

## Euratom signs up to Framework Agreement on nuclear research

**Brussels, 16 January 2006:** The European Commission (EC) has decided, after receiving the approval of the Council in December last year, that it will sign the accession of Euratom to the *Framework Agreement for International Collaboration on Research and Development of Generation IV Nuclear Energy Systems*. The EC will sign on behalf of Euratom and official accession will follow once the formality of ratification has been completed. The Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) has been designated as "implementing agent" of the Framework Agreement and will represent Euratom at the Generation IV International Forum (GIF).

GIF, which signed the Framework Agreement on 28 February 2005, is a platform for international research co-operation that brings together researchers and nuclear industry experts from France, USA, Switzerland, Argentina, Brazil, Japan, Korea, South Africa, the UK and Canada. Euratom's accession to the Framework Agreement provides added impetus to the international nuclear community's efforts to develop the high-performance nuclear reactor technologies of tomorrow. By supporting future nuclear research, the EU has shown that it intends to play a leading role, alongside Europe's nuclear industry, in developing innovative nuclear reactors. Generation IV reactors, which should be operational by around 2030, will help satisfy growing world energy Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) demand while promoting continued economic growth and a clean environment.

Today's decision by the EC to sign up to the accession of Euratom to the *Framework Agreement for International Collaboration on Research and Development of Generation IV Nuclear Energy Systems* is a significant development. Euratom will open the Forum to EU countries that, unlike France and the UK, are not members on an individual basis. EU policy-makers have confirmed their belief that nuclear energy should remain at the heart of the sustainable development debate and that nuclear fission will continue to provide a safe, plentiful and environmentally-friendly source of energy. The Framework Agreement highlights how the global pooling of resources and research expertise is the key to meeting long-term global energy needs.

The JRC is responsible, together with the Directorate General for Research and Technical Development (DG RTD), for implementing EU research policy. It will manage Europe's participation in GIF on behalf of the EC. Priority areas for research include the development of very high temperature reactors (VHTRs), gas-cooled fast reactors (GFRs) and sodium-cooled fast reactors (SFRs). Commenting on Euratom's accession to this milestone Framework Agreement, Roland Schenkel, Director General of JRC, said that innovative Generation IV reactors will "...provide a competitively priced and reliable supply of energy in those countries where they are deployed, while satisfactorily addressing nuclear safety, waste and public perception issues."

Dr. Peter Haug, Director General of the European nuclear industry's trade association, FORATOM, said: "The European nuclear industry welcomes Euratom's recognition of the fundamental importance of investing more in nuclear energy research. This research will lead to new reactors being developed that will provide a reliable, safe, economical and environmentally-friendly supply of energy for the rest of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Until Generation IV systems are operational, in around 2030, the nuclear industry will continue to meet short and medium term energy needs by investing in cutting edge technology to upgrade

nuclear facilities, provide a major contribution to security of supply, manage radioactive waste and help fight climate change. The transition from Generation III to Generation IV systems will be seamless one.”

The recent announcement by French President Jacques Chirac that a prototype fourth generation nuclear reactor unit will enter into service in France in 2020, even earlier than forecast by the industry, sends a clear signal that the next generation of high-performing nuclear reactors will soon be a reality.

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