

# ■ EU Energy Policy Diary 2010

## New Energy Commissioner takes over



**On 9 February**, the nomination of Günther Oettinger from Germany as the new Energy Commissioner was confirmed by the European Parliament (EP) along with the whole new Commission headed by José-Manuel Barroso. Mr. Oettinger had been Minister President of the Baden-Württemberg region since 2005. He belongs to the Christian Democratic Union Party (CDU) in Germany, Angela Merkel's party, which is currently in office and is considering reversing the current phase-out policy and extending the operational time of the country's nuclear power plants (NPP).

The European Parliament elected the new European Commission by 488 votes in favour, 137 against and 72 abstentions during the plenary session in Strasbourg. The vote was a single vote on the whole College of Commissioners, consisting of one Commissioner from each of the 27 EU member states.

The environment portfolio was held by Janec Potocnik from Slovenia, former Research Commissioner. Connie Hedegaard, from Denmark, was put in charge of the newly-created Climate Action portfolio. Máire Geoghegan-Quinn from Ireland assumed responsibility for the Research, Innovation and Science portfolio. During her hearing Ms. Geoghegan-Quinn declared: "Nuclear energy is no silver bullet that is going to resolve the climate change and energy problem, but nuclear energy remains the technology of choice in many Member States. Research should be maintained and developed as an option for those Member States that wish to pursue it."

Further information, please read Mr. Oettinger's CV ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%BCnther\\_Oettinger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/G%C3%BCnther_Oettinger)) and José-Manuel Barroso's speech before the vote of the EP (<http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/10/21&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>)

## MEPs support SET- Plan



**On 11 March**, the EP adopted a Resolution on the Sustainable Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan). The Resolution recognises the importance of investing in low-carbon technologies, including nuclear power, in order to meet the EU's energy and climate change targets by 2020.

Investing in low-carbon technologies in a time of crisis will also create jobs, enhance the EU's overall economic competitiveness, and secure its energy supplies, according to the Resolution. The Resolution was approved with 444 votes in favour, 88 against and 32 abstentions.

The Resolution stressed the need to increase public and private investment in order to develop those technologies over the next 10 years. The European Commission (EC) Communication entitled: *Investing in the development of low-carbon energy technologies*, which was published on 7 October 2009, estimates that the public and private investment needed for six “European Industrial Initiatives” (EIIs) over the next 10 years should be of the order of €6 billion for wind energy, €16 billion for solar energy, €2 billion for electricity networks, €9 billion for bio-energy, €13 billion for carbon capture and storage (CCS), €7 billion for nuclear fission and €5 billion for the Joint Technology Initiative (JTI) on fuel cells and hydrogen. In the Resolution, MEPs welcomed the selection of the six EIIs (by the EC) and the drawing up of the 2010-2020 technology roadmaps.

For further information you can read [the text of the Resolution](#) and [the EC Communication](#) on the SET-Plan.

## **Eurobarometer Survey on Nuclear Safety published**



On 29 April, the *Eurobarometer* Survey on Nuclear Safety was published. It provided a valuable insight into what European citizens think not only about the safety of nuclear energy, but also about its contribution to security of energy supply and the role it plays in Europe’s energy future.

Among the main facts and figures to emerge from the survey are the following:  
 59% of respondents are confident in nuclear operators’ ability to run nuclear plants safely; 68% of respondents think that nuclear energy helps reduce the EU’s dependence upon gas and oil, thereby enhancing security of energy supply; 56% want nuclear energy to be maintained or increased (up 8% on the 2007 survey results).

Experience shows that the more citizens know about nuclear energy, the more they are in favour of it. However, 74% of those surveyed said that they didn’t know enough about it. The industry is committed to participating in the stakeholder dialogue on all aspects relating to nuclear energy in order to bridge this knowledge gap. This includes doing more to inform citizens that solutions for the safe and efficient management of radioactive waste exist and are being put into practice in a number of countries.

It must be noted that 82% European citizens said that nuclear waste management should be regulated at EU level. This is consistent with the approach of the EC, which is currently drafting a Directive on radioactive waste.

For further information, you can read the [Eurobarometer](#) and the [press release of the EC](#).

Read also FORATOM’s Press Release: [Press Release on Eurobarometer survey](#)

## **ENEF: Fifth Plenary meeting takes place in Bratislava**



On 25 & 26 May, high-level representatives from the European institutions, the nuclear community and civil society gathered in Bratislava for the fifth Plenary Meeting of the European Nuclear Energy Forum (ENEF). The meeting was as well-attended as the previous ones and top-level speakers. The opening session included speeches from the Energy Commissioner; Günther Oettinger, the Vice-Chairman of the European Parliament’s ITRE committee, Evžen Tošenovský and the Prime Ministers of Slovakia and Czech Republic - Robert Fico and Jan Fischer respectively.

