Recommendation 738 (1974)[1]

1st activity report of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having examined the first activity report of the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), Doc. 3383 ;

2. Recalling Resolution 566 (1974) on the energy problem, in particular its paragraph 7. c, and Resolution 567 (1974) on development cooperation ;

3. Convinced that present events in the energy field have underlined that it is indispensable for Western Europe to take steps to ensure that new sources of energy, inter alia nuclear energy, make a far greater contribution to its energy balance-sheet in the early future than had hitherto been envisaged ;

4. Further noting that recent increases in crude oil prices have in many cases made the use of nuclear energy for electric power generation the most economically attractive solution, even from a strictly commercial point of view ;

5. Believing that the much greater contribution to be furnished by nuclear energy in the early future inter alia necessitates the urgent development of studies in two fields where ENEA and now NEA have carried out valuable pioneering work, and in which NEA is particularly competent :

a. in the field of the examination of the free world's available resources of uranium and thorium, and

b. in the field of the safe management and efficient disposal of radioactive wastes ;

6. Fully supporting the concern of public opinion about the urgency of taking the measures referred to in paragraph 5. b above ;

7. Believing that the public has the full right to be reassured that plans in the above respect are fully adequate to cope with the greatly increased quantities of radioactive wastes which are now to be anticipated from accelerated nuclear energy programmes ;

8. Convinced that it would be difficult to persuade public opinion that previous studies on radioactive waste management, effected on the basis of assumptions about the rate of growth of the recourse to nuclear power which are now manifestly outdated, can automatically be assumed to be still wholly valid ;

9. Expressing the hope that OECD or NEA will provide more detailed information on the economic, technological, environmental and safety aspects of the various systems of nuclear energy production- as compared to other sources of energy- with a view to better instructing public and parliamentary opinion on these matters,

Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :

a. urge member governments, with a view to effectively reassuring the public which is becoming more and more sensitive to this issue, to seek to have re-examined in the framework of NEA the problems of the safe management and efficient disposal of radioactive wastes of which increased quantities must be anticipated as a result of accelerated nuclear power programmes in Europe ;

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1. Assembly debate on 26 September 1974 (11th Sitting) (see Doc. 3442, report of the Committee on Science and Technology). Text adopted by the Assembly on 26 September 1974 (11th Sitting).

b. urge member governments to take urgent steps to broaden available knowledge as to the free world's resources of primary fissile materials (natural uranium and thorium), inter alia by seeking to arrange for NEA fully to update its August 1973 study entitled Uranium- Resources, Production and Demand by taking into account higher price brackets for uranium and thorium than the upper price bracket of US $10-15 per pound of U3O8 used in that study ;

c. invite the governments of those member states who have not yet done so to ratify the 1960 Paris Convention on third party liability in the field of nuclear energy.