COMMISSION OPINION

of 20 July 1989

concerning the nuclear fuel reprocessing plants UP_3 and UP_2800 of the La Hague Establishment (France)

(Only the French text is authentic)

(89/475/Euratom)

The general data concerning the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste from the nuclear fuel reprocessing plants UP_3 and UP_2800 of the La Hague Establishment were provided by the French Government to the Commission, in accordance with Article 37 of the Euratom Treaty, by letter received on 1 March 1989.

On the occasion of the meeting of the Group of Experts set up pursuant to the Treaty, which took place on 8 June 1989 in Cherbourg, the representatives of the French Government provided further complementary information and details.

On the basis of the data thus obtained and having consulted the Group of Experts the Commission drew up the following opinion :

1. The distance from the installations to Alderney is 20 km, while the other Channel Islands are at a distance of 55 km (Guernsey), 45 km (Sark) and 55 km (Jersey) respectively. The English coast is 105 km away.

2. In normal operation of the said plants, their liquid and gaseous effluent discharges are not liable to give rise to significant exposure of the population of other Member States.

3. Solid radioactive waste is to be stored only temporarily on the La Hague Establishment's site prior to transport to a final storage site under State supervision.

4. In the case of an unplanned release of radioactive effluents which could be occasioned by an accident of the type and magnitude considered in the general data, doses liable to be received in other Member States will not be significant from the health point of view. However, in certain adverse circumstances, doses liable to be received in the Channel Islands might be such as to equire the introduction of countermeasures. to this effect, France has signed bilateral agreements with the United Kingdom concerning the exchange of information in case of nuclear incidents or accidents ; these agreements also allow for hypothetical accidents, having radiological consequences more important than those presented in the general data, to be taken into account.

In conclusion, the Commission is of the opinion that the implementation of the plan for the disposal of radioactive waste from the UP_3 and UP_2800 plants at the La Hague Establishment is not liable, either in normal operation or in the case of an accident of the type and magnitude considered in the general data, to result in radioactive contamination, significant from the point of view of health, of the water, soil or airspace of another Member State ; however, in certain severe accidental circumstances, significant levels of contamination might obtain in the Channel Islands, but the projected doses could be reduced at non-significant levels by the introduction of countermeasures.

This opinion is addressed to the French Republic.

Done at Brussels, 20 July 1989.

For the Commission

Carlo RIPA DI MEANA

Member of the Commission