

Austria's Anti-Nuclear Crusade

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Content

- 1955 to 1968: The Pro-nuclear period in Austria
- 1968 to 1978: Planning, construction and suspension of the Austrian Nuclear Power Plant Zwentendorf
- 1978 to 1990: Formation of the Austrian anti-nuclear policy
- 1990 to 1999: Austria's fight against the NPP Mochovce, Slovak Republic
- 1994 till now: Austria's fight against the NPP Temelin, Czech Republic

1955 to 1968

- December 8th 1953: „Atoms for Peace Declaration“ by President Eisenhower
- 1955 First Geneva Conference
- Austria built three research reactors:
 - one industrial oriented 10 MW at Seibersdorf,
 - one 250 kW university training reactor in Vienna
 - one 1 kW university training reactor in Graz
- Reactors served to plan several nuclear power plants (NPP) in the 1970-ies and 80-ies in Austria

Seibersdorf 10 MW MTR Reactor



- Initial criticality
24.9.1960
- Final shut down
31.7.1999
- Under decommissioning
since
- Ultimate aim: To
conserve the reactor hall
for waste storage



TRIGA Mark II Reactor

- Initial criticality
7.3.1962
- In operation five days
a week, 45 weeks per
year for education and
training
- Scheduled to operate
until 2016

Graz Argonaut Reactor



- Initial criticality
17.5.1965
Final shut down 31.7.2004
- Fuel to be returned
to USA by end of
2005
- Decommissioned
2006

The period 1968 to 1978

- 1968 „*Kernkraftwerksplanungsgesellschaft KKWP*“ founded
- 1970 „*Gemeinschaftskernkraftwerk Tullnerfeld GmbH GKT*“ founded
- 1972 construction permit issued and work at NPP started immediately
- Early 1970-ies: world wide **anti-nuclear movement** also in Austria, public discussion on safety and need of nuclear energy in Austria

NPP Zwentendorf



- 730 MW_e Boiling Water Reactor (BWR Design model 69) built by KWU (originally AEG)

The Kreisky Referendum

- 1978 Chancellor Kreisky (Social Democratic Party SPÖ, pro nuclear) decided **public referendum** on the future of nuclear power in Austria
 - Strong political aspect brought into technical discussion
 - NPP originally proposed by Christian Democratic Party (ÖVP)
 - Kreisky promised to resign if referendum outcome is negative
 - ÖVP saw chance to get rid of Kreisky, therefore many pro-nuclear ÖVP party members voted anti-nuclear
 - Referendum on November 5th 1978
 - *31,6% against the NPP,*
 - *31,0% for NPP,*
 - *35,9% did not participate,*
 - *1,5% invalid*
- in summery difference of 30 000 votes with 5 million allowed voters
- December 1st 1978 Parliament issued a law which forbids „*the use of nuclear fission for energy production Austria*“, the law can only be changed by a 2/3 majority and **Kreisky did NOT resign**

Start of the anti-nuclear movement 1978 to 1990

- The NPP was placed in a conservation state for a possible later restart
- **1979 Three Mile Island accident**
- **1986 Chernobyl accident**
- Final blow to the NPP, some components sold but the major components are still in a kind of „**Historical Nuclear Monument**“
- **1978 Reactor Safety Commission (RSC)** to conserve nuclear knowledge established, composed of national and international experts
- 1990 Eastern Europe disintegrated
- Austrian Government realized NPP's of Soviet design in operation or planning near the Austrian border
- RSC dissolved under dubious legal aspects by Chancellor Vranitzky
- Replaced by group called „**Forum für Atomfragen FAF**“ mainly composed of persons with well known anti-nuclear background

1990 to 1999 Mochovce Fight

- FAF supported Austrian government with technical expertise in it's anti-nuclear strategy towards neighbour countries
- First test case: Two **Slovak WWER 440/213 in Mochovce**
- Slovak Republic (SR) supplied all requested documents to FAF
- Final FAF report states that NPP Mochovce
 - is basically unsafe,
 - does not fulfil international safety standards and
 - poses a high risk to Austria
- SR tried to obtain **EBRD credit** to finance the NPP completion
- Austria successfully blocked allocation of the credit
- Austria appealed to the EU Commission and EU Parliament
- Austrian politicians engaged as quasi-religious missionaries for a *„Nuclear Free Central Europe“*
- Supported by an almost paranoid attitude of Austria's media against any nuclear issue

