

**Opinion on the proposal for a Council Decision adopting a five-year research and training programme (1980 to 1984) of the European Atomic Energy Community in the field of biology-health protection (Radiation Protection Programme)**

The text referred to the Committee has been published in *Official Journal of the European Communities* No C 102 of 24 April 1979, page 4.

**A. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE OPINION**

On 10 April 1979, the Council referred the abovementioned proposal to the Economic and Social Committee in accordance with Article 7 of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community.

**B. OPINION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE**

The Economic and Social Committee prepared its opinion on the above matter at its 171st plenary session, held in Brussels on 26 and 27 September 1979.

The full text of the opinion is as follows:

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community, and in particular Article 7 thereof,

Having regard to the request made by the Council of the European Communities on 10 April 1979 for an opinion,

Having regard to the Bureau's decision of 22 May 1979 instructing the Section to draft an opinion and report,

Having regard to the opinion which the Section issued on 13 September 1979,

Having regard to the oral report made by the rapporteur, Mr Drago,

Having regard to the discussions at its 171st plenary session, held on 26 and 27 September 1979 (meeting of 26 September 1979),

Whereas it is in the Community's interest to increase our understanding of the consequences and hazards of ionizing radiation, so as to permit an objective assessment of the problems involved and thus ensure adequate protection of man and the environment;

Whereas advances in knowledge and new concepts in the field of radiation protection make it necessary to follow up the current 1976 to 1980 programme with a new programme covering the period 1980 to 1984;

Whereas the research covered by the draft Decision will effectively further such action in the common interest,

HAS ADOPTED THE FOLLOWING OPINION

unanimously:

1. In pursuance of the tasks assigned to it by the Euratom Treaty, the Community, under its radiation protection programme, has implemented four indirect research programmes in the field of biology and health protection.

The work in question has been carried out by national research bodies, and has been coordinated and partfinanced by the Community.

The current radiation protection programme expires at the end of 1980 and the proposed new programme is to begin on 1 January 1980.

2. The new programme is the fifth in a series of indirect research and training programmes (1980 to 1984). It will cost 68.2 million EUA.

3. The programme is designed to secure adequate understanding and control of radiation risks. It has two main objectives:

- improvement of scientific and technical knowledge with a view to updating basic standards for protection of the general public and workers against the health hazards arising from ionizing radiation;
- evaluation of the biological and ecological consequences of nuclear activities, and of the use of nuclear energy and ionizing radiation.

4. The Committee reiterates the need for further research into the effects of ionizing radiation, for the purpose of constantly improving radiation protection standards designed to protect (i) the general public, (ii) persons exposed directly or indirectly to radiation in the course of their work and (iii) the environment.

5. The Committee feels that such research is a prerequisite for ensuring that nuclear energy is used in a way compatible with the safety of the public at large, and of nuclear industry workers in particular.

6. The programme covers six integrated fields:

- radiation dosimetry and its interpretation;
- behaviour and control of radionuclides in the environment;
- short-term somatic effects of ionizing radiation;
- late somatic effects of ionizing radiation;
- genetic effects of ionizing radiation;
- evaluation of radiation hazards.

A greater understanding of these subjects will further the objectives which have been laid down for the programme in the light of current knowledge, new lines of approach and future requirements.

7. The Committee feels that priority should be given to certain research projects relating to the health and environmental hazards of radiation. The Committee endorses the proposed financial allocation and staffing arrangements. It recommends that findings to date in the area of biology and health protection should be made more and more widely publicized.

8. The Community should continue to play an active role at all levels of international cooperation, through the various bodies involved in this field. These bodies include: the UN Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation (UNSCEAR), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICPR) and the International Commission on Radiation Units and Measurements (ICRU).

9. The Committee feels that the Member States should give maximum publicity to work in course, and that everything should be done to maximize protection against the risks associated with all forms of radiation, including natural radioactivity which has been intensified by human activity, and radiation from radioactive material used for medical purposes.

The Committee stresses the importance of research into the effects of low doses, which is mentioned in the Commission's paper. This research is of considerable importance not only to workers currently employed in nuclear plants, but also to those who have been so employed in the past and to the general public.

The Commission's research and training programme can do much to reduce radiation doses from medical treatment, which is a major source of 'man-made' radiation.

10. A study has started on the preparation of a Community radiation register for workers directly exposed to radiation. The Committee endorses this exercise, and feels that the register should cover workers employed full time in nuclear plants. It is however also necessary to provide equivalent protection and appropriate checks for workers employed occasionally on temporary projects and in jobs involving exposure to radiation.

The Committee reiterates its call for the introduction of a 'nuclear passport' for all nuclear industry workers. This document would log the places where nuclear workers had been employed, and the radioactivity levels to which they had been exposed (1).

(1) Study of the Committee on a Community Nuclear Safety Code, 28 April 1977.

Finally, the Committee feels that, following the introduction of new dosimetric units, efforts should be

made to facilitate health check-ups for nuclear workers and to publicize protection measures.

Done at Brussels, 26 September 1979.

*The Chairman  
of the Economic and Social Committee*

Raffaele VANNI

#### Opinion on the

- proposal for a Council Regulation amending Regulation (EEC) No 1117/78 on the common organization of the market in dried fodder, and the
- proposal for a Council Regulation fixing for the 1979/80 marketing year the flat-rate production aid for dehydrated potatoes

The text referred to the Committee has been published in *Official Journal of the European Communities* No C 170 of 7 July 1979, pages 4 and 5.

#### A. LEGAL BASIS FOR THE OPINION

On 4 July 1979, the Council referred the abovementioned proposal to the Economic and Social Committee in accordance with Articles 47 and 198 of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community.

#### B. OPINION OF THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE

The Economic and Social Committee prepared its opinion on the above matter at its 171st plenary session, held in Brussels on 26 and 27 September 1979.

The full text of the opinion is as follows:

THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, and in particular Articles 47 and 198,

Having regard to the request made by the Council of

the European Communities on 4 July 1979 for an opinion,

Having regard to the decision taken by its Bureau on 16 July 1979 instructing the Section for Agriculture to prepare an opinion on the matter,