



# information

For immediate release

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## Call for Chernobyl Cancer Investigation in Ireland

Cllr Michael O'Dowd chairman of the All Ireland Forum of Nuclear Free Local Authorities (1) has called for an independent scientific examination into claims that the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear plant could have been responsible for up to 200 additional infant deaths in the Republic of Ireland.

The figures were put forward by researcher John Urquhart at a conference in London (2) where new research was presented showing Chernobyl may have led to over 1000 infant deaths in England and Wales.

Cllr O'Dowd stated:

*The evidence in relation to the additional deaths in the UK was compelling as the geographic distribution of the fatalities coincided with rainfall patterns in the UK as the radioactive plume from the Chernobyl reactor explosion drifted across the country.*

*In relation to Ireland that detailed information was not available, however when comparing different countries in Western Europe for the six years after the accident John Urquhart found excess infant deaths occurred in Nordic countries and the Republic of Ireland.*

*This requires further detailed examination as it would have implications for public health planning and emergency responses in the future.*

*Unfortunately we cannot turn the clock back and while this debate cannot be any consolation for families that lost a child during this period we need to investigate the trends that have emerged and ensure that any lessons that can be learned are learned and acted upon.*

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Note for editors:

1. The All Ireland Nuclear Free Local Authorities Forum represents five Irish local authorities: Dublin Regional Authority, South Dublin County Council, Louth County Council, Down District Council and Newry & Mourne District Council.
2. 8<sup>th</sup> Joint Irish & UK Conference on Nuclear Hazards, City Hall, London, 23 March 2006

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