

The Treaty establishing Euratom

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From the outset, establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (EAEC or Euratom) was one objective of the relaunched European process. The approach taken was similar to that which had guided creation of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), namely integration by sector, involving in this case the nuclear energy industry, as opposed to the comprehensive economic integration sought through the European Economic Community (EEC). The Treaty establishing Euratom, with its 225 articles and five annexes, provided, however, for the same institutional pattern as both the other treaties, with an Assembly, a Council, a Commission and a Court of Justice. The Assembly and an Economic and Social Committee (ESC) were to be shared institutions of the EEC and Euratom. Euratom's specific mission, however, dictated that the powers conferred on its institutions should differ in scope from those of the EEC bodies. Negotiations on the establishment of Euratom concentrated on eight key activities around which the Treaty was structured: promoting research, ensuring the dissemination of technical information, protecting health, facilitating investments and joint undertakings, safeguarding supply, ensuring safety, supervising the common market in nuclear energy, and external relations.

Euratom's mission was to contribute to the formation and development of Europe's nuclear industries, to help improve the standard of living in the Member States and to further the development of trade with other countries. Its responsibilities were strictly limited to civil applications of nuclear energy. The idea of the Euratom Treaty — concluded for an unlimited duration, unlike the ECSC Treaty which was valid for 50 years — was to enable the Member States, as well as cooperating closely with the USA, to embark together on producing energy of nuclear origin, to control the entire industrial cycle (including research, training and production), to provide for the supply of natural uranium and special fissile materials, and to lay the foundations for the vital task of supervising this particularly sensitive sector. Integrated supply policy was made the responsibility of a Supply Agency, an independent commercial body with legal personality and financial autonomy, even though it was to operate under the Commission's supervision. To fulfil its tasks the Agency was given a right of option on ores, source materials (uranium) and special fissile materials (plutonium) produced in the territories of Member States, and an exclusive right to conclude contracts relating to the supply of such products from within or outside the Community. Supply was secured by controlling the final destination of these products and their use for specified purposes only. The Euratom Treaty thus created the framework for a nuclear common market.