



COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION  
TO THE COUNCIL AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

**The Major Accident Hazards Bureau**



The Commission wishes to inform the Council and the European Parliament that it has established, at the Joint Research Centre at Ispra, within the Institute for Systems Engineering and Informatics, a special Unit called the Major Accident Hazards Bureau, dedicated to scientific and technical support for the actions of the Commission in the area of the control of Major Industrial Hazards.

Since 1982, when the original "Seveso" Directive (Council Directive 82/501/EEC) was approved by the Council of Ministers after the famous accident at Seveso, there has been Community provision for the control of major industrial hazards. The requirements of this Directive and its subsequent amendments, and of the national legislation implementing them, have come to be accepted by European industry as a powerful force in focusing attention on the control of major industrial hazards and the prevention and mitigation of major accidents. Last year the Commission proposed a revised Directive in this area - the "COMAH" Directive (COM(94) 4 final) - which has had its first reading in the European Parliament, and on which the Council has recently come to a common position.

EU legislation in this field requires the European Commission to undertake certain scientific and technical tasks, in particular those in connection with communication among the Member States. Thus under the "Seveso" Directive the Member States are called upon to inform the Commission about any major accidents which have occurred within their territory. To help prevent similar accidents in the future, the Commission evaluates this information, details lessons learnt from it, and disseminates the results to the Member States and industry. For this purpose the Commission maintains the Major Accident Reporting System database.

Similarly, on the request of the Committee of Competent Authorities responsible for the implementation of the "Seveso" Directive, the Commission has established a Community Documentation Centre on Industrial Risk whose principal remit is to collect, store and assess guidelines, regulations, codes of good practice, and accident case histories related to all aspects of relevant Community legislation and to facilitate the exchange of such information to assist in producing a consistent approach to the implementation of this legislation. In this context, the Centre has promoted a series of studies on lessons learnt in various Member States from emergency action after accidents involving chemicals, and the drafting of guidelines on the information to be communicated to the public concerning major hazards.

These activities will henceforth be grouped together in the Major Accident Hazards Bureau, along with support for other scientific and technical activities undertaken by DG XI in the framework of EU policy in the control of major industrial hazards, such as the organisation of technical seminars to facilitate communication among National Authorities and between them and industry, and support for the Technical Working Groups established by the Commission in the context of current and future EU legislation. These Technical Working Groups, which involve participants from industry as well as from the National Authorities, are currently involved in drawing up guidelines and recommendations covering technical areas such as the content of a Safety Report and the establishment and monitoring of a Safety Management System; it is envisaged that other technical areas may be covered in the future.

The establishment and funding of the Bureau has been achieved within existing budgetary provisions, by drawing on resources allocated under the heading of Institutional Support for the services of the Commission. The Bureau is being implemented as a Unit within the Institute for Systems Engineering and Informatics, which has for many years carried out research in the prevention and mitigation of major accidents. The scientific staffing initially assigned to the Bureau is a total of 10, in addition to temporary staff working on specific projects funded from other sources.

The overall mission of the Bureau is to assist the Commission and in particular DG XI in the successful implementation of European Union policy on the control of major hazards and the prevention and mitigation of major accidents. To fulfil this mission, the Major Accident Hazards Bureau will carry out scientific and technical activities related to the day to day implementation of relevant Community legislation.

The present remit of the Bureau includes the following tasks (it is possible that other tasks in its area of technical competence may be assigned to it over time):

- managing the Major Accident Reporting System database, including
  - verification and input of information;
  - extracting information and lessons learnt from the accidents and incidents reported;
  - assisting DG XI in the dissemination of information to National Authorities, industry and other interested parties;
  
- managing the Community Documentation Centre on Industrial Risk, including
  - acquisition of relevant public-domain material, both published and unpublished;
  - preparation of an occasional Bulletin with details and summaries of material acquired;
  - making non-copyright material available to Authorities and other parties
  - providing continued assistance to DG XI in the preparation of reports on the implementation of the Directive;

- assisting DG XI by undertaking
  - specific tasks of information dissemination, including organising seminars and workshops with the National Authorities (with industrial participation where appropriate) on relevant topics in the areas of industrial risk, risk management, major hazard regulation and licensing, and emergency response to industrial accidents;
  - technical and scientific support for Technical Working Groups studying various aspects of the control of major hazards.

