Radioactive material: safe transport

1998/2083(COS) - 24/01/2001

The committee adopted the report by Konstantinos HATZIDAKIS (EPP-ED, GR) on the Commission communication. Although the transportation of radioactive materials was mainly a matter for the Member States, the committee felt that the Commission could play a preparatory and coordinating role in some areas, such as ensuring that the number of shipments was reduced and that the principle of the shortest possible distance was applied to all shipments. The report also called on the Member States to avoid transit through densely populated areas wherever possible. The Commission was urged to look into the use of MOX fuel in a long-term European perspective, and the committee also wanted the Working Group to examine the risks of transporting plutonium. The report said that continued cooperation with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and stricter monitoring of their compliance with IAEA rules was essential to improving safety throughout Europe and progressing towards enlargement. The Commission was also urged to take action against Member States which failed to comply with radiation protection norms under the EURATOM Treaty. The committee stressed the need for greater transparency and information for the general public as regards the transport of nuclear materials. Local communities and the relevant public authorities should be informed in advance of the transit of hazardous materials through or close to their territory. Lastly, while emphasising the right to freedom of expression and peaceful demonstration, the committee strongly condemned any acts of violence (such as bombs on railway tracks or the destruction of power lines) as a form of protest against the transport of radioactive material.