

ENA 2008: Commissioner Piebalgs highlights nuclear energy's contribution to Europe's low-carbon economy goals

Brussels, 15 April 2008: the European Nuclear Assembly (ENA) 2008, *Nuclear Energy: Developing Europe's low-carbon economy*, kicked off today with a keynote address from EU Energy Commissioner, Andris Piebalgs, on the latest developments in EU energy policy and nuclear energy's contribution to the forging of Europe's low-carbon economy. ENA is a biannual international conference organised by FORATOM, the trade association representing the European nuclear industry. Around 180 policy-makers, industry experts and stakeholders from around the world congregated in Brussels to discuss the latest political, economic and environmental developments in the nuclear field.

Commissioner Piebalgs got ENA 2008 under way with an overview of the developments and challenges that continue to define EU energy policy in general, and nuclear policy in particular. He focused on key issues like the harmonisation of safety standards and radioactive waste management, the licensing and financing of new nuclear installations, the question of liability and nuclear research. He also outlined recent EU energy policy initiatives, including the European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF), which recognises the role that nuclear energy - as a non CO₂ emitting energy source - will play in ensuring a secure, reliable and affordable supply of low-carbon energy.

Commissioner Piebalgs then emphasised the need to support the lifetime extension of existing nuclear plants and for the strictest of safety and security standards: "Special attention must be paid to extending the lifetime of existing plants....new nuclear power plants must be built and existing ones have their operational lifetime extended in order ensure that 2030 electricity supply goals are met." He added that:
"Development for the past three years are on track but things need to increase speed."

Among the other main highlights of the conference was a speech from France's Ambassador to the EU, Pierre Sellal, who focused on the main issues and priorities that are likely to define the forthcoming French Presidency of the EU. During a keynote address on the subject of the nuclear new build in Europe Gérard Mestrallet, CEO of Suez, emphasised how the building of a new power plant should be viewed as part of a long-term commitment: "A nuclear project covers a period of almost a century – it takes 10 years to build a plant, the plants operates for 60 years and the decommissioning phase takes 20 years."

ENA 2008 continues tomorrow with debates on key issues like reconciling economic growth and the low-carbon economy and with discussions on key topics such as investing in nuclear and cutting edge R & D.

For more information on ENA 2008 please click on the following web link: www.ENA2008.org or contact Mark O'Donovan, PR & Media Relations Manager, FORATOM: Tel: 02/ 505 32 26; email: mark.odonovan@foratom.org