

# COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

COM(79) 90 final

Brussels, 5 March 1979

## COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE COUNCIL

on the progress of the support given to uranium exploration projects in the Community in accordance with Article 70 paragraph 1 of the Euratom Treaty (Regulation (Euratom) 2014/76)

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FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR URANIUM EXPLORATION  
IN THE COMMUNITY  
(ARTICLE 70 OF THE EURATOM TREATY)

1. At its meeting on 13 February 1975 concerned with the security of future uranium supplies, the Council advocated, in particular, the development of "economical and secure resources in the Community", and examination of whether and how action should be taken in several fields, including programmes for "prospecting for minerals".
2. The Commission was able to implement this recommendation under the powers afforded it by the first paragraph of Article 70 of the Euratom Treaty. This states that the Commission may decide to give financial support, "within the limits set by the budget of the Community, on such conditions as it shall determine, to prospecting programmes in the territories of Member States".
3. The Commission outlined its medium-term proposals for Article 70 funding in Doc. COM(76)439 of 23 July 1976, in which it reviewed the level of funding required.
4. The first year of this support was in 1976 when the Commission adopted Regulation (Euratom) No. 2014/76<sup>(1)</sup>, outlining the decision-making procedure for the granting of financial aid and the model contract to be used. Applications for this funding were requested in the Official Journal of the Communities for the 1 million u.a. to be committed in 1976<sup>(2)</sup>. Seven projects were finally selected for funding - see Annex I.

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(1) OJ of the EC, 14.8.1976, No. L221, p.17.

(2) OJ of the EC, 14.8.1976, No. C191, p. 2.

5. Five million u.a. were allocated in the 1977 budget (line 321) for the support of uranium exploration programmes to be carried out between 1977 and 1979. . . . projects were finally selected for funding - see Annex II.
  
6. The Commission published a call for applications for the 1978 exercise of 5 million u.a. to be committed in 1978 for the support of projects between 1978 and 1980 on 17 February 1978. Nine projects were finally selected - see Annex III.
  
7. In each of these three years the projects were chosen following a detailed examination of the applications by the Commission's services. The Commission then sought the opinion of individual expert geologists from the Member States. Their opinion was made and considered in the light of the suggested criteria for evaluation projects published with the original call for applications.
  
8. The projects for funding were selected also bearing in mind the principles initially recommended by the Advisory Committee of the Euratom Supply Agency. These were :
  - In the spirit of Article 70 of EAEC Treaty, Community efforts should not replace national and private efforts but complement and encourage prospecting in Member States whose territory has not sufficiently been explored.
  - The Community as a whole should benefit from the results of prospecting where it has assisted financially and such benefit should in general be related to the degree of Community support. The way in which this should be done would require careful consideration.
  - Funds should not be distributed on a pro-rata basis over all prospecting projects, existing or planned within the Community, but a selection should be made according to a set of criteria and taking account of the expertise of the geologists' sub-group.

- The process of selection should be reviewed from time to time in the light of experience.

9. The results of the work to date can basically be divided between the year 1976 where all the programmes were of one year duration and 1977 onwards where the programmes are mainly still ongoing.
10. Of the seven programmes initiated in 1976, the first year of the funding, five were successful enough to lead to extensions of the programmes being funded in 1977.

Three of these initial seven programmes were in the Republic of Ireland. This concentration reflected the view of the Commission and its advisory geologists that Ireland had uranium potential that so far has not been tested. This funding is leading to the first comprehensive evaluation of the uranium potential of Ireland.

As the exploration in Ireland is still only beginning, it is impossible to say yet whether the occurrences discovered will lead to anything that is of economic interest. One programme also initiated was in the Federal Republic of Germany, located in the southern part of Niedersachsen where a broad regional reconnaissance programme was started and this was carried through into 1978.

In Italy, in the upper part of the Val Seriana Valley, a programme was started to assess the potential of an area initially discovered in 1960 during radiometric prospecting of the Collio formation. The uranium mineralisation discovered during this programme proved not to be of economic significance and work in this area was terminated.

In Greenland a detailed drilling programme was carried out at Kvanefjeld located in the S.W. corner of Greenland. This programme was very successful in significantly increasing the uranium resources there as follows :

Reasonably assured resources 27,000 tonnes uranium (up from 5,800 tonnes)  
Estimated additional resources 16,000 tonnes uranium (up from 8,700 tonnes)

However, the uranium content of the ore is low and further advances in ore treatment will be required to make deposits economically viable.

