

## **Senior EU Official Underlines Need for Nuclear Power**

**Brussels, 5 May 2000:** Nuclear power is expected to remain a necessary component of the European Union's energy mix for at least the next 20 years, according to a senior EU official.

Roberto Salvarani, Head of the Environment Unit in the European Commission's Directorate General for Transport and Energy, told an energy policy workshop in Brussels that the EU needed to meet its targets under the Kyoto Protocol, achieve sustainable development and move towards cleaner energy sources.

He spoke also of the need to maintain security of energy supply, but pointed out that the Community's imports of oil and gas were from unstable regions of the world. Therefore, he said, extreme care had to be taken in finding the right energy mix, and there was a need to maintain "a sustainable component of nuclear".

Mr. Salvarani said: "Nuclear, in that sense, has to remain a serious option, and I don't even call it an option. It is a serious component of the fuel mix not only for the next 20 years, and we'll have to examine it carefully beyond that."

He predicted a major decline in the use of coal, balanced out by an increase in the use of gas, because of its lower carbon content. Renewables would also take on a more important role, while the nuclear share in power generation would remain stable or fall only slightly.

The European Commission is conducting a review of energy policy this year to take account of two key factors – the Kyoto commitments to reduce carbon dioxide emissions and the future enlargement of the Community.

Nuclear power plants currently generate about 35% of the EU's electricity and produce no greenhouse or acid rain gases.

The Brussels workshop, "Climate Change: A Challenge for the Electricity Industry", took place today (Friday) and was organised by the Centre for European Policy Studies (CEPS).

Speaking on behalf of the nuclear industry, Dr. Wolf-J. Schmidt-Küster, Secretary General of the European Atomic Forum (FORATOM), pointed to the results of a study recently issued by the Commission. The study concluded that EU countries would need to build about 100 gigawatts of new nuclear generating capacity over the next 25 years to meet the region's Kyoto commitments.

Dr. Schmidt-Küster said nuclear remained a viable option, on socio-economic and environmental grounds, for a world facing increased energy demand and growing concerns about global warming.

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