



**Union Nationale des Syndicats de l'Énergie Nucléaire,
de la Recherche, et des Industries Connexes
UNSENRIC C.G.T.F.O (Fédéchimie FORCE OUVRIÈRE)**

Note on nuclear industry: Analysis and Claims

Unsenric CGTFO - (V1.5 10/2012)



**IndustriALL Global Union
International Nuclear Workers' Unions' Network (INWUN) Meeting &
Electric Power Sector World Meeting
31 October – 1 November 2012, Ankara, Turkey**

"Bread, Peace and Freedom", this secular slogan of the international labour movement is more than ever on the agenda in relation to the most serious crisis faced by the capitalism since the Second World War.

While some would be keen to restrict the crisis to the financial sphere, confederation FO immediately asserted it was a crisis of the capitalist system. One can even speak of a crisis of humanity, if we consider the wars, famine, and more generally the poverty of people, men, women, children and elderly.

The capitalist economy is freed of any political control by nations, that is to say, by sovereign people. Its self-proclaimed institutions dictate regressive measures that hit people and hinder economic and social development.

Similarly, the exploitation of natural resources as well as financial, industrial and finally human resources with the sole aim of profit maximization confiscated a few people at the expense of improving the condition of the majority of others, dangerously increases the dangers threatening peace and freedom in the world, and the environment, ie the very conditions of life.

FO has for decades claimed that energy policy should be recognized as a priority and a basic condition for economic development and social progress. In the words of Michel Pecqueur, energy is "the lifeblood of the economy."

A coherent and well-controlled energy policy is necessary because it affects economic development and employment, particularly in manufacturing industries (In 1980, the FO Confederal Congress adopted a resolution on "energy" which remains fully valid in all its parts).

Recessionary periods that have affected the global economy in the last 40 years were triggered among others by the crises of energy supply. They led the French Republic to intensify and accelerate the development of a comprehensive program of nuclear power, which currently provides 75% of the supply of electricity at a generally lower cost than in other industrialized countries. Thanks to treatment and recycling, France also has a large stock of energy that can be used later.

The development of this program was made possible by the national scientific research relying on manufacturing companies. It has now have a large amount of knowledge and exportable expertise whose excellence is recognized everywhere, including in terms of control, safety and security.

The sector was built by different historical actors: CEA¹ and Cogema and its subsidiaries Areva NC, EDF², Creusot-Loire (Empain-Schneider) and Framatome and Areva NP. Today EDF, CEA and AREVA remain. Reflections were underway at the government level for a possible reorganization of the entire industry. The Roussely report of 2010 addressed this issue, but only the summary of the report was made public, so the social partners have been deprived of food for thought.

After the presidential and legislative elections of 2012, a new debate has been launched on energy policy during the campaign of the elected President, F. Hollande, namely the reduction from 75 to 50% of the share of nuclear power in the energy mix. A first decision strongly opposed by FO (and CGT) is the closure of the Fessenheim reactors in 2017. In parallel, other unions (CFDT) oppose the construction of a second EPR³ in the country.

According to FO, research efforts must be continued, including the near future reactors. As such, FO supports the proposed fast reactor Astrid (for memory FO was not favorable to stop Superphénix FBR).

After the nuclear accident at Three Mile Island (in 1979, without consequence for the population), Chernobyl in 1986 and Fukushima following a tsunami in 2011, the security and safety of nuclear installations in the world, in Europe and France in particular seems to be given back the priority it would not cease to be.

It is clear that the appetite of industrial groups, not only French, for profit, particularly in this area that requires heavy investment with a long time back, in a context of opening up competition of the market electricity in Europe against national public monopolies has led to inappropriate policies.

Governments obsessed with a balanced budget and the European criterion of 3% (deficit) on one side have punctured the accounts of these public enterprises which increased the search for lower costs, and on the other side drastically decreased budget allocation to the CEA endangering the research essential to the sustainability of the sector.

The objective of permanent cost reduction has led to investment policies, maintenance, personnel management, method of management, control, which in France broke down the margin of safety which is now at the last acceptable limit.

In particular, FO has repeatedly condemned the meaningless expansion of subcontracting. It has the effect or purpose of lowering the labour cost, downgrade qualifications, to the detriment of the rights, health and safety of employees. It is also a dangerous politic for facilities, people and the environment.

Certainly in France questions of safety and security are largely taken into account in the design of facilities, but experience shows that not everything is predictable. It is therefore essential to have high margins to prevent or manage accident situations, whatever the cause and the sequence.

¹ Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique (French Atomic Energy Commission)

² Électricité de France

³ Areva European Pressurized Reactor

The concept of risk has changed significantly, and the technological risk is curiously become "socially" unbearable while statistics show that it has never been lower in industrialized countries.

No activity can know a zero risk, and fear can't avoid danger. This is why FO has always fought on all fronts for the best guarantees of safety and security, both for workers who are first exposed for people and the environment. If the "ALARA" principle (As Low As Reasonably Achievable) principle should be applied to the risks and exposures to ionizing radiation, an "AHAP" principle (As High As Possible) should be applied for the safety and security.

It must be the cornerstone of management policies in public industrial groups concerned, more than the search for appropriate conditions to the introduction of assets at the stock exchange; which requires the presentation of attractive balance sheets.

FO has always considered that the production of electricity should be realized from all available and usable energy sources. This is why FO never opposed, even moderately, the development of a nuclear energy industry and associated research.

On the contrary, favourable to the development of all energy sources, FO has always been aware of the economic benefit provided by the unquestionable nuclear power generation, and the excellence achieved in this sector by companies and research and control organizations.

