

France

New Agencies on Environmental Health and Nuclear Safety

Parliament voted on 6 February to create a new agency charged with advising the government on health and safety risks posed by human activities that alter the physical environment. The *Agence Française de Sécurité Sanitaire Environnementale (AFSSE)* is the third such advisory body created since the present government came to power in 1997.

The AFSSE will, like its food safety and medical safety counterparts, have the power to launch investigations, conduct scientific analysis, advise the government on risk management, and render its findings public. It will report directly to the Environment and Health ministries, but its field of action will be open to studying the environmental health and safety risks posed by all sectors, including agriculture, industry, and transport.

It is thought that the new agency will play a growing role in regulatory activity over sectors including chemical and biological products, electromagnetics, noise, and radioactivity.

Parliamentarians also approved the creation of an agency that will combine existing nuclear safety and radioactivity protection activities carried out by competing agencies into a single body.

The new *Institut de Radioprotection et de Sûreté Nucléaire (IRSN)* will bring together the civilian nuclear safety activities carried out by the Institute of Protection and Nuclear Safety (IPSN) with related radioactivity monitoring carried out by the Office of Radiation Protection (OPRI).