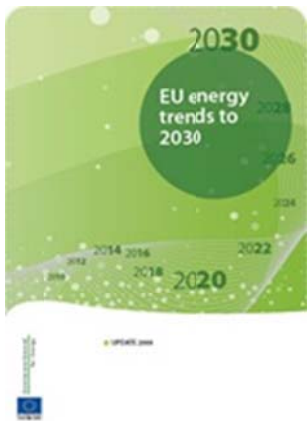
The Energy Commissioner recognised the major contribution of nuclear energy in helping the EU meet its climate change and security of supply targets. He highlighted the fact that nuclear accounts for two thirds of

EU's CO<sub>2</sub>-free electricity, and with some of the lowest costs". Mr. Oettinger said he was committed to supporting the continuous development of ENEF. He also praised the work of the Forum and the good level of participation in this Bratislava Plenary Meeting. He emphasised the importance of the radioactive waste issue and recalled the results of the latest *Eurobarometer* survey on nuclear safety that found that 82% of EU citizens would favour EU legislation on radioactive waste. Indeed a piece of legislation on radioactive waste is currently being prepared by the EC.

The rest of the meeting focused on the work of the 3 ENEF Working Groups (WG): Risks, Opportunities and Transparency. Each WG Chairman gave an update on the work of his respective group. Each presentation was followed by a panel discussion on relevant topics: waste management for the Risks WG, European low-carbon economy for the Opportunities WG and public involvement in siting for waste disposal for the Transparency WG.

For further information, please consult [the FORATOM website page](#) and [the EC website page](#) dedicated to ENEF.

### Nuclear production to remain stable, says EC report



**On 17 September**, in an update of its Energy Trends 2030 publication, the EC concluded that nuclear energy production will remain at current levels if the current phase-out policies in Germany and Belgium are maintained and projected nuclear units are built in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, France, Finland, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

"The policies included allow total energy demand to stabilise, renewable energy sources (RES) to deploy considerably (up to 64% of total electricity generation), nuclear to partly revive thereby reducing the use of fossil fuels and decreasing significantly CO<sub>2</sub> emissions", says the report. The conclusions show once again that nuclear is now clearly recognised within the EU institutions as a low-carbon energy source.

Another recently-published study of the International Energy Agency (IEA) and the Nuclear Energy Agency of the OECD (OECD/NEA), *Technology Roadmap, Nuclear Energy*, shows that nuclear could generate up to 25% of global electricity production by 2050.

The update of Energy Trends to 2030 is available at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/trends\\_2030/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/energy/observatory/trends_2030/index_en.htm)

You can also read the IEA and OECD/NEA Nuclear Technology Roadmap at:

[http://www.iea.org/papers/2010/nuclear\\_roadmap.pdf](http://www.iea.org/papers/2010/nuclear_roadmap.pdf) .

### EC Directive Proposal focuses on radioactive waste management



**On 3 November**, the EC published a *Proposal for a Council Directive on the Management of Spent Fuel and Radioactive Waste*. The Proposal aims to set up an EU framework for the safe management of radioactive waste and spent fuel from nuclear power plants, research, the medical sector and industry.

Solutions for the long-term and safe management of radioactive waste exist and the proposed EU legal framework will facilitate their implementation. Although quantities of radioactive waste are small compared to other toxic wastes, a legally-binding text

is important to ensure that all Member States define and implement national programmes for the long-term, responsible management of radioactive waste. Indeed the *IAEA Joint Convention on the Safety of Spent Fuel Management and on the Safety of Radioactive Waste Management* is a significant treaty to which all Member States (except Malta) are party and provides for the highest safety standards. But it does not entail any sanctions. The Waste Directive Proposal also includes measures that will accelerate the implementation of decisions for the final disposal of radioactive waste. The resulting national programmes should include plans, a concrete timetable and a financing scheme for the construction of final disposal facilities. These should be set out by Member States within four years of the adoption of the Directive, approximately by 2015.

Technically and economically viable solutions for the management of radioactive waste exist. Indeed, the European Union's low-level waste, which represents approximately 85% of the total volume of waste, has already been disposed of safely. The Directive Proposal acknowledges the fact that there is a world-wide scientific and technical consensus that deep geological disposal of high-level waste (and spent fuel if considered as waste), which has been proven by over 30 years of research, represents the safest and most sustainable option. Some countries, like Sweden, France and Finland are already in the process of developing deep repositories for the final disposal of spent fuel and radioactive waste by 2025.

