

FORATOM welcomes EU's adoption of Radioactive Waste Directive

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FORATOM, the trade association representing the European nuclear industry, welcomes the adoption by EU ministers today of a Council Directive on the management of spent fuel and radioactive waste, thereby establishing for the first time a Community-wide framework for the safe and sustainable management of the EU's radioactive waste.

The Council Directive establishing a Community framework for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste is expected to enter into force at the end of August 2011. Member States' governments will have two years to bring their national legislation in line with the Directive. They will be required to submit national radioactive waste management programmes to the EC that feature specific targets and timeframes, inventories, estimations of the cost of the programmes over a 10-15 year period and how they will be financed.

Commenting on the long-awaited adoption of the Directive, Santiago San Antonio, Director General of FORATOM, said: "We welcome the adoption of this Directive. It imposes legal responsibilities on Member States to manage their radioactive waste and spent fuel safely without imposing unnecessary burdens on future generations. Technically and economically viable solutions for the management of all categories of radioactive waste already exist. For the management of high-level waste and spent fuel (if the latter is considered as waste), the scientific consensus is that deep geological disposal represents the safest and most sustainable end-point. Some countries are already developing deep underground repositories. This Directive should encourage others to make similar progress."

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