

## **Sweden Delays Reactor Closure**

**Brussels, 17 August 2000:** The Swedish government has announced it plans to delay the closure of the Barsebäck-2 nuclear power unit, in a move welcomed today by the European Atomic Forum (FORATOM), the Brussels-based trade association for the European nuclear industry.

In 1997, the Swedish parliament approved a plan to close both reactors at the site. Unit 1 was closed at the end of last November, after the government agreed to compensate the operators Sydkraft for the loss of generating capacity. Unit 2 was also earmarked for closure by July 2001, provided the annual loss of 4 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity could be balanced out by reducing energy consumption and increasing non-fossil generating capacity.

However, Industry Minister Bjorn Rosengren announced yesterday that the closure of Barsebäck-2 would be delayed, due to several reports that the conditions attached to the 1997 decision would not be met.

The closure of the first Barsebäck unit resulted in Sweden having to increase imports of electricity from Denmark – power generated by burning coal, with negative consequences for the environment. Mr. Rosengren was quoted as saying that the risk of power shortages in southern Sweden was another reason for delaying the closure of Barsebäck-2. According to news reports, he pointed out that increased imports of power from burning coal and oil would increase CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

In reaction to the announcement, FORATOM makes the following points:

- The Swedish decision highlights the important role that nuclear energy plays in achieving security of energy supply and meeting environmental objectives.
- It also highlights the severe economic and environmental problems associated with government attempts to close nuclear plants for purely political reasons.
- About 35% of the EU's electricity is generated by nuclear plants that produce no greenhouse or acid rain gases. It is difficult to see how the Community will be able to reach its CO<sub>2</sub> reduction targets under the Kyoto Protocol without maintaining the important contribution made by nuclear power.
- Europe's nuclear plants increase energy independence, reducing reliance on power imports and on imported fossil fuels that increase pollution and can be subject to volatile price changes. Phasing out nuclear therefore makes no sense at all environmentally or economically.

### **Contacts**

Jack Ashton, Media Relations Manager, Tel: +32 2 505.32.26, e-mail: [ja@foratom.skynet.be](mailto:ja@foratom.skynet.be)

Karen Daifuku, Communications Director, Tel: +32 2 505.32.20, e-mail: [kd@foratom.skynet.be](mailto:kd@foratom.skynet.be)