

Brussels, 22 December 2009

## **Green light from the Council for the Commission to negotiate a broad Nuclear Partnership Agreement with Russia.**

***The Council of the European Union adopted today a mandate authorising the Commission to negotiate a partnership agreement for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy between the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom) and the Russian Federation. Russia is one of the main global suppliers of nuclear materials and equipment. It is also a key supplier of nuclear fuel and related nuclear fuel cycle services to nuclear power plant operators in the EU.***

"This is an important step, which will give a new impetus to EU-Russia relations in the energy sector. It is in the interest of both sides to reach a comprehensive agreement on nuclear cooperation, and I am pleased that these negotiations can now start. Such an agreement creates a stable and predictable legal framework both for the governments and the industrial operators, aims at corresponding levels of safety and security standards, and facilitates legitimate nuclear trade between the Parties ", said Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs.

Several EU Member States are operating reactors of Russian design and further reactors are planned. Besides the importance of Russia as a nuclear supplier to the EU, nuclear safety, nuclear liability and non-proliferation are also important aspects of our bilateral relations.

Recent developments, such as the latest EU enlargements and the renewed interest in nuclear energy as a way to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from energy generation, have made it necessary to negotiate a broad partnership agreement with Russia in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. Nuclear energy is an important component of the EU energy mix, generating almost one third of the electricity in the EU and two thirds of EU carbon free electricity. Many countries both within and outside the EU are currently developing this source of energy. Currently, 146 nuclear power plants are operating in the EU. In Russia, there are 40 nuclear power plants operating or under construction; furthermore, 44 installations are planned up to the year 2030.

To date the Community has concluded nuclear co-operation agreements with four major suppliers of nuclear material, the United States, Canada, Australia, and Kazakhstan. Co-operation agreements were also signed with Uzbekistan, Ukraine and Japan (a major EU client). Recently the Community concluded an agreement, limited to research and development, with China. Agreements with Canada and Australia are in a process to be renegotiated.