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FORATOM welcomes EC approval of EPR investment plan

FORATOM, the trade association representing the interests of the European nuclear power industry, has warmly welcomed the approval given today by the European Commission (EC) to the investment plan for the construction of an EPR (European pressurised water reactor) nuclear power plant at Flamanville, France, that was submitted by Electricité de France (EDF).

The green light given today to the investment plan that underpins the construction of a new-generation EPR power plant at EDF's nuclear facilities in north western France was the culmination of a lengthy approval process. This process involved, in accordance with the terms of the Euratom Treaty, prior notification by the project owners and the subsequent statutory approval of the EC. The construction of the EPR in France could signal the gradual renewal of the French nuclear fleet. It is not, however, a first – a groundbreaking EPR is already under construction at the Olkiluoto plant in Finland, which is run by the Finnish power utility TVO. However, the fact that it will be built in France, which is Europe's premier nuclear country, is highly significant. Furthermore, the technology behind the EPR was co-developed by EDF and AREVA-NP in the 1990s, in partnership with the German engineering company, Siemens. The national nuclear safety authorities in France and Germany were also associated with the development of the EPR project from day one.

The new reactor's design represents the very latest in cutting edge nuclear technology and sets a new benchmark in terms of safety, environmental protection and economic performance. Significantly, the investment plan approved by the EC took into consideration all relevant costs, including those associated with waste management and decommissioning, which shows the economic added value of the project.

Within the context of European energy policy, which was recently articulated through the EC's consultation document *Energy Policy Green Paper: A European Strategy for Sustainable, Competitive and Secure Energy*, the EC's approval of the investment plan that will fund the construction of the latest EPR shows clearly how nuclear energy is now officially recognised as a key policy driver. A fundamental element of that policy is the promotion of an energy mix that includes nuclear energy and all low-carbon emitting technologies.

Commenting on the EC's rubber stamping of the funding project, Santiago San Antonio, Director General of FORATOM, was quick to add: "We welcome the European Commission's decision to approve the EPR project's investment plan. The decision represents a clear recognition and endorsement of the vital role that nuclear energy has to play in ensuring security of energy supply, combating climate change and providing a safe, efficient and affordable supply of base-load electricity. The construction of the EPRs in France and Finland will enable Europe to maintain its position of leadership in a technological field that is vital to its sustainability goals and future prosperity. Other countries around the world are actively looking to exploit this state-of-the-art technology, which confirms that the global nuclear revival is gathering momentum. Nuclear is not the only solution, but there is no solution without it."

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