

A more detailed look at the energy policy of a country



from nuclear sources is generated in seven oower stations on the Doel and Tihange sites.



Opinion of Robert Leclere. ELECTRABEL Communications Manager

"It is clear that the German set by the Green Party for decision in 2000 to stop using nuclear power had a significant impact on the Belgian decision. There was, no doubt, concertation between the Green Party Ministers in Europe on this subject, and this was one of the conditions



its participation in the government at the time of the May 1999 elections, Evervthing could change now. The principle to renounce the use of nuclear power was included in the coalition agreement signed at that time. As you can imagine, Belgian electricity operators fought against this decision since they could not see how Belgium could manage without nuclear power. In particular. they regretted that this

important decision was not

preceded by a detailed

Belgium The end of nuclear?

At the beginning of 2003, Belgium became the second European country (after Germany) to renounce generation of nuclear powered electricity, with an operating lifetime of reactors limited to 40 years and a ban on new power stations. Will the new government coalition confirm this choice?

he law voted on December 6 last year by the House of Representatives and confirmed by the Senate on January 16, 2003 organized for termination of the Belgian nuclear power program. The government mentioned several reasons, first the intention to shutdown a system that generates waste and "leaves a potential danger for future generations". Another stated objective is to reduce the "increased" risk of the proliferation of fissile materials in a world environment in which threats from uncontrolled groups are increasing. Finally, the Belgian government would like to protect the population against the danger of an accident,

which although improbable, is considered as being "unmanageable" if it occurs. In its current state, the law requires the Belgian electricity producer (CREG) to implement measures to replace the generation of nuclear powered electricity, first with fossil fuels (oil, coal and gas) gradually making up the difference, since the share of renewable energies will remain very low (1.1%). At the moment, apart from the nuclear, Belgium produces 37.9% of its electricity from conventional thermal power stations (including coal 12.5%, gas 23.3%) and fuel oil 2.1%), the remainder (4%) being supplied by hydroelectric energy and other renewable energies.



Belgium has the second highest proportion of nuclear-generated electricity in the European Union.

Its ratio of nuclear powered electricity is 56%, the highest after France (76%).

A renewed debate

Belgian nuclear electricity producers and various professional federations disagreed with the government decision on three basic points. First, terminating nuclear power generation could bring Belgian industry into a period of uncertainty, particularly for companies consuming large quantities of energy. Second is the commitment made in Kyoto in 1997 regarding the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. Finally, is it really possible, or desirable to drastically reducing electricity consumption in the current economic and competitive conif not abandon it.

analysis of the situation, considering technical, economic and environmental aspects. Admittedly, a force maieure clause in this law allows for continued use of nuclear power up to the last moment, if the analysis by the regulatory organizations shows that the energy security of the country would be threatened. But the situation will become worse as the date on which the first reactor is due to close (2015) becomes closer. We cannot afford to make a mistake with a step that would be irreversible"

text? Almost 60% of electricity would have to be generated otherwise, and the only way to do it would be to use thermal, gas or coal-fired power stations. And there is still the problem of CO_2 emissions. Therefore the debate is not closed, despite the vote for the law. The former Belgian government had considered the possibility of abrogating the law if exceptional conditions merited it. But now that the Green Party no longer forms part of the government, some Members of Parliament would like to go further and modify the law quickly,

Climatologist at the Louvain Catholic University (Belgium) and director of the George-Lemaitre bne ymonoritze geophysics service.



Nuclear in Europe

Seen by Pr. André Berger

"Terminating nuclear powered electricity at the beginning of the twenty-first century would not only be an anachronism, it would be a mistake. Continuing to develop nuclear electricity is an efficient way of supporting sustainable development... France must remain firm with its nuclear program. Otherwise, electricity generation in Europe would become bankrupt after the decisions made is a risk civilization. Nuclear by Belgium and Germany, and also Italy and the United Kingdom, to stop using nuclear power. None of the countries mentioned can satisfy its internal electricity demand and at the same time uphold its Kyoto commitments on greenhouse emission gases. The solution lies essentially in the production of electricity without emitting CO₂. The only genuine help

comes from nuclear powered electricity. But to understand this, the problem needs to be analyzed objectively, without subjective and sectarian arguments. In a field as sensitive as this, the only way to calmly approach the truth is to hold discussions based on specific facts since the arguments used against nuclear power are not justified. Whether we like it or not, our civilization powered electricity is one of the lowest risks that we have to face. Considering the decision of some European countries to 'opt out' of nuclear power, we should expect that large amounts of electricity will be purchased from France, Finland and Sweden in coming years, three European countries that maintain an 'intelligent' attitude towards energy."