

Brussels, 26 November 2008

Nuclear Safety: Commission moves ahead

Today the Commission adopted a revised proposal for a Directive setting up a Community framework for nuclear safety. The new Directive responds to EU citizens' concerns for Europe-wide binding safety legislation for the operation of nuclear power plants. It defines basic obligations and general principles for the safety of nuclear installations in the EU while enhancing the role of national regulatory bodies.

“This Directive will benefit EU citizens by improving their safety and giving them legal certainty. Member States will have a common reference framework for their respective national nuclear safety systems and retain the right to apply more stringent rules if required.” said Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs.

The cross-border risks associated with the operation of nuclear installations is well known, but there has only been limited standardisation of safety requirements between Member States until now. The recent renewed interest in the use of nuclear energy makes convergence rules at EU level even more necessary in order to support the Member States in their efforts to continuously improve nuclear safety.

The general objective of the proposal is to achieve, maintain and continuously improve nuclear safety and its regulation in the Community and to enhance the role of the regulatory bodies. Its scope of application is the design, siting, construction, maintenance, operation and decommissioning of nuclear installations, for which consideration of safety is required under the legislative and regulatory framework of the Member State concerned. The right of each Member State to use nuclear energy or not in its energy mix is recognised and fully respected.

The new Directive is firmly anchored in the subsidiarity principle as it aims at enhancing the role of the national nuclear safety control bodies, their independence and resources in fulfilling their tasks.

The proposal – which replaces and updates the one tabled in September 2004¹ – is based on the obligations of the Convention on Nuclear Safety² (CNS) and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Safety Fundamentals³. The High Level Group on Nuclear Safety and Waste Management (ENSREG), will become the focal point of cooperation between regulators and will contribute to the continuous improvement of nuclear safety requirements, especially with respect to new reactors. The proposal foresees that the Commission shall present a report to the Council on progress made with the implementation of this Directive, accompanied, if appropriate, by legislative proposals.

The Directive is available [here](#).

¹ COM 2004(526) final.

² Signed on 24 October 1996 under the aegis of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

³ IAEA Safety Fundamentals: Fundamental safety principles, IAEA Safety Standard Series No. SF-1 (2006).