

# European Community

## News Release

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### BACKGROUND AND SOURCE MATERIALS

We take pleasure in forwarding the following full and summarized texts of topical speeches by high-level European Communities officials and other source documents which we trust will be useful. The Press and Information service of the Delegation of the Commission of the European Communities in Ottawa will be happy to respond to individual requests for other source and background materials and information.

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#### INFORMAL MEETING OF TRADE MINISTERS IN SEOUL : STATEMENT BY WILLY DE CLERCO, EUROPEAN COMMISSIONER RESPONSIBLE FOR TRADE POLICY AND EXTERNAL RELATIONS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

This meeting has underlined the dangers which beset our open trading system and the responsibilities we all have to fight them. In doing so this conference has given extra and much needed impetus to the preparation of a New GATT Round.

The need for such a Round is beyond question. In my view we do not have the choice between the status quo and progress. If the new Round does not take off there will be a serious danger that protectionist tendencies and bilateralism will take over and undo much of what GATT has achieved in liberalizing trade on a multilateral basis. It is therefore crucial that the GATT Ministerial next September in Punta del Este make decisive progress towards the launching of a New Round.

I am however concerned about the clouds on the horizon. Protectionist tendencies seem to grow stronger instead of weaker. In some cases they have led to regrettable legislative action and threats, such as in the United States, against the consequences of the enlargement of the Community with Spain and Portugal. There is also a strong temptation in some countries to bypass the multilateral GATT framework and conclude bilateral trade deals.

Already in 1982 the GATT contracting parties committed themselves to abstain from new protectionist action and to roll back existing protectionism. All countries represented at the Seoul conference have reconfirmed the essential importance of that commitment for the success of a New GATT Round.

If Punta del Este is to be the launching platform of the New Round we must remain credible and ensure that our acts are in conformity with our declared intentions. New protectionist measures may lead to major bilateral trade conflicts and thereby damage the prospects of a New Round.

The Seoul Conference has particularly brought out the obligations which each of us has towards the multilateral trading system which has served us very well over the last 30 years.

The European Community is ready to live up to its commitments and responsibilities and hopes that all other contracting parties will be inspired by the same determination.

AGREEMENT ON EURATOM SAFEGUARDS AT SELLAFIELD, U.K. :  
STATEMENT BY ENERGY COMMISSIONER NIC MOSAR

Agreement has been reached between the European Commission and the Government of the United Kingdom which enables Euratom inspectors to verify all the civil nuclear material at Sellafield.

I welcome this agreement which was reached after long consultations and which represents an improvement in the application of safeguards within the Community.

While in the past Euratom safeguards inspectors have always had access to civil areas of the Sellafield site, this was not the case for the mixed civil/non civil areas including the so-called Magnox reprocessing plant and associated process areas.

The announced agreement means that the safeguards procedures will now also fully extend to the mixed installations.

Those procedures include :

1. The keeping of records of the flow and stocks of the civil nuclear material,
2. the provision of monthly accountancy reports to Euratom,
3. inspector access to the records and to the civil nuclear material to verify that there has been no net loss to the civil cycle in either quantity or quality.

Inspection at the mixed Magnox site started as of the end of March 1986.

STRICT ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION VITAL ELEMENT IN  
ECONOMIC POLICY

Extracts from an address given by Commissioner Stanley Clinton Davis at the Bundesrat Committee on European and Internal Affairs, Bonn, 5 June 1986.

For many people on both sides of industry, environment policy is still seen as something which costs money, makes our industry uncompetitive and destroys jobs. The European Commission is, however, convinced that this is a very short-sighted view and that strict environmental protection can be regarded as an essential component of a properly conceived long-term economic policy.

The message that environment policy is good for the economy and good for jobs has happily been recognized very widely in

Germany. For my part I intend shortly to propose to the Commission a 5-year programme of demonstration projects to explore the possibilities of job creation through environment policy. It is my hope that we can create a large body of experience and information on which Member States will be able to draw.

