

European Community

News Release

RADIATION AND RAW MATERIALS AGREEMENTS BETWEEN CANADA AND THE EC

Mr. Karl-Heinz Narjes, Vice-President of the EC Commission, and Mr. Daniel Molgat, Canadian Ambassador to the European Community, yesterday signed two cooperation agreements in the fields of «Research on the Health and Environmental Effects of Radiation» and «Processing of Complex Sulphide Minerals».

These agreements expand already existing cooperation under the 1976 Framework Agreement for Commercial and Economic Cooperation between Canada and the EC, the only agreement of its kind between the Community and an industrialized third country.

In addition to industrial collaboration, cooperation in the field of research and technology has been formalized in the following areas:

- management of radioactive waste (1980)
- waste water research (1983)
- medical and public health research (1984), and
- fusion (1986).

Beyond this, R & D cooperation has been pursued, in an informal way, in the following fields:

- environmental research in addition to waste water research
- non-nuclear energy
- biotechnology
- forecasting and assessment in science and technology (FAST), and
- information technology.

1. Research on the Health and Environmental Effects of Radiation - Memorandum of Understanding

Cooperation in radiation protection research is crucial to obtain a coherent approach to a subject of great economic and social importance even before the nuclear accident at Chernobyl. The application of radiation in industry and medicine requires a careful assessment of the possible risks involved and a permanent vigilance against accidents and their possible consequences.

Cooperation between the EC and Canada will involve mainly:

- scientific and technical information
- visits of research workers at laboratories, and
- meetings and workshops for a definition of priorities and an evaluation of the respective research programmes.

Fields of particular interest to both sides are dosimetry, radiology, in particular the behaviour and effects of tritium, and the movement of radionuclides in natural ecosystems, the genetic basis of radiosensitivity, radiation-induced cancer, including epidemiological studies, models for the age-dependent behaviour of radionuclides in the organism, assessment of the risks of natural radiation and optimization of radiation protection.

The agreement with Canada will further strengthen world-wide cooperation among scientists in the field of radiation protection. It is intended to result in a better understanding of the risks of ionizing radiation and in improved protection both during normal operations or in the case of accidents in nuclear installations.

2. The Processing of Complex Sulphide Minerals - Memorandum of Understanding

The aim of cooperation in this field is to find better ways to exploit mineral sulphide resources available in the Community (especially in Portugal, Spain, Greece, France and Italy) as well as in Canada. It is in the interest of both parties to improve the technology for processing these minerals. Therefore, Canada asked the Commission to participate in the Community's programme, aimed at solving the technological problems of exploiting this important raw material.

Canada/EC cooperation will involve an unlimited exchange of scientific information. The areas of research will focus on:

- liberation modelling/flotation
- fine particle technology, and
- iron control and elimination in hydrometallurgy.

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