

Beat: Politics

Remembering Chernobyl

EP plenary session

Madrid / Brussels, 27.04.2016, 21:14 Time

USPA NEWS - President of the European Parliament, Martin Schulz, opened the session Wednesday by recalling the victims and heroes of Chernobyl nuclear disaster, 30 years ago in what was then the Ukrainian Soviet Republic.

The explosion and meltdown of reactor core 4 ejected a vast radioactive cloud that contaminated large parts of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and central Europe as far as the North Cape. "This disaster reminds us of Europe's duty to ensure that its nuclear reactors are safe," he said. "Even today, the exact number of people who fell sick or died due to radiation is controversial and probably will never be determined exactly. Death estimates vary from a few thousand to hundreds of thousands," noted President Schulz.

He praised the heroes, mostly young men, who were sent in without proper protection or warning to try to contain the radiation and paid for their commitment with their lives. "Chernobyl remains a ruin, a memorial to the disaster - and also a problem. The new protective sarcophagus, which is to replace the temporary one built in 1986, will be completed in 2017 at the earliest, and at a cost of 1.5 billion euros or even 2 billion euros," he said. "Beyond partisan and nation-state disputes over the use of nuclear power, we must at least ensure that nuclear power plants in Europe and our environment are safe. That's the warning and the imperative of the Chernobyl meltdown 30 years ago today," concluded Martin Schulz.

Article online:

<https://www.uspa24.com/bericht-7812/remembering-chernobyl.html>

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V.i.S.d.P. & Sect. 6 MDSStV (German Interstate Media Services Agreement): Jose A. Martin

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Editorial program service of General News Agency:

United Press Association, Inc.
3651 Lindell Road, Suite D168
Las Vegas, NV 89103, USA
(702) 943.0321 Local
(702) 943.0233 Facsimile
info@unitedpressassociation.org
info@gna24.com
www.gna24.com