Nuclear safety: decommissioning of obsolete installations at the JCR and waste management

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The committee adopted the report by Alejo VIDAL-QUADRAS ROCA (EPP/ED, E) on the Commission communication on historical liabilities resulting from nuclear activities carried out at the Joint Research Centre (JRC) - decommissioning of nuclear installations and waste management. The committee felt that there was no point in drawing up a strategy on decommissioning and on waste management until the Commission had resolved the questions of the 1998 internal audit on the activities of the JRC and the inventory of nuclear materials. The JRC should be able to play to the full its role as the 'awarding authority' and the committee therefore urged the Commission to set up an appropriate structure within the JRC to draw up and issue invitations to tender aimed at outside contractors and to monitor, supervise and accept the work carried out. It made a number of recommendations, such as proper training of new recruits, ensuring that the members of the committee of experts which would assist the JRC in its work were independent and properly qualified and ensuring the availability of information. It also called for the action programme to be subdivided into clearly identifiable projects and to be implemented in strict compliance with current safety rules and standards. On the question of financing, the committee stressed that under no circumstances should the programme be financed under the research budget - instead, it should come under a special budget line adequately financed to cope with the historical and future liabilities arising from nuclear research. The committee felt that the Commission proposal was too piecemeal in nature to be able to meet the needs of a large, long-term programme, which made the proposed financing method unaccceptable. It therefore proposed that a trialogue be convened so that Parliament and the Council could be involved in finding appropriate ways to ensure that the programme was seen through to completion, with sound, effective management.