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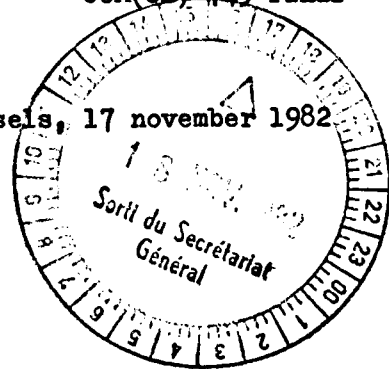
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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(82) 749 final

Brussels, 17 november 1982



REVISION OF THE CURRENT JRC PROGRAMME FOR 1983

(Communication from the Commission to the Council)

COM(82) 749 final

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

Subject: Revision of the current JRC programme for 1983

At the outcome of the discussion held during the Council meeting of 4 November on research, it was agreed that the Commission would produce a document setting out its position on the revision of the JRC programme for 1983 and the guidelines for the 1984-87 programme, describing the solution that seemed to be emerging at the end of the discussion and providing some further clarifications requested by the Ministers.

Whereas the modification of the Super-SARA programme is required for reasons that have been set out elsewhere, the Commission recognizes that it is reasonable not to discuss the remainder of the JRC programme at the same time: the latter will be discussed in 1983 in the context of the framework programme. This is made possible by the general attitude that seems to be emerging within the Council in favour of maintaining the balance between the nuclear and non-nuclear parts of the programme.

The continuation of the activities in the field of fast reactor safety and radioactive waste that the Commission had considered discontinuing or reducing considerably represents an expenditure of 3 million EUA in 1983, which does not exert a substantial effect on the programme as a whole. Questions concerning the reorganization of the infrastructure will be tackled in 1983 in the context of discussions on the 1984-87 four-year programme.

The decision requested therefore concerns exclusively the Super-SARA project and relates to the project phase covering the period 1983-86 inclusive. This phase initially involves the manufacture and qualification of the fixed installations designed for carrying out the experiments, and is to culminate in 1986 with the issue of the operating license, the divergence of the ESSOR reactor and the performance of the first in-pile tests that will demonstrate the feasibility of the venture. The execution of this phase requires close cooperation with the other programmes on reactor safety. (The federative nature of this project moreover corresponds naturally to the Community dimension of nuclear safety policy.) It is on this condition that the programme will be able to go ahead as planned. If this work is to be carried out, temporary increases in the JRC's staff complement peaking at approximately 100 posts in excess of the 2 260 figure will have to be authorized during the first few years of the phase in question; this excess will subsequently be eliminated by means of staff departures.

In view of the foregoing, the appropriations for commitment required for the whole of the 1982 and 1983 budgets amount to 27.5 million ECU.

1 million ECU have already been granted under transfer 30/82;
16.5 million ECU are the subject of a transfer procedure that has already been initiated (No 43/82); since these appropriations will be available towards the end of 1982, the Commission has already mentioned the need to carry them forward to 1983;
10 million ECU should be the subject of a transfer within the 1983 budget or a supplementary and amending budget in 1983.

The Council on Economic and Financial Affairs will be required to state its preference between these two solutions and to approve the first quota of additional posts allocated to Super-SARA in 1983, i.e. 57 employees, which amounts to 19 more than the 2 260 figure. The Commission formally undertakes to use none of these 57 recruitment authorizations until the decision to revise the JRC programme and continue the Super-SARA project has been taken.

The first section of the attached document describes the revision of the JRC programme for 1983, which is strictly confined to the Super-SARA project and based on an acknowledgement of the project's requirements for the period 1984-86. It is presented in the form of the conclusion that should, in the Commission's view, be that of the Council.

The second part of this document gives indications on the repercussions that a programme comprising the Super-SARA project would have and the main consequences that would result from the abandonment of the project.

I. DRAFT COUNCIL CONCLUSION

In view of the characteristics of the Super-SARA project, in particular its execution phase, which is to last until 1986 and requires the following:

- an additional budget of 27.5 million ECU in appropriations for commitment for the whole of 1982 and 1983 and an average additional allocation of 13 million ECU a year in excess of current expenditure for 1984, 1985 and 1986, which would increase the project commitments to an average of some 30 million ECU a year during this period;
- a temporary increase in the JRC staff complement peaking at some 100 posts more than the 2 260 figure, which will be eliminated by means of staff reduction measures (see document ATO 83, section I.3),

the Council has taken note of the fact that:

- the current status of the additional 27.5 million ECU for 1982 and 1983 is as follows:
 - 1 million ECU have already been granted by virtue of transfer 30/82;
 - 16.5 million ECU are the subject of a transfer procedure that has already been initiated (No 43/82);
 - 10 million ECU should be the subject of a transfer within the 1983 budget or a supplementary and amending budget in 1983;
- the Commission considers these amounts sufficient provided that:
 - the expenditure on licensing recently decided by the Italian Government is not charged to the Community; and that
 - the amounts outstanding under the ESSOR 1/78 contract are made available to the Commission by the Italian Government;
- since its staff complement of 2 260 has been reduced by 38 posts as a result of the transfer of the latter to the operating budget, the JRC requires additional staff in order to carry out the Super-SARA project, the first quota of which will amount to 57 posts in 1983, i.e. 19 posts in excess of the 2 260 figure authorized by the 1980-83 programme decision. These posts will be occupied by temporary staff, and their number will be offset by departures when the abovementioned staff reduction measures come into force.

