Sewage sludge production would be increased by 10 to 40% because of solid waste in waste waters. Only 30 to 40% of sewage sludge is used on land as fertiliser in the Community. The rest is either landfill or incinerated. Moreover, sewage sludge is normally much more contaminated by heavy metals than compost from source separation of food waste.

Urban waste water treatment plants are not built in order to deal with solid waste but with wastewater. Concerning the implementation of the Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 91/271/EEC of 21 May 1991, Member States and local authorities have already made their investments, which are based on wastewater volumes that do not include food waste.


(2001/C 364 E/131)

WRITTEN QUESTION E-1461/01
by Marjo Matikainen-Kallström (PPE-DE) to the Commission

(17 May 2001)

Subject: Funding earmarked for nuclear energy research in the Sixth framework programme for research

The budget of the Sixth framework programme for research is due to grow by 17% compared with the Fifth framework programme for research. However, it is intended that Euratom’s share of the Sixth framework programme will be reduced by 2.5% compared with the Fifth framework programme.

Bearing in mind the growing importance of nuclear energy for an overall solution to the energy question in Europe, what is the Commission’s reason for such a marked reduction in the resources for research into nuclear energy?

Answer given by Mr Busquin on behalf of the Commission

(1 August 2001)

The Commission’s proposals for the next framework programmes (FP) for research (1) have been substantially restructured in comparison with the previous ones in order to make a reality of the European research area.

One of the main principles of the proposals is concentration on a selected number of priority research areas in which Community action can add the greatest possible value.

As regards research in the fields of nuclear waste treatment and storage, radiation protection and innovative concepts for new and safer processes of exploitation of nuclear energy, the level of Community funding remains as a whole roughly unchanged. The focus on nuclear waste should allow to assemble research efforts in the Community into a critical mass and to provide a common basis of knowledge available to waste management organisations.

The budget for fusion research was reduced from €788 million in the Fifth framework programme on Research and Technological Development of the Community to €700 million. The Commission proposal confirms the reactor orientation of the fusion energy research and reinforces the co-ordination at European level in the framework of the European Research Area. It gives a high priority to the realisation of the Next Step in the context of the international co-operation on the International Thermonuclear Energy Reactor (ITER) project and to the common use of the Joint European Torus (JET) Facilities. It emphasises Community support to multilateral projects with European added value and anticipates that Member States will bear a larger fraction of the programmes carried out at the national level by the associations.
The approach taken in the new Euratom framework programme proposal is in line with the Commission's Green Paper 'Towards a European strategy for the security of energy supply' (\(^1\)).

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WRITTEN QUESTION E-1465/01
by Bruno Gollnisch (TDI) to the Council
(21 May 2001)

Subject: Time-share holiday swindles

The number of abuses and swindles perpetrated by time-share holiday 'professionals' has been growing for several years now.

Hundreds of people have fallen and are still falling prey to these mafiosi of the tourist trade, who sell or resell annual stays in non-existent flats and then disappear into thin air once they have collected the money.

Such behaviour has in some cases seriously damaged the tourist industry's reputation in several parts of Spain (particularly Tenerife and Denia), in south and south-west France (particularly Canet-Plage) and in French overseas departments (Guadeloupe).

Does the Council intend to carry out in-depth investigations into what already appears to be a serious problem?

Does it intend to take action against the agencies, companies and even banks that are knowingly involved in such cross-border swindles?

Does current European legislation on tourism and consumer protection provide for any specific measures on time sharing?

Were it to be established that, owing to the laxity of their public authorities, some States were failing to show the proper diligence in combating such activities, would the Council consider calling upon them to take action? If so, what procedure would it follow?

Reply
(27 September 2001)

The Honourable Member should note that purchase of the right to use one or more immovable properties on a timeshare basis is governed by Directive 94/47/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 October 1994 on the protection of purchasers in respect of certain aspects of contracts relating to the purchase of the right to use immovable properties on a timeshare basis (\(^2\)). The purpose of that Directive is to approximate the laws, regulations and administrative provisions of the Member States on the protection of purchasers in respect of certain aspects of contracts relating directly or indirectly to the purchase of the right to use one or more immovable properties on a timeshare basis.

The abuses and swindles in time-sharing mentioned by the Honourable Member are not, however, specifically suppressed by a European Union legal instrument.

However, many legal instruments adopted by the Council on the basis of Article 34 of the Treaty on European Union aim at considerably improving cooperation between the authorities responsible for combating international fraud.

Should Member States' national legislation fail to provide a satisfactory answer to this problem, it would be incumbent on a Member State or the Commission to make use of its right of initiative by proposing that such activities be suppressed in a harmonised manner at European level.

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\(^1\) COM(2001) 94 final.