RTD 5th framework programme Euratom 1998-2002: research and training activities

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OBJECTIVE: To establish a 5th Framework Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) for research and training activities (1998-2002). SUBSTANCE: In parallel to its proposal for a 5th Community Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration (COD97119), the Commission has presented a 5th Multi-annual Framework Programme for all research and training activities in the area of nuclear energy for the period 1998-2002. This 5th Framework Programme covers controlled thermonuclear fusion and energy systems related to nuclear fission. The Framework Programme's thematic programmes will comprise: - key actions, defined according to explicitly formulated economic and social objectives of the Community; - activities for research and development of generic technologies; - activities in support of research infrastructures. The horizontal aspects comprise: - cooperation with third countries and international organizations; - dissemination and optimization of the results of research and training activities; - training and mobility of researchers. The long-term objective of the key action on controlled thermonuclear fusion is the joint creation of prototype reactors for power stations to meet the needs of society: operational safety, environmental compatibility, economic viability. The proposed strategy to achieve this long-term objective includes the development of an experimental reactor (Next Step) and then of a demonstration reactor (DEMO). Research and development activities on generic technologies will focus on the following priorities: operational safety of existing facilities, the security and safety of the fuel cycle, radiation protection, studies on new nuclear facilities and advanced, more efficient fuels, encouragement of cooperation with the countries of Eastern Europe and the former USSR. The criteria for selecting the areas and objectives are divided into three categories: (a) criteria related to social objectives, primarily their impact on employment; (b) criteria related to economic development and scientific and technological prospects, the main objective being to increase EU competitiveness; (c) criteria related to the Community 'value added'. EURATOM will participate financially through indirect actions (shared-cost actions, training fellowships, support for networks, concerted actions and accompanying measures) and direct actions to be implemented by the Joint Research Centre (JRC).