



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Secretary General,

The European Commission thanks the Italian Senate for its favourable opinion on the Commission's Communication on nuclear non-proliferation {COM(2009)143}.

The Commission appreciates the support expressed by the Italian Senate towards the Commission activities in this area, in particular for the use of bilateral Euratom agreements and of financial assistance instruments of the Community (the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation and the Instrument for Stability) as means to strengthen international cooperation on nuclear non-proliferation.

In this respect, the Commission shares the views expressed by the Italian Senate and is working together with the IAEA and other major actors, in particular the United States, to further enhance the international nuclear non-proliferation regime, in close coordination with the Council of the European Union.

More concretely, in the area of bilateral agreements, the Commission is examining possibilities to negotiate additional Euratom agreements with countries that have or are developing significant nuclear power programmes.

The Instrument for Stability foresees around €300m being spent on CBRN (chemical, biological, radioactive and nuclear) risk mitigation cooperation with third countries in the period 2007-2013, in support of the 2003 EU Strategy against the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. Under this instrument, the Commission is working to create regional centers of excellence in three main regions: the Middle East, South East Asia and Africa. The purpose of these centers is to coordinate at regional level actions aiming at reducing the proliferation risks related to CBRN materials and to develop a culture of safety and security on CBRN. Close coordination with major international partners is ongoing to maximize synergies and better plan third country assistance.

Mr Antonio Malaschini
Secretary General
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Under the Instrument for Nuclear Safety Cooperation, cooperation with a number of new beneficiary countries is being initiated. Although the focus is on nuclear safety, support for building up the regulatory capacity in a given country is likely to bring also benefits in terms of reducing risks of proliferation.

The Commission works closely with the Council in order to ensure that new measures proposed follow priorities identified in the "New lines for action by the EU in combating the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems".

Yours sincerely,

Margot WALLSTRÖM
Vice-President of the European Commission