Finally, was mentioned that the EU reached a technical consensus about the safety of the power plants, but looks almost impossible to reach a similar consensus in the political side of the nuclear energy issue, with many differences between the countries (with France and Germany as good examples of that).

If Germany ends its nuclear program in 2022, more than half of the EU will be no, and perhaps also anti, nuclear. What will happen in that case is one of the open questions that left the panel.

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