Nuclear research: 7th framework programme Euratom for nuclear research and training activities, 2007-2011

2005/0044(CNS) - 15/06/2006 - Text adopted by Parliament, 1st reading/single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution drafted by Jerzy BUZEK (EPP-ED, PL) by 457 votes to 97 with 22 abstentions and made some amendments to the Commission's proposal:

- the indicative overall amount for the implementation of the seventh framework programme shall be EUR 2751 million for the period of 5 years starting on 1 January 2007 . The amounts earmarked for the individual programmes: EUR 1 947 m rather than EUR 2 159 m for fusion energy research; and EUR 517 m rather than EUR 539 m for nuclear activities of the Joint Research Centre;

- within the amount foreseen for fusion energy research, not less than EUR 900 million will be reserved to activities, other than the realisation of the research infrastructure ITER, listed in Annex I. MEPs wanted the EU to exploit to the full the potential of fusion to contribute to a sustainable and secure energy supply "approximately fifty or sixty years from now", and said that a "fast track" to fusion energy should be pursued "in order to reduce as much as possible the time taken to develop an actual fusion power plant". They stipulated that the aim should be to create prototype reactors within thirty to thirty five years. Referring to the need for a full and effective exploitation of the ITER device, Parliament wanted a bold accompanying programme and therefore specified that, within the amount foreseen for fusion energy research, not less than EUR 900 m should be reserved for that programme;

- to ensure that adequate human resources would be available, MEPs proposed the creation of a European PhD in "Physics and Engineering of Fusion". The provisions on human resources, mobility, education and training give particular stress to maintaining educational efforts in universities with an emphasis on organising joint post-graduate studies in the fields of nuclear engineering and radiation protection; and to promote safety as a priority ;

- all the research activities carried out under the 7th framework programme should give priority consideration to safety aspects, and emphasis should be placed on preventing "human or organisational error (individual or collective)";

- the Commission shall provide prior information to the budgetary authority whenever it intends to depart from the breakdown of expenditure set out in the remarks and Annex to the annual general budget of the European Union;

- in supporting the objectives of the EU, the Joint Research Centre shall have specific tasks related to: global security, particularly through its participation in developing techniques and methods for efficient safeguards, to combat illegal trafficking and for nuclear forensic matters; enlargement of the EU, because this has involved (and will involve) new types of reactors and other nuclear installations ; energy supply, by contributing to new techniques for a nuclear fuel cycle in line with the principles of sustainable development. Parliament's text deletes the Commission's reference to matching the Kyoto objectives;

- the JRC's activities should include campaigning to make politicians and the public understand nuclear energy now that most scientists, politicians and citizens are convinced that global warming is real and caused by fossil-fuel carbon emissions, and that nuclear power is an essential component of the energy mix available to meet the world's energy needs with zero CO2 emissions. They should also include

disseminating information about nuclear power to citizens and their representatives through the launching of multi-annual information campaigns on nuclear power to encourage debate and facilitate decision-making, thereby enabling them to have an objective debate based on facts and take informed decisions. To ensure that they are as effective as possible, these campaigns should be drawn up using methodology derived from the social sciences. Furthermore, and bearing in mind that comparisons with other energy sources are essential in order to grasp the implications of the use of nuclear power, any information campaigns which are promoted or encouraged will also mention and explain the efforts being made by the EU at other levels to promote other energy sources, with particular regard to renewable sources of energy.