



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 4.6.2013
C(2013) 3263 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Senato della Repubblica for its Opinion concerning the proposal for a Council Regulation on the Research and Training Programme of the European Atomic Energy Community (2014-2018) complementing the Horizon 2020 – The Framework Programme for Research and Innovation {COM(2011) 812 final}, and apologises for the long delay in replying

The Commission thanks the Senato della Repubblica for the strong support to the proposal on the Euratom Programme (2014-2018). Although in formal terms the proposal is now with the Council and the European Parliament, the Commission remains very open to hear any new ideas being put forward. In this perspective the Commission would like to provide the following clarifications on the four main observations raised in the Opinion:

Description of the research activities (Annexes to the proposal):

The proposed Regulation for the Euratom Programme (2014-2018) intends to provide a general framework for nuclear research activities, for the first time through a single document. Annex I to the proposal provides the main lines and strategic orientation for these activities, as was the case under the previous and current Framework Programmes. In line with existing practice, more detailed information for each research activity will be provided in the Work Programmes. As in previous Framework Programmes, the proposal does not mention the resources available for each research activity, but instead a breakdown of resources between the main fields of research, i.e. indirect actions in fission and fusion, and direct actions.

Fusion research:

The Commission's proposal fully acknowledges the order of magnitude of the challenge to reach commercial deployment of electricity from fusion. For this reason, the Commission proposed to establish an 'ambitious, yet realistic roadmap towards the production of electricity by 2050'. The first version of such a roadmap has been prepared in 2012 by the members of the European Fusion Development Agreement (EFDA). This document shows that the realisation of fusion energy has to face a number of technical challenges. For all of them, candidate solutions have been developed and the goal of the fusion programme is now to demonstrate that they will also work at the scale of a reactor. Eight different roadmap's missions have been defined and assessed. They will be addressed by universities, research laboratories and industries through a goal-oriented programme supported by Horizon 2020.

Mr Pietro Grasso
President of the
Senato della Repubblica
Piazza Madama, 1
IT – 00186 ROMA

Financial allocation for the Euratom Programme:

For indirect actions, the budget indicated in the proposal (expressed in current values) maintains the same level of annual commitment appropriations as under the two previous Framework Programmes. This is particularly true for fission indirect actions, where the proposal stays fully in line with the budget of the current Programme (2012-2013).

As regards the budget for the Joint Research Centre (JRC) direct actions, the proposal includes an increase of about 30% as compared with the 2009-2013 period. This budget proposal is based on the amounts allocated under the last year of the current Framework Programme, corrected for inflation (2%), plus an additional amount that takes into account the cost of infrastructure projects in line with the strengthened nuclear and security standards, EU regulations and environmental objectives (EUR 80 million over the 5-year Programme).

Ex-post evaluation of the Euratom Programme:

Euratom Programmes are limited to 5 years in line with the Euratom Treaty. In order to adapt to the timeline of the Multiannual Financial Framework, an additional Programme covering the period 2019-2020 will have to be adopted. For this reason the ex-post evaluation of the Euratom Programme should be carried out by 31 December 2022, allowing for a single exercise covering the Euratom research Programmes for the periods 2014-2018 and 2019-2020. This is strictly in line with the approach retained for the ex-post evaluation of the FP7 Euratom Programme, to be completed by the end of 2015.

The Commission hopes that these clarifications address the comments and questions raised in your Opinion and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue with the Senato della Repubblica.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*