For further information, please read [the press release of the EC](#). The FORATOM press release is also available here: [http://www.foratom.org/download-center/doc\\_download/4247-press-release-waste-directive.html](http://www.foratom.org/download-center/doc_download/4247-press-release-waste-directive.html). You can also read the [FORATOM Fact Sheet](#) on radioactive waste management and consult the [website of ANDRA](#), France's national radioactive waste agency, to learn more about the radioactive waste management plans in different countries (in French).

## EU 2020 Energy Strategy document published



**On 10 November**, the EC published its proposed action plan on energy entitled: *A strategy for competitive, sustainable and secure energy*. It defines the EU's energy priorities for the next ten years. The strategy clearly recognises nuclear energy's security of supply, competitiveness and low-carbon economy credentials and calls for "replacing and expanding existing capacities" to maintain its contribution.

The 2020 Energy strategy notes that nuclear power accounts for around one third of total electricity production in the EU and two-thirds of low-carbon electricity. To maintain that contribution the Communication recommends speeding up investment in research programmes devoted to waste management, the next generation of fission reactors, cogeneration of heat and electricity and nuclear fusion (ITER). To do so, the Strategic Energy Technology Plan (SET-Plan) that includes the European Nuclear Industry Initiatives (ESNIIs) should be implemented "without delay."

The strategy document also mentions the fact that the implementation of the Safety Directive "should allow the EU to keep its leadership in safe nuclear energy and contribute to the responsible use of nuclear energy worldwide." While stressing the importance of continuing to tackle waste, safety and security issues, the document confirms that political support exists at EU level for nuclear energy.

During the subsequent press conference, Günther Oettinger called for the *européanisation* of energy policy and indicated that the 2020 Energy Strategy will be presented to the Council on 4 February 2011, during the first ever EU Energy Summit. It should "give impetus and support to render energy policy more European."

For further information, please read [the press release of the EC](#), [the 2020 Energy Strategy](#) itself and information on [the public consultation](#) on an energy strategy for 2020.

## ESNII launched as part of SET- Plan



**On 15 November**, the ESNII (European Sustainable Nuclear Industry Initiative) was launched during the SET-Plan conference. ESNII aims to develop a new generation of nuclear reactors that will help the European Union to meet its climate and energy targets. The initiative, which is part of the measures proposed by the SET-Plan to increase effective research coordination, brings together industry and research partners and will promote Europe's leadership in nuclear technology.

The European Industrial Initiatives (EII) were ignited by the publication of the SET-Plan in November 2007, which provided for the creation of EIIs not only for renewables, but also for nuclear fission, CCS and electricity grids. The SET-Plan aims to increase the use of low-carbon technologies to meet the targets set up during the Spring Council in March, namely a 20% CO<sub>2</sub> emissions reduction and a 20% increase in renewables provision by 2020. Under the umbrella of the Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform (SNETP), ESNII will promote the development of Generation IV fast neutron reactor technology. This new technology will enable to produce more electricity with less uranium and to reduce the amount of radioactive waste, thus sustaining the long-term contribution of nuclear power to a low-carbon economy.

Paul Rorive, Senior Vice-President of nuclear activities at GDF-Suez, said during the SET-Plan conference: "the fast neutron reactors with closed fuel cycle technologies have the potential to multiply by a factor of 50 to 100 the energy output from a given amount of uranium, while improving the management of high-level radioactive waste. They are, therefore, potentially able to provide energy for the next thousand years using known uranium resources."

For further information, please read [the press release](#) of the SNETP and consult the website of [the SET-Plan conference](#) and of [SNETP](#).

## EC launches public consultation on Energy Roadmap 2050



**On 20 December**, the EC launched a public consultation period on the Energy Roadmap 2050. The Roadmap itself, which will address all major energy sources - including nuclear energy - should be launched in the second half of 2011. The Roadmap seeks to promote the EU's transition

towards a low-carbon energy system. It will outline ways for the Union to achieve its energy objectives, in particular energy sustainability, energy security and competitiveness - all of which will be improved by a transition to a low-carbon energy system.

DG Energy invited public authorities, Member States, private organisations, industry associations, citizens, consumer organisations, NGOs, environmental groups etc. to help prepare the Roadmap by filling in a special questionnaire. The questionnaire asks people for their views on the major energy issues facing the EU, such as the priorities of energy policy development, the major milestones that will have to be reached for the transition towards a low-carbon energy system to take place and what the main drivers of energy policy are. The consultation period will run until 7 March 2011 and the results will be published.