

## Henri Proglio : Investments by EDF are on the cards

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Henri Proglio, the Chief Executive Director, answered to Le Monde after the publication of the report of the Nuclear Safety Authority. To him *“there is not the slightest bit of neglect at EDF, which remains the authority on nuclear in the world”*

### **How do you react to the conclusions of the Nuclear Safety Authority’s (ASN) report ?**

I notice that the ASN acknowledges the safety of our nuclear services and does not recommend shutting down of any nuclear plant. It is our usual and routine representative. It has given the right opinion, and we must respect it. Don’t you think it was easier for it to ask for the closure of reactors in order to show its power and independence in its attempt to set an example? We have a sort of mutual agreement between us. Our responsibility is huge : there will be nuclear power only if it secured.

For that matter, we didn’t wait for Fukushima. Well before, we had planned an increase in the duration of use of 58 reactors from 30 to 60 years. And to get the green signal from Nuclear Safety Authority, the security has to be improved. We are gradually modernising and reinforcing the safety of the decennial visit. At the end of 30 years of use, the big equipments have to be changed. That’s what we have done in Fassenheim, in order to improve the economic efficiency and the safety level. There is no objective reason to close this plant, that’s the conclusion of ASN. Today it’s one of the most renovated ones.

### **The recommendations of ASN show that EDF has not taken all safety measures needed before the Fukushima incident**

Before Fukushima, we simply thought that such an accident was so improbable that it was pointless to make the French people pay more in their electricity bills. Since, we have decided to rule out the notion of probability and incorporate the notion of improbability in the scenario. Also we must protect the public from a feeling of lack of security. If the **ASN** took into consideration public opinion, it had to take irrational decisions to satisfy them, such as shutting down the nuclear plants. There is not the slightest bit of neglect at EDF, which remains the authority on nuclear energy in the world. Why do you think the British entrusted their nuclear responsibility to us?

The President of ASN talks about a “massive” financial effort to improve the safety. How much do you think would be the amount?

It is a little illusory to try to know it today, because we have different ideas on investment. Before Fukushima, we had scheduled 40 billion euros so that 58 plants could survive upto 60 years. I would say that expenses for the measures taken after Fukushima will rise up to 10 billion. But I think the amount is included in the 40 billions euros investments decided before Fukushima. We will give a priority to the cost for safety over others.

### **Can EDF bear this?**

Our investments will be coming soon. EDF invests more than 11 billion euros per year in nuclear plants, networks, renewable energy situated all over the world. In all these, we have become a major actor with the entire EDF renewable energies. Our nuclear centre is only 26 years old and thus we have years before us.

### **What will be your schedule in order to meet the requirements of ASN?**

It depends on some elements. Bunkerisation Operation by the risk management centre, installed in each of the 19 nuclear plants, will spread over 5 to 7 years, such as installation of 58 diesel motors in ultimate emergency situations. For the rapid action nuclear force, it's more a question of human investment than financial : 300 persons will be associated with this mission permanently. It will be ready in late end 2014 with a gradual installation starting from 2012. We have already started the work on strengthening the sill of Fessenheim with some tests on concrete. EDF suggested to ASN this autumn these improvements, to which we will add a base for cooling water or improvements of filters which were missing in Fukushima (to avoid caesium waste). The ASN approved them.

I insist on a point : refreshing and developing skills in order to guarantee the relay from earlier generations who made the nuclear programme. In 2011, EDF hired 5000 people, of which 2200 in the nuclear division and in engineering. We will do the same things in 2012. This is a new issue.

### **Don't you think it is better to close down the plants and build new gas plants or put more emphasis on renewable energy?**

When we inherit a heritage like that of EDF, we must improve it and make profit out of it. Denying ourselves nuclear energy would have very high costs: heavy investments in new production tools and the network for renewable energy, increased CO2 from electricity production (fight against greenhouse effect) loss of energy independence and increase in electricity bill of the French people.

**This safety improvement will also have a price. Are we expecting an increase in the electricity tariff?**

There won't be any fundamental change. Before Fukushima, I had said that the cost of production of megawatt hour will be 46 euros. Later, the cost will be between 46 and 50 euros. I am trying hard so that all the items entering in the electricity bill are controlled: production, transport, distribution and contribution to the public service charges for Electricity (which funds the preferential rates and the extra cost of renewable energy)

France has world's most competitive electricity price due to the competitive price of nuclear energy. Over 20 years, the increase of costs could be curbed and we will be in an advantageous position than Germany (where there will be a sharp rise in costs further to a denial of nuclear option), Italy and Spain.

Inputs provided by Jean-Michel Bezat