



For Immediate Release

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EPR Reactors & Hinkley Point C: Time to close down a disastrous episode.

Further delays have been announced for the planned opening dates for the European Pressurised Reactors (EPR's) at Flamanville in France and Olkiluoto in Finland. These are both forerunners of the type of reactor being planned for Hinkley Point C.

'Le Monde' reports today that the Flamanville EPR is likely to experience further delays. The French Nuclear Safety Authority is expected to order the repair of defective welds or additional studies to ensure their longer-term reliability. It has been suggested in media reports these delays could add as much as another two years to the project.

Construction began at Flamanville in 2007, and it was originally expected to commence operation in 2012 but it may not now open until early 2020 or even 2021. It was originally expected to cost 3.5 billion euros, but the cost has now risen to 11 billion euros. While the site is almost finished, a core factor in the delay is quality differences found in the welding of the secondary circuit discharging steam to the turbine. The nuclear regulator remains highly concerned about the quality of the welds – a critical nuclear safety issue for the operation of the reactor. (1)

The third EPR being built in Europe is at Olkiluoto in Finland. It has been announced that fuel loading will be postponed by a further two months at least, to August 2019 rather than June 2019. First commercial production of electricity was scheduled for January 2020, but this too will be delayed.

The construction of Olkiluoto-3, a 1,600-MW EPR unit, began in August 2005 and is about nine years behind schedule. In March 2018 TVO signed an agreement with Areva-Siemens over costs and losses caused by delays to the project. The settlement included compensation of €450m, to be paid in two instalments, part of a project with a cost overrun of around 6 billion euros. (2)

Stop Hinkley spokesperson Roy Pumfrey said:

“It really is time to scrap Hinkley Point C before it turns into yet another EPR fiasco. It is still likely to be cheaper for electricity consumers to cancel Hinkley and pay the cancellation costs than it would be to soldier on. (3) The cost of renewables has been falling rapidly and the National Grid has said the system will be ready, willing and able to accept 100% renewables by 2025. (4) We don't need to pay for expensive new nuclear stations.”

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Notes:

- (1) Le Monde 10th April 2019 https://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2019/04/10/nucleaire-l-epr-de-flamanville-risque-de-connaître-de-nouveaux-retards_5448479_3234.html
- (2) Nucnet 10th April 2019 <https://www.nucnet.org/all-the-news/2019/04/10/finland-s-tvo-announces-further-delay-to-olkiluoto-3-epr-project>
- (3) See <http://www.no2nuclearpower.org.uk/wp/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Time-to-Cancel-HinkleyFinal.pdf>
- (4) National Grid ESO 1st April 2019 <https://www.nationalgrideso.com/document/141031/download>