



**Friends of
the Earth
Europe**

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To

**UK Presidency of the European
Union, Mr Prime Minister Tony Blair
Competitiveness-Council of the EU,
Mr Lord David Sainsbury,
Parliamentary Under Secretary for
Science and Innovation**

**Councillors for Research of all
Member States of the European
Union**

Brussels / Vienna, 24/11/2005

Open Letter

Time to Abandon Nuclear Power's Special Status: The 7th Research Framework Programme Must Increase Funding for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency.

Dear Mr Prime Minister Tony Blair,
Dear Lord David Sainsbury,
Dear Councillors for Research,

The European Union's 7th Research Framework Programme provides industry, research centres and public authorities in European countries with public money for research activities. Obviously, research and development is of utmost importance for the development and economic growth of modern societies. However, it has to be ensured, that research activities fulfil requirements of sustainability and lead to an improvement of living conditions and quality of the environment.

We are very concerned by the fact, that the current proposal for the 7th Framework Programme does not fulfil the requirements of sustainability in the field of energy research. We urge you to exert your influence during the Competitiveness Council meeting on 28/29th November, while seeking to reach political agreement on the general approach of the 7th Framework Programme to take the chance to change the current proposal to one that is truly transparent and sustainable.

The Commission proposal for the 7th Framework Programme is remarkable as it once again creates a 'special case' for nuclear power, by providing the technology with its own research and development budget, separate from all other programmes. This means that nuclear power is excluded from the debate about how the limited funds for energy R&D should be allocated. Currently, energy is set to receive €2951 million from the European Community budget for the 7th FP, while nuclear power is set to receive €4753 under the Euratom Programme (The Commission proposal is only for the Euratom FP to run for 5 years,

however, information on the proposed budget for years 6 and 7 is included within this documentation). In the light of this artificial separation and the limited volume of proposed funding, it is essential that urgent efforts are taken to increase the transparency of the Euratom Proposal. **Consequently, we are urging you to take the following steps:**

- That the proposed Euratom Budget be further broken down in order to differentiate between the different sub categories in the programme. This would enable a clear indication of the proposed budgets for different technologies and strategies. While all Member States are likely to support further research into the medical applications of nuclear technology, there is unlikely to be as much support for transmutation. Similarly, most Member States support increasing safety in existing reactors, in particularly those in the former Soviet Union, but will not necessarily support the development of the next generation of reactors – Generation IV. Only by clearly differentiating between these items can the funds be expected to target the most appropriate technological needs.
- Currently, it is proposed that excessive funding be allocated to fusion research, this must be dramatically reduced. Furthermore, the information provided cannot be used to justify this level of funding. Therefore, the Council must request that the Commission supply detailed information on: What is the construction and operating costs for the ITER project from cradle to grave, when will it be completed and how long will it operate and what is the European Union's financial commitment to the ITER project, broken down by annual contribution?

Furthermore, on the Framework Programme as a whole we respectfully request that:

- Priority must be given to energy sources which can assist the EU to meet its short and medium term CO₂ reduction targets and secure its supply objectives. Investing the majority of funding into technologies that may or may not deliver new technological options 30 years from now is not an appropriate response to the urgency of the situation. In order to increase transparency there must be separate budget lines for each energy technology.
- The EU has an opportunity to save up to 20% of its energy consumption at little or no cost, with a further 20% currently technically possible. These saving potentials will only be realised with further research into new technologies and implementation methods. Priority must be given to energy efficiency in the 7th Framework Programme.
- Renewable energy for electricity, transport, heating and cooling are all areas which will benefit from further research and development. The further use of renewables is a fundamental part of the EU's strategy to improve security of supply and reduce the environmental impact of the energy sector. Renewable energy must receive more funding than other energy supply option in the 7th Framework Programme.

Yours sincerely,

Silva Herrmann
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