



European Economic and Social Committee

Speaking notes from Janos Toth

**Conference –Nuclear energy: Opportunities and Risks -
views of European Civil Society and Stakeholders, 30th
November 2009 at the EESC**

- Dear Members of the European Parliament, representatives from the European Commission, Members of the Committee, distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,
- I am pleased to welcome you in my **double** role of the President of the EESC's Section for Transport, Energy, Infrastructure and the Information society and as the Chairman of the “Transparency” Working Group of the European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF).
- This conference being prepared in the framework of the ENEF, I would like to thank once again the European

Commission represented here by Mr Dominique Ristori, as well as the chairs of the two other ENEF working groups, Mr Jean-Pol Poncelet, chair of the Opportunities Working Group, and, Mr Walter Hohlefelder, chair of the Risks Working Group, who is today represented by Mr Eero Patrakka.

- As highlighted by my colleague Irini Pari, today's debate is in keeping with both the important priority of the EESC to raise the consciousness of citizens about different energy options and with the broader mission of the ENEF to encourage stakeholder dialogue and wide societal communication on nuclear energy.
- One of the challenges of the Working Group "Transparency" that I have the honour to chair, is to promote a real, inclusive dialogue among all groups of civil society on the future of nuclear energy. The European Nuclear Energy Forum plays already an important role in enabling a structured and regular exchange between the main representatives of the sector. This is remarkable to note as, a few years ago, there was no such instance to stimulate a dialogue of that sort.

- However, I think that one must do more on that count.
- As a member of the EESC, I have an almost natural inclination and attention to those who are not generally part of high-level discussion in European fora. In the nuclear energy domain, there is a large number of important actors who have not been invited to express their views so far and who have yet important messages to say to policy- and decision-makers: I mean, for example, the workers of the nuclear energy industry, those who live around nuclear installations, the electricity consumers, and, of course, the European citizen.
- Rapidly after I took up the position of Chair of the ENEF Transparency Working Group, I decided to organise regular conferences that give an opportunity to these actors to express themselves freely and openly. . We had a first EESC conference in January 2009 where we essentially discussed how transparency can be promoted throughout the whole sector of nuclear energy. On this occasion, we invited several European citizens to sit in the

conference panels and to challenge the views of the speakers.

- Today, in this second conference, we would like to present the work of the two other ENEF Working Groups on "Opportunities" and "Risks" from the perspective of the needed transparency. Two aspects will essentially be addressed: the competitiveness of the sector (in connection to the opportunities Working Group) and the management of nuclear wastes (in connection with the Risks Working Group).
- The next step for the "Transparency" working group would be to "go local" and to support the development of national and local fora on nuclear energy. It is of high importance if we want to achieve the objective of making transparency real to as many Europeans as possible....
- In this respect I would like to praise different initiatives, already in good progress, such as the ones promoted by the Group of European Municipalities with Nuclear Facilities (known as GMF) and by the National Association

of Local Committees for Information on nuclear activities (known as ANCLI).

- Another axe of the "Transparency" WG is to establish a common understanding of *transparency in the field of nuclear energy* and to give concrete advice for stakeholders on **how to be really transparent**. Here, I should mention that the working group Transparency elaborated a set of Concrete Recommendations, accompanied by definitions regarding the information, communication, participation and decision-making. These Recommendations will be soon completed by guidelines in the form of best practices based on the experiences collected by the ENEF members.
- To conclude, I hope today's conference will enable those who are not participating in the ENEF to express their opinion in the most open and democratic manner.
- As a Chair of the ENEF Working Group, I will ensure that the diversity of viewpoints expressed in this room are carefully noted down, to nourish our further works in the group.

- My duty will be to feedback your views, in the best possible way, at the next ENEF Plenary Session in May 2010 in Bratislava. I therefore sincerely hope that today's debates will be as constructive and wide-ranging as possible.
- I now give the floor to Mr Jean-Pol Poncelet who will present the results of the WG "Opportunities" on the competitiveness of the nuclear energy.