One programme, in Orkney, Scotland, did not get under way, as planning permission to carry out the drilling programme was refused by the Orkney Islands Council. This refusal to grant permission reflected strong opposition to the uranium exploration project by various groups within and outside the Orkneys, who organised a protest against this programme. The abandoning of this programme was a disappointment as it is important in the evaluation of the Community that all the interesting uranium targets should be examined because the results of these investigations provide vital information for other uranium exploration ventures as well as on the specific target being tested.

11. In 1977, work on the three Irish projects continued. Some regional uranium reconnaissance was initiated in N. Ireland and Belgium and following the success at Kvanefjeld, a large regional programme is being supported covering a significant area of S.W. Greenland. Four regional uranium exploration programmes are being supported in Germany and two in Italy. Work on two of the German programmes is now being terminated as the results do not justify further work. These are the Niedersachsen and Mittelfranken projects. Work has also been halted at Val Rendena in W. Italy, where the exploration licence has been rescinded. The cancellation of this licence can also be attributed to local groups who were opposed to uranium exploration in this area.
12. The programmes for 1978 are only, in many cases, just getting underway. However, encouraging initial results are being recorded, especially in the programme in Bavaria, Federal Republic of Germany and that in N. Italy.

ARTICLE 70 - EURATOM TREATY

Financial support - Proposed funding of projects

Name of project	Country	Organisation	Funding in u.c.
Kvanefjeld	Greenland	Geological Survey of Greenland	272,000
Regional programme	Ireland	Irish Base Metals Ltd.	104,570
Regional project	Ireland	Irish Geological Survey	14,400
Leinster Granite Survey	Ireland	Maugh Ltd.	192,893
Marifunt	Italy	AGIP S.p.A.	219,840
Orkney	U. Kingdom	South of Scotland Electricity Board	162,900
Niedersachsen	W. Germany	Urangesellschaft GmbH	33,397

ANNEX 2 - F. P. 1977-1979  
 Financial report - 1977, 1978 and 1979

Proposed number of projects

Name of project	Country	Organisation	Funding		
			1977 u.a.	1978 u.a.	1979 u.a.
Uranium follow-up programme	Ireland	Irish Base Metals Ltd (Ireland)		330,810	
Leinster project (Stage II)	Ireland	Naugh Ltd	146,945	582,165	
Regional Survey	Ireland	Geological Survey of Ireland	52,200		
Mintona Block	UK (N. Ireland)	Minorex Ltd (Ireland)	85,200	13,800	
Visé	Belgium	Free University of Brussels	18,000	48,000	
Bayerischer Wald	W. Germany	1) Uranengesellschaft mbH & Co (W. Germany) 2) Minatome S.A. (France)		135,670	221,295
Niedersachsen	W. Germany	Uranengesellschaft mbH & Co (W. Germany)		121,970	144,648
Oberpfalz	N. Germany	Saarberg Interplan mbH	615,209	316,260	254,997
Mittelfranken	W. Germany	Saarberg Interplan mbH	151,246	186,829	182,326
Kvanofjeld	Greenland	Geological Survey of Greenland		26,133	
S. Greenland Reg. Prog.	Greenland	Geological Survey of Greenland		238,333	196,734
Western Alps project	Italy	A.G.I.P.	355,200		
Val Mendona	Italy	A.G.I.P.	576,000		
TOTAL			2,000,000	2,000,000	1,000,000

ARTICLE 10 - EXPANSION PROGRAM

Financial support - 1978, 1979 and 1980

Proposed funding of projects

in UCE

Name of project	Country	Organisation	Funding			
			Total	1978	1979	1980
Preliminary U Prospecting	Belgium	Union Minière	504,839	384,812	120,077	
Allihies	Ireland	Minerex Ltd.	24,243	24,243		
Val Vedello	Italy	A.G.I.P.	728,303	728,303		
Western Alps	Italy	A.G.I.P.	762,892	762,892		
URSEN	Netherlands	IRC International Resources Consultants	42,000	42,000		
Cornwall-South of Scotland	U. Kingdom	Minatome	547,052	137,379	133,668	275,805
Bavarian Forest Field I and Field II	W. Germany	Deutsche BP	802,679	317,328	244,535	240,816
U exploration in the Schwarzwald	W. Germany	Uranerzbergbau	985,721	333,414	352,150	290,157
Keuper Württemberg	W. Germany	Urangesellschaft	592,852	260,260	139,370	193,222
<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>4,990,631*</b>	<b>2,990,631*</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>

\* The sum of 9,369 UCE has already been committed by written procedure No. SEC(78)792 - article 321.