In addition, the global situation must be taken into account : the stocks of fossil fuels (oil and gas) in both financial and environmental affordable costs are limited to a few decades, unless many countries and their populations are affected through the conditions of their essential development.

The environmental consequences of fossil fuel combustion (massive emissions of greenhouse gases, global warming) may be limited if the industrialized countries use low-carbon energy production means. The nuclear power has its due place among other means.

If the nuclear industry has consequences for the environment and people, this is not the only one, far from it. The production and consumption of fossil fuels have today adverse effects, which first affect workers and people (eg the Chinese coal industry). WHO (World Health Organization) has long indicated that the impact of the nuclear industry on the environment during normal operation produces environmental pollution whose consequences are less acute than those resulting from many cycles of operation of other fuels.

In France, the environmental consequences of nuclear (excluding accidents) are controlled and mastered, the waste is stored and managed, limited releases by public license (decrees). Countless measurements are made in the environment and scientific studies are conducted. However, uncertainties persist (effect of low doses, for example) which require deeper knowledge through research.

Even if everything is still perfectible, and efforts in this direction should be increased, the national nuclear industry can and should export its knowledge and know-how to secure the production of nuclear energy. With the necessary security, nuclear energy is not a transition but abundant energy and sustainable cost.

In this context, FO believes that nuclear energy is unavoidable in the short and medium term, not only in France but in all countries where this is possible. This is the only technique available immediately for mass production and efficient use of electricity required to meet the explosive demand in countries that desperately need it.

This does not exclude that all efforts should be made to reduce in the same time redundant consumption, to search for alternative energy solutions and to question the destructive short-sighted global economic model. But however FO can not accept that efforts made to save energy or develop the so-called renewable energy lead to a policy of restricting supply or increase prices, which could only lead to an economy austerity and sharing of scarcity.

Although monitoring and control is in France at a level at least equal to what is done elsewhere, the Fukushima accident, caused by a natural disaster on an unprecedented scale, led to a pertinent fresh look on safety and security of French nuclear facilities both at a technical and organizational level. In fact, the first inspections realized in this new framework reveal abnormalities which were not detected during routine inspections.

However, FO is concerned that public authorities and employers forget that workers are the first and the most exposed to risks inherent to the nuclear industry. Moreover, these workers are the essential guarantors of safety and security facilities and their operation, including degraded mode or accidental.

However, the rights and working conditions of thousands of workers involved in the nuclear remain uneven, inadequate and unworthy for employees of outsourcing.

This situation, which disproportionately deteriorated, is unfortunately not a new one: since the 70s, FO has claimed for all nuclear employees in France safeguards and equivalent rights negotiated in a collective and conventional framework. If the nuclear industry is not quite similar to any other industry, nuclear workers are workers like the others and should enjoy the same freedom to determine their coverage through negotiation.

According to FO, there is an urgent need to improve the situation by providing a positive response to this claim.

FORCE OUVRIÈRE is determined that nuclear employees are not forgotten by industrial and political decisions. This is why FO claims promptly discussions, for example in the context of the National Conference of Industry, which should help to overcome the obstacles faced in the past.

UNSENTRIC CGTFO considers:

- In all circumstances safety and security should be made a priority and not profitability and competitiveness, which implies maintaining or bringing back the nuclear industry under public control
- To accomplish its mission, research must benefit from considerable resources , which can not depend on the profitability of the industry in order to anticipate and enlighten the whole industry

- The means and independence of regulators and expertise: ASN⁴, IRSN⁵, recognized as among the best in international, must be guaranteed by public budgets up to their missions and needs
- Local Information Commissions, whose role is essential and recognized in the information of the population, should receive additional resources provided by the 2006 TSN⁶ Act , that is to say, the assignment of a share of the INB⁷ tax
- Finally, we repeat, there is an urgent need to substantially improve the rights and working conditions of thousands of workers involved in the nuclear industry.

Unsenric-FO hopes that this last point is the subject of discussions in the first part of this committee.

The most suitable situation would come from the reinternalisation of all tasks outsourced or hived, as soon as therefore the employees' workplace is a BNI.

Alternatively, a conventional instrument must be implemented in order to harmonize the rights and working conditions. Such an instrument can be a national collective agreement that is to be nationalized, or a national interprofessional agreement requiring compliance with a number of provisions in the Conventions of existing branches.

To do so, FO favours a negotiation between employers and unions. This implies that public authorities, policy makers for State-owned industries and their countless subsidiaries, work on the implementation of an organization of employers at the branch level.

On the content of such a negotiation, we can indicate briefly at this point and outside of the mandatory provisions in the case of a collective agreement, that issues qualifications, monitoring and medical dosimetry, the hardship, working conditions and intervention, accidents at work and occupational diseases, the inability to work, etc., should be treated.

Note on Local Information Committees

The Prime Minister's circular of 15 December 1981 called circular Mauroy has created a very interesting tool and enabled the establishment of Local Information Committees (CLI) with basic nuclear installations and all similar structures.

The task of these committees is both a fact-finding mission and ongoing monitoring of the impact of major energy facilities. There is a CLI for each great nuclear site.

They are composed of local elected officials, scientists, trade unions and associations of protection of the environment. They meet several times a year and can conduct studies.

⁴ Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire Française (French Nuclear Safety Authority)

⁵ Institut de Radioprotection et de Sûreté Nucléaire (French Institute for Radiological Protection and Nuclear Safety)

⁶ Loi Transparence et Sûreté Nucléaire (French Act for transparency and nuclear safety)

⁷ Installation Nucléaire de Base (Basic Nuclear Installation)