That a Community policy for the environment not only makes sense, but is absolutely vital, is demonstrated by the fact that pollution does not respect frontiers. Take, for example, pollution from power stations, which gets blown in large quantities from one country to the next. How then can that country expect to deal with these problems on its own ?

And, of course, if we needed any reminder, the disaster of Chernobyl has demonstrated just how small is the Community, let alone the individual Member States, when faced with a nuclear accident.

Chernobyl has shown us all how vulnerable we are - not only to our own but also to other people's accidents. The damaged reactor is about 1200km from the nearest part of the Community. Yet contamination was such that food had to be withdrawn from the market. If Chernobyl had been Brussels, then people in Bonn would have evacuated their homes. Chernobyl has shown that the Community is indeed a small place and that we must all be concerned with one another's nuclear policies.

What do we do ? It goes without saying, I believe, that we must ask ourselves whether we really want to open more nuclear power stations. Second, we must make sure that those that exist are as safe as can be and that accidents will not occur. Third, we must make sure that routine discharges of radioactivity are reduced preferably to zero but are at least as low as technologically feasible. The Commission is now working on a number of proposals which will be put to the Council of Ministers.

COMMISSION OUTLINES ACTION PLAN FOR NUCLEAR SAFETY  
(Summary of full Action Plan document, available on request.)

The Chernobyl disaster has emphasized how vital it is to take action at the international level to cope with nuclear accidents. The aftermath of the accident has also underlined the

necessity for an effective Community framework of legislation in the whole field of nuclear power, building on the existing provisions of the Euratom and EEC Treaties and introducing new measures where they are needed to protect the people and the environment of Europe.

Until now the individual Member States of the European Community - like all other countries throughout the world - have developed their nuclear industries on a mainly national basis, despite the fact that neighbouring regions and countries may be directly or indirectly affected by incidents such as accidental emissions or serious accidents. The European Commission is now proposing to the Council of Ministers a series of new measures which would recognize the European dimension of nuclear developments. They would help the Community to minimize the risk associated with nuclear power and would give it the capacity to react rapidly in an emergency. They would also ensure better provision of information to the general public.

In its Communication to the Council of Ministers, the Commission proposes a plan of action covering five areas of policy :

- health protection;
- nuclear installations safety and safety in use;
- crisis procedures;
- new measures at the international level
- research

#### 1. Protection of health

The Commission puts the highest priority on Community measures to ensure the protection of people's health and effective controls on the safety of nuclear installations (see 2. below). It has already begun an enquiry to see whether the basic standards set under the Euratom Treaty against the dangers of ionizing radiation should be revised. These standards lay down limits of environmental radiation to safeguard the general public and workers in the nuclear industry and were last revised in 1984. The Commission is also reviewing how Member States apply the basic standards, what radioactivity monitoring facilities they have and how the information on radioactivity levels is communicated, and is examining the procedures of assessment of projects for radioactive waste disposal, which have to be submitted to the Commission by Member States. All these measures are provided for under the Euratom Treaty (articles 30-39).

The Commission believes that the system for collecting information on radioactivity levels should be speeded up and standardized and that the results should be available for regular publication. It will be sending a detailed communication to the Council by the end of July which will consider the problems of applying the Euratom articles on health and safety, including the possibility of Community-level inspection.

Specific proposals will be put to the Council before the end of September for establishing tolerance limits for radioactive contamination of foodstuffs. Some short-term figures have already been agreed for caesium following Chernobyl, but these expire on 30 September. The Commission is seeking a general system for the long term.

2. Safety of nuclear installations and safety in use.

No Community rules currently exist for limiting radioactive emissions into air and water. The Commission is considering whether emission standards should be applied to nuclear installations in addition to basic standards, as they are already for certain types of industry and certain pollutants. When its enquiry is finished, the Commission will inform the Council and the European Parliament and make any necessary proposals.

