

## **Nuclear: France's Viable Long-term Energy Choice**

**Brussels, 2 August 2000:** A major independent study has concluded that nuclear power is likely to retain its economic viability in France over the next 50 years. The findings, contained in a 288-page report compiled for Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, have been welcomed by the European Atomic Forum (FORATOM), the Brussels-based trade association for the European nuclear industry.

The report, covering the period up to 2050, was produced by senior officials from three separate organisations – a key public policy-making forum, France's national scientific research centre and the country's atomic energy commission.

The two main conclusions were:

- Existing nuclear power stations should retain their cost advantage over gas-fired plants, provided they are not closed down prematurely.
- Nuclear is likely to retain its economic edge when it comes to building new generating capacity.

France embarked on a major nuclear power programme after the oil crisis of the early 1970s, and today about three-quarters of French electricity is nuclear-generated. Thanks to its extensive nuclear park, France has made substantial gains in terms of energy independence and security of energy supply. France has also gained environmentally, as nuclear power plants emit no greenhouse or acid rain gases.

The authors of the report have stressed that the document is not designed as a guide for policy-makers or an attempt to influence public opinion. They say it purely provides the technical, economic and ecological information needed for a public debate on France's future energy options.

Commenting on the findings, FORATOM's Secretary General, Dr. Wolf-J. Schmidt-Küster, said: "The French report is a welcome reminder of the economic benefits that can be derived from the prudent use of nuclear energy for electricity generation. There are growing concerns about carbon dioxide emissions and climate change, and EU leaders are focusing their attention on these problems and the increased energy independence that nuclear offers. Nuclear can play an important role in CO<sub>2</sub> avoidance strategies and in reducing dependence on imported fossil fuels.

"The French example now also shows that nuclear can maintain its cost competitiveness, even when there is the attraction of low gas prices. The new study demonstrates that nuclear is a viable and desirable option in terms of both hard cash and environmental protection."

The report (in French) is available on the Internet ([www.plan.gouv.fr](http://www.plan.gouv.fr)), and an [English translation of the executive summary](#) will be posted next week on the FORATOM website ([www.foratom.org](http://www.foratom.org)).

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