Euratom Safeguards Office. Report 1999-2000

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PURPOSE : to present the report on the operation of the Euratom safeguards office 1999-2000.
CONTENT : the task of the Euratom Safeguards Office is to ensure that within the European Union nuclear material is not diverted from its intended use and that safeguarding obligations assumed by the Community under an agreement with a third state or an international organisation are complied with. This document describes the role and the legal basis of the Euratom Safeguards Office and reports on its operation for the period 1999-2000. It also provides some information on current developments and includes an outlook for the future. Firstly, Safeguards is the set of measures performed by the controlling authority to verify that nuclear material and equipment are not diverted from their intended (peaceful) uses, e.g. are not used to produce nuclear weapons. The aim is to allow the use of nuclear energy whilst ensuring that civil nuclear materials remains in peaceful nuclear programmes. Its legal basis and scope is defined in the treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community signed in 1957. It has the necessary infrastructure for data handling, evaluation and inspection support. Co-operation with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) assures effective and efficient safeguards under Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in the European Union. Secondly, the period under review was characterised by a steady increase in quantity and sensitivity of nuclear material under safeguards in the European Union. To cope with such an evolution, the Euratom Safeguards Office streamlined, improved, modernised and upgraded, on a regular basis, its methods, equipment and systems (including information technology). Overall, as a result of its activities in 1999 and 2000, and subsequent evaluations, the Euratom Safeguards Office did not find any indication that nuclear materials were diverted from their intended peaceful uses. The "Materials Unaccounted For" (MUF), which is one of the indicators of diversion was acceptable for nearly all the installations. Small discrepancies found during inspections or the material evaluation were rectified or are still being investigated with the operators concerned.