

## TRANSFORMATION OF PUBLIC OPINION AS A FACTOR IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR ENERGY

Lir V.E.

Candidate of Economic Sciences,  
Institute of Economics and Forecasting  
National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine

It is presented the evolution of the formation of public opinion regarding the development of nuclear energy in industrialized countries of the world. The attitude of the public towards nuclear energy was different at different stages of its development. At first, it practically did not meet opposition from the population: it was believed that the NPPs would open the way to "clean" electricity, as the negative environmental impact of organic fuel combustion products was obvious. However, the facts gradually accumulated, indicating a deterioration of the radiation conditions around the NPP, the shortcomings in their work and the crashes that were initially concealed. In the minds of many people, atomic energy is associated with nuclear weapons, and this fact intensified the negative attitude towards it. The article presents the results of sociological surveys on the population's relation to the problem of construction and operation of nuclear power plants.

In the publications at the beginning of the 21st century, researchers state the contradictions in the public consciousness and national differences, but they do not analyze the factors of different attitudes of the population of a particular country or one or another social group to the development of nuclear energy. Meanwhile, national differences in public opinion are quite significant (even among such high-tech countries as the US and EU countries), which requires their identification and allocation as a separate subject of research on the mentioned problem.

The pointed factors influence the formation of public opinion, as well as the degree of influence of society on the formation

of the priorities of the state's energy policy as regards the use of nuclear energy and its share in national energy balances, are determined. In order to understand the shift in attitude to the NPP, we should take into account the psychological factors that influence the formation of public opinion: people are painfully reacting to single large accidents, while numerous small accidents remain virtually unnoticed. A serious barrier at the present stage of the development of anthropogenic energy was the danger of an accident at nuclear power plants. Its terrible realization at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant has really changed the "classical" scheme of development of industrial power, violating the regularity of the transition to higher-quality energy resources. The scientific community responded to the negative reaction of public opinion to the development of the concept of nuclear reactors with intrinsic safety. However, its implementation requires a decade. Therefore, the renewal of the rapid growth of nuclear energy can be expected after 2020 and it will happen, including using other physical principles.

According to the analysis which was carried out in the article, it is established that the main factors influencing the formation of public opinion on the development of nuclear energy are: the technological level of the country's economy; the standard of living and education of the population; proximity of inhabitants to areas of nuclear power station placement; the state of information society about the state of nuclear energy safety; awareness of the growing role of electricity in the energy balance and the price competitiveness of nuclear power.