# Major Accident Hazards Bureau

## FINANCIAL STATEMENT

### 1. Title of operation:

Establishment of Major Accident Hazards Bureau

### 2. Budget headings involved:

Article B6 - 111	Joint Research Centre Personnel connected with the Institution
Article B6 - 121	Means of Implementation
Article B6 - 2131	Environment and Climate

### 3. Legal basis:

- Directive 82/501/EEC on the Major Accident Hazards of Certain Industrial Activities and its modifications (O.J. L230, of 5.8.1982, OJ L85 of 28.3.87 and OJ L336, 7.12.1988)
- Council conclusions of 26 April 1994, on the rôle of the Joint Research Centre (O.J. n° C126 of 7.5.1994)
- Council decision adopting JRC 1995-1998 Programme of Research and Technological Development (O.J. L361, of 31.12.1994, p. 125: research area 'industrial reliability', paragraph 1, "support for the implementation of directives ... concerning major hazards")

### 4. Description of operation:

#### 4.1 General objective:

Assisting the services of the Commission in the monitoring of EU legislation in the field of Major Accident Hazard Control and its implementation

By agreement with DG XI, collecting and disseminating information relevant to the control of major hazards

Managing, and drawing conclusions from, the information sent to the Commission by the Member States under Directive 82/501/EEC as modified, and the COMAH Directive proposed by the Commission (COM(94) 4 final, published on the 26th January 1994)

#### **4.2 Period covered and arrangements for renewal:**

This proposal is intended to apply for the duration of the current Framework Programme (1995 - 1998). Should subsequent Framework Programmes also envisage JRC activities in the same technical domain, a proposal could be made to continue the activities of the Bureau.

#### **5. Classification of the expenditure:**

**5.1 Non-compulsory expenditure**

**5.2 Differentiated credits**

**5.3 Type of revenue involved: none**

#### **6. Type of expenditure:**

Direct expenditure by the Joint Research Centre under the budget headings named above<sup>1</sup>

#### **7. Financial implications:**

Most of the individual activities concerned are already being carried out by the JRC. The creation of the Bureau, and the assigning of the staff concerned to it, is intended to improve the visibility of these activities (see point 9.2 below). However, as the activities will continue to be carried out under the same budgetary headings as previously, the establishment of the Bureau will not in itself have any impact on financial resources, neither in terms of personnel credits nor in specific credits.

##### **7.1 Method of calculating total cost:**

The method of calculation is the same as that used for other JRC activities: the costs, both in personnel and in specific credits, of infrastructure and administrative and technical support is allocated in proportion to the number of members of staff assigned to the activities concerned.

It should be noted, however, that since it is proposed to inaugurate the Bureau at the end of September, the 1995 costs given below only cover 3 months (October-December).

For the future evolution of personnel costs and overheads, allowance has been made for a 3% increase per year, in accordance with the policy of the JRC.

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<sup>1</sup> This operation falls into the category "others" as defined in note DG XIX 3731 of 18/05/95.

## 7.2 Itemised breakdown of cost

Commitment appropriations  
ECU million  
(at current prices)

Breakdown	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 and subs. yrs	Total
Scientific Personnel	0,245	1,007	1,037	1,069	p.m.	3,358
Support Personnel <sup>2</sup>	0,109	0,449	0,463	0,476	p.m.	1,497
Credits - direct <sup>3</sup>	0,077	0,309	0,320	0,330	p.m.	1,036
Credits - overheads	0,073	0,299	0,308	0,317	p.m.	0,997
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>0,504</b>	<b>2,064</b>	<b>2,128</b>	<b>2,192</b>	<b>p.m.</b>	<b>6,888</b>

## 7.3 Schedule of commitment and payment appropriations

ECU million

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 and subs. years.	Total
Commitment appropriation	0.504	2.064	2.128	2.192	p.m.	6.888
Payment appropriation						
1995	0.101					0.101
1996	0.403	0.722				1.126
1997		1.006	0.745			1.751
1998		0.335	1.037	0.767		2.140
1999 and subs. years			0.346	1.425	p.m.	1.771
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.504</b>	<b>2.064</b>	<b>2.128</b>	<b>2.192</b>	<b>p.m.</b>	<b>6.888</b>

<sup>2</sup> personnel costs of infrastructure, administrative and technical support

<sup>3</sup> these direct credits are intended to cover, in addition to equipment and operating and maintenance costs: software development, purchase of published works for the CDCIR, workshops and meetings, disseminating of information, and external contract research.



