

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(86) 374 final

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EUROPEAN COUNCIL - 26-27 JUNE 1986

THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CHERNOBYL ACCIDENT

COMMISSION MEMORANDUM

COM(86) 374 final

1. On 12 June 1986, the Commission of the European Communities sent the Council and Parliament an "Outline Communication on the Consequences of the Chernobyl Accident".

2. In preparing that Communication, the Commission took particular account of:

(a) the public outcry caused by the accident and the potential damage to the image of nuclear power;

(b) the response provoked at the highest political level both inside and outside the Community, involving calls for or the announcement of initiatives to meet the dangers of radioactivity and to improve the safety of nuclear installations;

(c) the economic damage caused by the accident and the difficulties of ensuring the normal functioning of the internal market and a uniform approach to imports in its wake;

(d) the need for international action;

(e) the need for the Community to speak with one voice in the competent international bodies;

(f) the opportunity for the Community to play a leading role in this context by exploiting to the full both the links of solidarity which unite the Member States and the considerable assets represented by the experience and knowledge which it has acquired in the fields of radiation protection and nuclear safety.

3. In the light of these considerations and observations, the Commission believes that the Community's first duty is to exercise fully and rigorously the powers conferred upon it by the Treaties, particularly the Euratom Treaty, in the fields of health protection, international relations and research. As regards the protection of public health, in particular, it is important to define Community tolerance limits for the

radioactive contamination of products, which must be fixed in advance so as to preclude any controversy in an emergency. The radioactivity monitoring system should also be improved by the acceleration, standardization and automation of data acquisition.

4. The Communication also provides a brief historical outline of Euratom and indicates the Commission's willingness to examine certain questions in detail in response to a request from the Council. In this connection, the Commission has endeavoured to contribute to the examination of the problem by announcing proposals and making suggestions relating, in particular, to the technological safety of nuclear installations and of their operation and to the procedures to be initiated in an emergency. Although the existing provisions of the Treaties cannot be said to confer direct legal powers on the Community in this area, there is no denying that it is concerned by these problems in view of its obligations in the field of public health and its responsibility for promoting the creation of a uniform industrial area.