

The Energy Union Conference

Riga, 6 February 2015

Summary of the intervention by Jean-Pol Poncelet, Director General FORATOM

Decarbonisation of the EU energy Mix

The European Atomic Forum (FORATOM) is the Brussels-based trade association for the nuclear energy industry in Europe. The membership of FORATOM is made up of 16 national nuclear associations. FORATOM represents nearly 800 European companies working in the industry and supporting around 800,000 jobs.

Today, nuclear energy represents nearly 30% of the EU's electricity generated in 14 of its 28 Member States. During operation, nuclear power plants do not release any significant carbon dioxide (CO₂) or other greenhouse gases (GHG) and their life-cycle emissions are also low.

FORATOM welcomes the initiatives by the European Commission in the areas of a long-term policy for energy and climate. We appreciate the idea of an 'Energy Union' discussed today and the efforts to highlight the crucial role energy will play in helping underpin the wider economic strategy for Europe. There is a pressing need to take action that will create jobs, growth and lift industrial competitiveness, while keeping in mind the nature of climate change and its consequences.

FORATOM believes that EU energy policy should be built upon the three pillars of security of supply, competitiveness and sustainability. The term 'Energy Union' should serve as an umbrella that includes recent and future reforms in the areas of climate and energy, such as the 2030 policy or the Emissions Trading System reform. Implementation of reforms to the ETS should be brought forward enabling it to deliver an effective and robust carbon price sooner rather than later.

'Energy Union' should also mean that new drivers are developed which ensure that Member States' energy strategies and goals contribute to the common Energy Union goals. It should promote a balanced energy mix that recognises the crucial role of base-load electricity supply, the need for flexible generation and the impact of increasing contribution from intermittent energy technologies.

Low carbon technologies must be allowed to compete fairly on price without any specific subsidies, taxes or levies, thus achieving emissions reductions in the most cost-effective

way and promoting industrial competitiveness. In order to accommodate for the long-term and capital intensive nature of low carbon generation – including nuclear – an effective investment environment for all such technologies must be enabled (including innovative financing mechanisms such as long-term contracts, contracts for difference, shared ownership/take-off schemes, or other market models).

Member States, have to adhere to, and comply with, the common goals and targets set at the EU level, they should, therefore, be given the possibility to choose their own path to reach the agreed targets.