

Brussels, 20 November 2009

Commission takes action against Greece for non-notification of the transposition of a Euratom directive

The Commission decided today to send a Reasoned Opinion to Greece for failure to notify the Commission of the timely transposition into national law of the Directive on the supervision and control of shipments of radioactive waste and nuclear spent fuel.

The deadline for the transposition of the Directive on the supervision and control of shipments of radioactive waste and nuclear spent fuel into national law was 25 December 2008. The Greek authorities have still not notified the Commission of its final transposition into national law. Therefore, after having given Greece the opportunity to submit its observations, the second phase of the infringement procedure had to be launched.

The Directive, which replaces a 1992 Directive,¹ continues a system of control and prior authorisation for transboundary shipments of radioactive waste, to protect the health of workers and of the public and to avoid illicit traffic of such materials.² Moreover, the Directive extends the scope to “spent fuel”, that is nuclear fuel that has been already used in a nuclear installation.

The Directive improves and simplifies the existing consent procedure and ensures that countries of destination and transit are informed about transfers of radioactive waste or spent fuel to or through their countries.³

The dispatch of a Reasoned Opinion is the second phase of an infringement procedure. If Greece omits to notify the Commission of the transposition of the Directive into national law within the set deadline, the Commission may refer the matter to the European Court of Justice.⁴

¹ Directive 92/3/Euratom of 3 February 1992 on the supervision and control of shipments of radioactive waste between Member States and into and out of the Community.

² The Directive is not directly intended to fight illicit trafficking; it primarily sets the rules under which one has to get the permission from the countries involved if nuclear material is shipped from one to another.

³ See more information on Radiation Protection issues at http://ec.europa.eu/energy/nuclear/radiation_protection/radiation_protection_en.htm

⁴ Pursuant to Article 141 of the Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community