The safety criteria for nuclear plants vary between Member States, while national markets are shut off from each other. However, it should be possible to a large extent to bring together the safety criteria on a Community basis, while the increasing concentration on particular types of reactor in Europe should make it feasible to agree on common criteria for conception, construction and component design. The Commission believes that the Community should seek a consensus between the Member States concerned. A Council resolution of 1975 noted the advantages of Community-wide criteria for the safety of nuclear installations and agreed to action by stages to harmonize national criteria. The Commission will report to the Council during July.

The Seveso directive of 1982 provides for a protection and information system whereby major industrial plants dealing with dangerous chemicals must register information giving details on the nature of the installations, emergency plans, alert systems, etc. This information must be provided for people in the area likely to be affected.

The Commission is examining whether similar requirements already provided for under the Euratom basic standards are

sufficient and will be sending the Council its conclusions before the end of the year. It will also propose ways of implementing at the Community level the international Incident Reporting System which allows analysis of the safety implications of significant incidents in nuclear plants.

The Commission will be proposing that various international agreements on the transport of dangerous substances, including radioactive matter, should become Community law. Training and briefing for personnel involved in the transport of nuclear materials may also be recommended.

A Community action plan already exists for improving the disposal of radioactive wastes. This includes an examination of the best methods of long-term storage of wastes, consultation on different ways of managing the problem and a research and development programme. To deal with the problem of dumping nuclear waste at sea, the Commission believes that the Community should become a full member of the London Dumping Convention, which already bans the discharge at sea of certain dangerous substances and whose members have in practice refrained from dumping nuclear waste for the last three years. The Community currently has only observer status.

### 3. Procedures to be followed in the event of crisis

The Chernobyl disaster demonstrated the necessity for an immediate exchange of information following a nuclear accident. An international convention is to be negotiated within the framework of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which will oblige its signatories to report and exchange information in the event of an alert or radioactive accident. However, negotiation of such a convention will take some time, so the Commission proposes an interim measure at the Community level which would also guarantee that each Member State had a single authorized information source to give the public accurate information.

The IAEA is also planning a mutual assistance convention to take effect in the event of a nuclear accident, but the Commission believes that the Community should go further and adopt its own system of mutual assistance. It recognized that national competence is predominant in this field and therefore intends to consult before making proposals.

### 4. International action

The Commission recognized the key role played by the IAEA in the whole field of nuclear safety, and notes that the

Community should be closely involved in its work. It should, for instance, be a party to the international conventions (see 3. above) now under discussion and should participate in IAEA discussions as a Community. The Commission will be taking the necessary initiatives to see that the Community can participate in work at the international level.

## 5. Research

Certain research lines should be developed in Community programmes, such as improved methodology in risk evaluation, studies into major accidents and ways and means for limiting their consequences, and development of certain radio-protection research. The Commission will be putting forward appropriate proposals, some of which might have budgetary implications.

A number of the measures outlined by the Commission in its Communication has already been requested by the Council of Ministers, which on 12 May 1986 invited the Commission to present proposals for further basic standards relating to the health of the population and to work out an emergency procedure so the Community can react quickly in a crisis similar to that of Chernobyl. The European Parliament has also called for new Community initiatives.

Particular requests for action have also been made by individual Member States. The Luxembourg Government has already called for tightening of the basic standards and the Irish Government is pressing for the establishment of a Community inspectorate for the nuclear industry. The Belgian Government has called for a number of Community initiatives including safety criteria for nuclear power plants and an improved emergency information system.

Chancellor Kohl of West Germany has requested an international conference to establish a mechanism for exchanging information in the event of a nuclear accident, improved cooperation in emergency and the fixing of basic procedures at the international level.

A number of the actions proposed by the Commission can be achieved within the context of the Euratom Treaty, whose provisions governing health and safety could be expanded. Other measures would be based on the Treaty of Rome. A number of detailed proposals will be put forward by the Commission before the end of July, others by the end of the year. The Commission is establishing a special committee of independent experts to help it in its work.

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