



ODBOROVÝ SVAZ ECHO



Climate Fight Needs Nuclear

COP26 is a chance for policymakers to choose emission-free energy, good jobs and sustainable prosperity. That means choosing nuclear power as part of a balanced energy system. Too often, climate activism and discourse has ignored nuclear and muted the voice of the people who rely on it. People are crying out for practical solutions to the climate crisis, ones that offer real hope in a green economy.

As union leaders, we will make their voices heard. Our world needs much more clean, reliable and affordable energy, and our members need secure, quality employment. Nuclear delivers both, and that's why we need more nuclear.

This issue is the subject of a political debate. There is no scientific debate: every serious expert analysis confirms that we need nuclear to hit net zero. Nuclear has already saved 70 billion tons of CO₂ emissions worldwide, and provides clean power for hundreds of millions of people. Crucially, it is our only clean source of electricity that is available 24/7, whatever the weather, and can be deployed in any country that wants it.

From a human perspective, nuclear is the most jobs-rich form of zero-carbon energy on Earth. Today, nuclear sustains millions of jobs across the world for communities who need them. Nuclear jobs are skilled, secure, and long-term, well-paid with good conditions. They are jobs free from the precarity of modern economies, where workers have union cards and rights at work. Crucially, nuclear power guarantees jobs in the country that chooses to deploy it. The work of operating a power plant cannot be moved offshore. It stays in the community.

We urge any sceptics of nuclear to look at the communities that have benefited from nuclear investment—in the Midwest in the United States, the Great Lakes in Canada, in northern Britain and rural France, and every single place a plant has been built. They show us what our net zero future could be: clean and affordable energy, great jobs, thriving local supply chains and opportunities for the next generation.

If we want that to be our future, we need to make the investments today. Without new investment, more than 100 gigawatts of nuclear capacity, enough to supply 200 million homes, will retire by 2040. That would probably cost us half a million jobs and represent the single greatest loss of clean power in world history. The flip side is that the IEA's "Net Zero Emissions" Scenario forecasts a doubling of nuclear power generation between now and 2050. Such a bold program would drastically cut emissions and provide two million more chances to our young people to get ahead in life. Whether or not we seize those chances is a test of our courage.

We should not be cowed by outdated prejudices and pickled dogmas that would have us abandon nuclear. Nuclear phase-outs do not work. They raise emissions, and they cost jobs. In the United States, premature plant closures will devastate local economies that depend on a strong nuclear workforce. In Germany, coal and Russian gas will fill the gap left by closing nuclear plants. In Belgium, gas imports will replace the homegrown power and green jobs of nuclear plants forced to close decades before their time. These are the facts of phase-outs, simple and inescapable.

Net zero cannot be reduced to simple slogans. Net zero must be about people. They will be the ones who will have to live in this new world, who will have to find work, pay bills and raise families. This requires us to move beyond warm words to willing the means, with an active industrial strategy underpinned by investment. Policymakers and countries need to choose nuclear investment now. Today is when we will choose the world we want our children to live in. COP26 is our moment to make the right choice.

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