

The Ecomodernist Society of Finland's Comment on the Update to Finnish Nuclear Law

Our nuclear law needs to enable the use of advanced nuclear reactors

The update to our current nuclear law fixes some current issues and updates the nuclear law to meet today's European requirements and the situation here in Finland. If Finland aims to be a leader in clean energy and climate mitigation technologies, we need a more comprehensive and open-minded update on the nuclear law.

Practically all the credible scenarios and roadmaps (for example IPCC 2014) for effective climate mitigation require a significant increase to our current global nuclear capacity. The next generation of advanced reactors, commercializing in 2020s and 2030s, aims to answer precisely the needs that Finland will be facing after cleaning up its electricity grid in the early 2020s: Synthetic fuels for transportation, clean heat for district heating and high temperatures for industrial processes.

The next, more comprehensive update on the Finnish nuclear law should answer these future needs:

1. Permitting and construction process of standardized small modular reactors needs to be streamlined to be both more affordable and much faster than today. The current law makes it impractical at best to license and build standardized small reactors for various uses.
2. It needs to be possible to experiment on building and using new reactor concepts. The current regulation is done almost exclusively for light water reactors, but there is a multitude of other interesting designs entering the market in the coming years.
3. Used nuclear fuel holds many untapped possibilities: reprocessing, importing/exporting, using it to fuel breeder reactors and all the services and know-how regarding these possibilities offer huge possibilities to sell services and expertise both domestically and abroad. The law needs to better enable these technologies and opportunities.

By being open-minded and at the forefront of nuclear technology development, Finland can carve out a significant portion of the global nuclear technology and -services market in the future. Nuclear has currently a bad reputation in many OECD countries, but that needs to change if we are to mitigate climate change effectively - and in many countries, it is already changing. Finland can be at the cutting edge of advanced nuclear, along with countries like Canada, UK, China and The United States. We can gain enormous benefits by both holding on to and improving our current know-how on nuclear technologies and by allowing those technologies to be developed and implemented in Finland.

More information: The Ecomodernist Society of Finland

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