## **8. Anti-fraud measures proposed:**

The normal JRC systems of internal control and audit will apply to this activity, as well as those of the Commission's Directorate-General of Financial Control, including prior authorisation of any expenditure. In the case of specific contracts being made with outside firms for particular services the usual Commission procedures will be followed, including calls for tender, examination and comparison of the proposals received, and where appropriate consultation of the CCAM.

## **9. Elements of cost-effectiveness analysis:**

### **9.1 Specific and quantified objectives; target population:**

The objective of this activity is to assist directly the services of the Commission (primarily DG XI) to ensure the optimum control of major hazards, including the gathering and dissemination of information in all the technical domains concerned with major hazard control.

The target population for the Bureau's activities is therefore in the first instance DG XI of the Commission, and the various national authorities in the Member States involved in major hazard control (authorities responsible for licensing of hazardous plant, worker protection, environmental protection, civil protection, and emergency response); and indirectly the chemical, petrochemical, pharmaceutical and hydrocarbon fuel industries as well as the general public.

### **9.2 Grounds for the operation:**

#### **1) Why a European Centre?**

The operation of gathering and dissemination of information can be carried out far more effectively at European level than at a national level, especially concerning the lessons learnt from major accidents, since - fortunately - such accidents are rare, and no single Member State has had sufficient accidents to provide a useable sample. As a spin-off from these activities, it is worth noting that the requirement to notify the Commission of major accidents has already led to several Member States setting up their own complementary accident databases.

The duty on the Commission to treat accident information from the Member States under strict confidentiality means that the collecting and analysis of this information has to be carried out by the Commission, and the staff of the Institute for Systems Engineering and Informatics (ISEI) have the technical knowledge and experience needed for this analysis. In this respect the close continuing contacts with ISEI staff will be most useful.

Many of the activities involved (e.g. the Documentation Centre on Industrial Risk) have been undertaken at the specific request of the Member States' representatives, while DG XI of the Commission needs to be able to call on impartial scientific and technical expertise, both in its own right and on behalf of the Technical Working Groups which it has created to study various technical questions.

The activities connected with monitoring the implementation of the "Seveso" directive can also benefit from a comparative approach, while the study and communication of best practice in this domain makes a contribution to European integration.

The contribution made by the JRC in this area was noted by the Council in its resolution of 16 October 1989 (O.J. C273/1, of 26.10.89, under point 4).

## 2) Why a Bureau?

The establishment of a Bureau to cover this range of activities is consistent with Commission policy, other Bureaus such as ECVAM having already been created within the JRC. It will provide much greater visibility for the European Union's work in the area of control of major hazards, and will be a point of scientific and technical reference both within and outwith the Union, in particular for countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

### **9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the operation:**

The activities of the Bureau will continue to be analysed and evaluated like other JRC activities. They will therefore be submitted on an annual basis for advance approval by the JRC Board of Governors in the form of JRC Work Schedules. They are furthermore subject to a special annual evaluation in their capacity as support to the Commission.

The Bureau will be managed by a Management Committee consisting of representatives from DG XI and the JRC. It will also work in close collaboration with the Committee of "Seveso" Directive Competent Authorities, who will receive, normally twice a year, a presentation of the Bureau's activities, both past and proposed.

Detailed performance monitoring will be carried out for those of the Bureau's activities which are susceptible to it, for example the usage of the Documentation Centre. Other activities, such as organising seminars and providing scientific support to Technical Working Groups are subject to a less formal but no less challenging evaluation by DG XI and the National Authorities.

### **10. Administrative expenditure (Section III, Part A of the budget):**

Since all the activities here come under section B6 of the budget, there will be no impact on administrative expenditure.



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