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- 1. Following news381.1on Small Modular Reactors (SMR), Chris Purser writes: The Economist Technology Quarterly has been talking about the use of thorium-based reactors for a while now; they have multiple advantages thorium is more abundant than uranium, doesn't generate strategically useful products, the reactors are much more "fail safe" than existing altogether a much friendlier technology. I suspect that the major reason that the use hasn't been adopted is because the manufacturers of the old and elaborate uranium based power plants have got so much invested in the highly elaborate and lets face it, antique technology (When did Calder Hall open!) that they are almost seen, like the banks, as "too big to fail". Also, thorium technology doesn't provide political cover for continuing research into military nuclear technology!
- 2. Further to news381.2 the statement of 10^{th} June from Energy Minister Ed Davey can be found <u>here</u>.
- 3. The Irish Government consultation on its green paper on energy policy is drawing to a close at the end of July. <u>ReThink Pylons</u> has responded 16 July: "Today, ReThink Pylons launches its response to the Green Paper. Written by respected energy consultancy BW Energy, it makes clear that the Government's renewable energy policy, formulated in 2007 and based almost entirely on increased wind power, is wrong for Ireland in 2014. Biomass and Residential Solar PV represent far better, cheaper alternatives for Ireland now and into the future."
- 4. In June Eirgrid published its (alternative) <u>underground route</u> for the Grid West project. Some objectors are sceptical as to whether it is serious or just cosmetic. At least it is something to discuss. The website says "Later this year, our analysis of both the overhead route corridor option and emerging preferred underground option will be reviewed by the Government appointed Independent Expert Panel to provide assurance to the public that both options are considered in a fair, objective and comparable way."
- 5. Eirgrid is <u>proposing</u> new compensation payments near new high-voltage overhead powerlines (near "new pylons or stations"), following a 2012 government policy statement. Two elements are proposed: a Local Community Fund of 40,000 Euro per kilometre of 400 kV line and a one-off Proximity Allowance to residences on a sliding scale from 5,000 Euro at 200 metres to 30,000 Euro at 50 metres.
- 6. Eirgrid's compensation proposal is part of an overall approach set out in its January 2014 "Grid 25 Initiatives", which also include the upfront assessment of alternative underground cable routes. It is still a proposal rather than a guarantee, but it cuts new ground in opening up payments to residents in proximity. In the UK, where the legal system is different, payment is restricted to landholdings over which the line passes; other residents, who may live closer to the line, get nothing. So this is a welcome new development and, notwithstanding the rightful criticism we might make from time to time, we are pleased to commend the Irish government and Eirgrid on this initiative.

- 7. Having said that, the visual impact does of course extend well beyond 200 metres. A fully fair system would take account of loss of property value for all concerned as well as loss of amenity of tranquil green space and its public health value. Those losses would be built into the project costs at the planning stage. That is still a long way off for pylons and other environmental impacts. At least Eirgrid has made a start.
- 8. The <u>INTEROCC</u> international epidemiology study is related to the INTERPHONE study of mobile phones. INTEROCC looks at occupational ELF exposure (the sort from electric power systems) rather than at mobile phones (which can give some ELF exposure as well as the principal RF). Its report (<u>Turner et al, 2014</u>) states "In conclusion, in this large-scale study we observed no association with lifetime occupational ELF exposure. However, results from this, and several smaller previous studies showed positive associations between ELF in the more recent past and glioma, and probably with meningioma." The striking thing here is that the association with brain cancer (particularly glioma) comes from exposure specifically over the five years before diagnosis, and so is thought to suggest a cancer promotional role rather than initiation.
- 9. Previous research found a persistent but weak association (good statistical strength but low relative risk) between occupational ELF exposure and brain cancer. The INTEROCC results put a new light on the previous results in that they might become stronger if the exposure period is revisited and focused on the five years before diagnosis.
- 10. <u>Microwave News</u> gives more comment and historical background on ELF brain cancer epidemiology.

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