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**EURATOM, FRENCH CONCLUDE CONTRACT FOR
FAST-NEUTRON REACTOR DEVELOPMENT**

WASHINGTON, July 19 -- The Euratom Commission and the French Atomic Energy Commission (CEA) announced today a far-reaching contract of association under which Euratom will participate in the research and development of fast-neutron reactors.

This work has been carried out by the CEA since 1958 in the Saclay, Fontenay-aux-Roses, and Cadarache plants. Studies on fast-neutron reactors, which the Euratom Commission included in its research program in 1959, occupy an important place in the Community's second five-year research program.

Covering a period of five years, the new Euratom-CEA association is aimed at the design, construction and operation of the sodium-cooled fast-neutron "Rapsodie" experimental reactor, and also of a fast-neutron critical assembly. Euratom's participation in the project, for which a total of more than \$90 million has been earmarked, will be about 35 per cent.

Fast reactors offer possibilities of producing more fissionable material than they consume (breeding), thus cutting the cost per kilowatt and making the best use of the plutonium produced by natural uranium gas-graphite reactors, e.g., the EDF or Simea type.

The 20,000 KW(th) Rapsodie experimental reactor is scheduled for commissioning in mid-1965. The plant consists also of auxiliary buildings and laboratories.

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The purpose of the Rapsodie project is to provide an instrument for physical research, to acquire technological experience which can be applied to subsequent reactors, and to constitute an irradiation facility for fuels used in the fast reactors of the future.

The Euratom-CEA association will also provide for the construction of a fast-neutron critical assembly which will enable studies to be carried out on the physical characteristics of the entire range of fast plutonium reactors planned for the future, from the Rapsodie stage to that of the large 300 MWe industrial plant reactor. Its volume will be greater than that of comparable installations in the United States and the United Kingdom. It is expected to go into operation in 1965.

The association, which is to be administered by a joint management committee, provides for a participation on the part of Euratom research workers amounting to a maximum of 50 per cent of the total staff.

Euratom's second five-year research program has earmarked a sum of \$73 million for the fast-reactor program, which is to be carried out mainly by means of contracts of association. These contracts will be aimed at the construction and operation of the Rapsodie reactor, the construction of large-scale critical assemblies, research and development work on the design of 100,000 KWe reactors, together with other studies aimed at the design of a fast-neutron reactor based on the uranium-thorium fuel cycle.