

The Babushkas of Chernobyl



Pierre Scalliet

Pierre is head of the radiation oncology department at Cliniques Universitaires Saint Luc. He is a radiation oncologist and specialises in breast and digestive cancer. Pierre was a professor in oncology and radioprotection at the Université Catholique de Louvain Medical School since 1995 and professor at the University of Antwerp 1989-1995. Pierre is an expert at IAEA in medical application of radiation. Born in 1953, he is married, has 6 children and is also a grandfather.



Kathrin Glastra

Kathrin is the Director of the European Energy Transition Programme at the Heinrich Böll Foundation's EU office in Brussels. She is responsible for the European perspectives and coordinates the Foundation's network EnergyTransition@EU, a joint project between the offices in Berlin, Brussels, Paris, Prague, Thessaloniki and Warsaw. This network aims at discussing challenges and opportunities of energy transitions in Europe; strengthening a mutual, solution-oriented dialogue among the EU Member States. Prior to joining the foundation, Kathrin worked in an EU consultancy.



Markus Trilling

Markus is an EU Policy Officer, Bankwatch, Brussels. Since 2010 Markus has lead the campaign on greening EU funds, coordinating the activities of Bankwatch member groups in eight countries in the CEE region. Based in Brussels, he is substantially involved in the EU campaign for mobilizing EU public finance for sustainable development targeting the relevant stakeholders. European Commission, the European Parliament, the Council and other relevant organisations from countries across central and eastern Europe (CEE).



Carlos Jimenez

Carlos is the Desk Officer for Spain and Andorra at the United Nations Regional Information Centre in Brussels. Mr. Jimenez started his career at the United Nations in 1984 and has since worked at UN offices in New York, Madrid and Geneva. He studied journalism at the School of Communications of American University in Washington and was a correspondent at EFE, Spanish News Agency.

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30 Years Since the Chernobyl Nuclear Disaster

UNITED NATIONS SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE ON THE EFFECTS OF ATOMIC RADIATION

The United Nations Scientific Committee on the effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR) was established by the General Assembly of the United Nations in 1955. Its mandate in the United Nations system is to assess and report levels and effects of exposure to ionizing radiation. Governments and organizations throughout the world rely on the Committee's estimates as the scientific basis for evaluating radiation risk and for establishing protective measures.

The small secretariat in Vienna, which is functionally linked to the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), organizes the annual sessions and manages the preparation of documents for the Committee's scrutiny.

The accident at the Chernobyl nuclear reactor that occurred on 26 April 1986 was the most serious accident ever to occur in the nuclear power industry.

In response, the authorities evacuated, in 1986, about 115,000 people from areas surrounding the reactor and subsequently relocated, after 1986, about 220,000 people from Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine. The accident caused serious social and psychological disruption in the lives of those affected and vast economic losses over the entire region.

The impact of nuclear radiation upon human health:

Up to 2005, more than 6,000 cases of thyroid cancer were reported in children and adolescents among the residents of Belarus, the Russian Federation and Ukraine who were exposed at the time of the accident, and more cases can be expected during the next decades. Notwithstanding the influence of enhanced screening regimes, many of those cancers were most likely caused by radiation exposures shortly after the accident.

The radionuclides released from the reactor that caused exposure of individuals were mainly iodine-131, caesium-134 and caesium-137. Iodine-131 has a short radioactive half-life (eight days), but it can be transferred to humans relatively rapidly from the air and through consumption of contaminated milk and leafy vegetables. Iodine becomes localized in the thyroid gland. For reasons related to the intake of milk and dairy products by infants and children, as well as the size of their thyroid glands and their metabolism, the radiation doses are usually higher for them than for adults.

For more information visit: <http://www.unscear.org/unscear/en/chernobyl.html>



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