

EU to spend billion euros on nuclear power research

BRUSSELS - The European Commission said yesterday it had approved spending of more than one billion euros on research into nuclear power over the next four years but was criticised by Greenpeace for wasting money.

The European Union, trying to meet targets on cutting emissions of greenhouse gases under the Kyoto Treaty on reducing global warming, is devoting funds to nuclear research.

The Commission said in a statement that spending of 1.23 billion euros (\$1.16 billion) had been targeted under a nuclear research programme for 2002-2006 approved on Friday.

"Safe and clean nuclear energy is a priority for sustainable development: it can greatly contribute to meeting Kyoto Treaty requirements," said EU commissioner in charge of research, Philippe Busquin.

"And there is a clear need for EU action to pool together know-how and resources in state-of-the-art nuclear research at European level," he added in a statement.

Most of the funds, or 750 million euros, will go to research nuclear fusion, when atoms are smashed together to produce power. Spending on fission, when atoms are split and which is currently the main way nuclear power is generated, will focus on the management and disposal of nuclear waste.

Greenpeace nuclear campaigner Tobias Muenchmeyer said he was disappointed at the funds devoted to fusion research, which he said was a waste of money.

"This is a decision to waste money because even Commission documents prove that for the next 50 years there is no chance fusion can be economical," he said.

"Greenpeace does not understand why these large amount of resources are to be spent on fusion and not energy alternatives. We view these (alternatives) as the sources to get Europe moving to the direction of sustainable energy use," he said.

Greenpeace and other environmental groups favour wind and solar power and other renewable sources of energy over nuclear.

The European Commission's approach has been that it is up to EU member states to decide on nuclear power.

Story Date: 18/6/2002

[Back to Top](#)

[Back to Headlines](#)

[See yesterday's headlines](#)

REUTERS 

All Contents

© Reuters News Service 2002