- May 22, 1998 anti-nuclear activists occupied the Slovak Embassy
- FAF warned of a „*Super GAU in Mochovce*“
- Chancellor Klima warned SR that Mochovce case could play an important role in the Austrian's support for the Slovak EU accession
- June 9th 1998 one major Austrian newspaper announced „*The lethal reactor is switched on, danger is growing from day to day*“
- During start-up tests of the NPP test shut downs were presented by Austrian newspapers using titles as „*The lethal reactor is already defect during start-up*“
- December 2, 1999 one major newspaper headline says „*In front of the rubble of Austria's anti-nuclear policy*“.
- 2nd NPP unit was made critical on December 1st 1999 without any major protest

Since 1994: Temelin Fight

- Since 1978 Czechoslovakia planned 4x1000 MWe reactors at the site of Temelin
- Project on hold until early 90-ies
- Strong opposition in Austria under Chancellor Vranitzky
- Since the mid 90-ies Austria tried to make **Temelin a European problem**
- It also **linked Temelin with imminent EU accession of Czech Republic (CR)** warned to veto the energy negotiations
- In same period major **political changes in Austria**: Former Social Democratic (SPÖ) government replaced by coalition government with Christian Democrats (ÖVP) and right wing Freedom Party (FPÖ)
- **EU sanctions against Austria** lasting over a year
- CR supplied all requested NPP documents to FAF

- Austria required from Czechs **German safety standards for Temelin**
- Temelin was **first NPP placing work progress in Internet**
- Strongly abused by Austrian media and anti-nuclear groups, **every minor problem was a major nuclear accident**
- In 2000 many high level bilateral political and technical negotiations with no visible results
- **EU was requested as mediator**, several meetings in the Austrian town of Melk and in Brussels
- Frequent **road and border blocks** in Austria by anti-nuclear groups
- Overall **anti-nuclear phobia** created by media
- Finally EU Commissioner for EU enlargement **G. Verheugen** brought parties together to find way out of dead end

- After many meetings on December 12, 2000 the **Melk Protocol** signed which included

1. Extended Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)
2. Early and direct information system between the two countries
3. Austrian monitoring station near the NPP Temelin
4. Close cooperation on energy research
5. No road or border blocks
6. Both countries agreed to support EU enlargement

Full text in

- www.umweltbundesamt.at/umweltschutz/kernenergie/akw/temelin/etemelk/

- Melk Protocol criticized by anti-nuclear groups
- In 2001 many high level meetings up to Prime Ministers
- Austrian list containing 29 technical deficiencies reduced to three major concerns
 - Safety of blow down valves in primary circuit
 - Wipe effect of pipes near containment penetration at +28.8 m
 - Capacity of emergency batteries
- Temelin issue reduced to legal issue how to produce a bilateral binding contract on open safety issues
- November 29, 2001 trilateral agreement (**Brussels Protocol**) was signed, full text in
- www.umweltbundesamt.at/fileadmin/site/umweltthemen/kernenergie/temelin/Roadmap/Br_ssel/bruessel_eng.pdf

- Results heavily criticized by SPÖ, FPÖ and Green Party
- Austrian internal politics completely blocked in 2001 by the Temelin case
- FPÖ organised referendum in January 2002, signed by less than one million citizens (=15.5% of voters)
- Austrian coalition government almost broke up
- Provincial government of Upper Austria brought suit against CEZ in an Austrian court
- Rejected as Austrian court has no rule over a sovereign country
- General problem: „Sovereignty“ and relationship between EU Member States and Candidate Countries
- Chancellor Schüssel (A) and Prime Minister Spidla (CZ) agreed to attach Melk Protocol to the Czech Accession Treaty, but it remains a bilateral agreement

Final Remarks

- Technical matters completely covered by political aspects in a multi-layers process
 - Austria's internal political problems
 - Austria's bilateral problems with Czech Republic
 - Austria's problem with EU
 - Czech accession to the EU
- Temelin – heavy strain on bilateral agreements
- Temelin almost broke Austrian coalition government
- Complicated technical matters cannot be discussed in media and should not be used for internal political ambitions
- Both parties must agree on positive attitude and keep emotions away from negotiations