In the light of this information, the Council:

- decides that the execution of the Super-SARA project will be continued and that the 1983 revision of the 1980-83 JRC programme will be confined to measures designed to put at the Commission's disposal the resources necessary for carrying out this project, as described in the foregoing;
- instructs the Permanent Representatives Committee to draw up the necessary texts for implementing this decision;
- asserts its intention of taking its decision on the 1984-87 four-year JRC programme in June 1983, in the context of the framework programme.

II. COMMENTS BY THE COMMISSION

1. IMPLICATIONS OF THE REVISION OF THE PROGRAMME IN 1983 AND OF THE CONTINUATION OF THE SUPER-SARA PROJECT

Many delegations have voiced their concern about the effect that the continuation of the Super-SARA programme could have on the execution of the other programmes.

The revision of the programme for 1983 that the Council is now being invited to approve in accordance with the conclusion that emerged from its discussion of 4 November would enable resources not to be withdrawn from the other programmes in 1983. It should be stressed in particular that the activities which it had been envisaged to discontinue or reduce considerably in the field of fast reactor safety and radioactive waste will be continued in 1983 on a scale that is sufficiently large to enable the Council to decide to maintain them in full or in part in the 1984-87 programme.

The amounts outstanding from the ESSOR 1/78 contract - approximately 11 million ECU - that the Italian Government is to put at the Commission's disposal will make it possible to establish a reserve for technical risks amounting to some 20% of the specific appropriations, which will afford financial protection for the other programmes in the event of an unforeseen technical difficulty.

The Commission retains its intention of conserving the overall balance of the 1984-87 programme and in particular of proposing that the non-nuclear part of the programme be increased.

Lastly, beyond the direct scientific and technical value of the Super-SARA experiment, whose importance in the context of the experiments on light water reactor safety being prepared throughout the world is reaffirmed by the Commission, it is necessary to stress the federative nature of this project on a strictly European scale, which will group together a large number of engineers working in public and industrial establishments in the Member States.

2. IMPLICATIONS OF A POSSIBLE ABANDONMENT OF THE SUPER-SARA PROJECT

If the Council does not decide to continue the Super-SARA project, its execution will have to be abandoned for want of adequate resources.

2.1 In 1983, before the forthcoming programme decision

A study of the possible alternatives for employing the staff that go to make up the project team would necessarily take time, and their redeployment would be delayed proportionately.

Furthermore, the ESSOR reactor operating staff and part of the general services and support staff and of the project team (i.e. a total of some 150 employees) would have to be maintained in their posts pending the forthcoming programme decision which would have to be accompanied by a decision on the future of the ESSOR reactor.

Certain contracts connected with the Super-SARA project would have to be terminated against compensation, which would involve additional costs.

All things considered, the amount of expenditure to be charged to the Super-SARA project in 1983 should a decision be taken to abandon it immediately can be estimated at approximately 7 million ECU.

2.2 In the medium term and in the context of the 1984-87 four-year programme

The ESSOR reactor, which can be used only for irradiating arrays of fuel rods, would have to be decommissioned. An operation of this kind could be carried out in four years, while gradually releasing approximately 80 employees, some of whom could be redeployed. As regards the remaining employees, new programme decisions would have to be awaited.

If this course of action were taken, the four-year programme proposal that the Commission would present would comprise the following features:

- (a) the total financial cost of the programme would have to be increased as a result of phasing out Super-SARA and ESSOR;

(b) in terms of staff, the authorized complement proposed would be 2 260 posts. Mobility constraints would also require in this case the possibility of replacing approximately 100 employees. On the other hand, the proposal would not include a temporary increase of some 100 posts;

(c) the Commission would endeavour, as it is now doing, to strike a balance between the different programme categories and in particular between the nuclear and non-nuclear programmes.

2.3 Overall financial aspects

The investment made in the ESSOR reactor, amounting to approximately 300 million ECU at current prices, would be lost forever.

Likewise, the amounts that have hitherto been allocated directly to Super-SARA, i.e. approximately 70 million ECU, would have been spent with absolutely no return.

Investment on the physical protection of the Ispra Establishment has so far totalled 9.5 million ECU, of which some 7 million ECU would not have been necessary had the Super-SARA project not been envisaged.

As has been explained in point 2.1, a decision to discontinue Super-SARA in 1983 would cost approximately 7 million ECU.

Lastly, the decommissioning proper of the ESSOR reactor cost approximately 25 million ECU spread over four years.