

Diana Wallis (ALDE), rapporteur. – Madam President, Commissioner, this report follows on well from the last debate, which was on the general nature of the Euratom Treaty past, present and future. This is an actual, specific, individual case, which clearly highlights why this Treaty needs looking at in order to ensure the future safety of Europe's citizens in the event of nuclear incidents.

This nuclear incident and its sad after-effects for certain individuals have wider implications for the health and safety of all our citizens. It is, of course, the strength of our petition system that it allows individuals to bring such events to our attention when the European institutions or legal framework have not assisted as they would have wished or expected. Our citizens are telling us that the Euratom Treaty is not working, so we should listen.

Let me take you back to an Arctic night in January 1968, still the era of the Cold War – indeed the facts of this story sound like an international thriller. An American B-52 bomber gets into trouble, the crew scramble to safety and the plane comes down in Greenland with an enormous amount of weapons-grade plutonium on board. Residents of Greenland working at the American base at Thule immediately set out across the ice with husky teams to get to the downed plane, the Americans desperate to get there before anyone else. Over the weeks that follow, many Thule workers were involved in the clear-up. They were not working in laboratory conditions. They were not wearing any protective clothing, except against the cold – indeed the clothing that many of them wore was so contaminated by radiation that it had to be destroyed. Over the months and years that followed, the Thule workers began to suffer all sorts of terrible health consequences. Mr Carswell, the petitioner in this

case, was one of them.

This is a long story, which has been all through the Danish courts and has been the subject of many reports, debates and discussions. We are looking here at a very specific issue in the saga, namely the rights of the Thule workers under Council Directive 96/29/Euratom of 13 May 1996, laying down the basic safety standards for the protection of the health of workers and the general public against the dangers arising from ionising radiation. All sorts of legal arguments have been raised against the petitioners and I do not seek to deal with those in detail here, but will merely say that they are set out and dealt with seriously in the report – the question of both the temporal and geographic application of the Treaty to Greenland and the issue of the application to military incidents. This was not a military incident as far as the Member State involved is concerned. The military element is from a third state, so we, following in the steps of the ECJ, argue that the Directive can indeed apply.

But this is not just some legal argument; this is above all a political argument – an argument that could even be pursued under the European Convention on Human Rights, concerning the duty of a state to take appropriate steps to safeguard the lives of those within its jurisdiction. However, what we are absolutely clear about is that there is a right under the Directive for medical monitoring of the survivors, proper surveillance and intervention measures – not merely statistical exercises as have been conducted to date, but proper clinical, medical monitoring that would benefit not only those survivors but also the health and safety of all Europe's citizens in the event of such future incidents. If this is not allowed, then it tells us that the Treaty is not working, and that is why it needs review and attention.

I am afraid that I must also urge colleagues to reject the amendments. They are confused or refer to unspecified events not mentioned in the petition, or they try to undermine the argumentation of the report. Therefore, on behalf of the Thule survivors, and in the hope of future work to review the Treaty, I commend the report to you, unamended.