



De Rode says she has received no official communication from the commission and cannot comment on the investigation or a possible link to Carrion's departure.

On the future of the academy, she says: "There is no link between the well-being and future of the EAS to one of its past executives, Professor Carrion. The same observation applies to Professor Verkhovsky. Both of them were active in the establishment of our academy, but, as time went on, their personal involvement was duly replaced by the activity of committees, which is perfectly normal. The EAS is fulfilling its mission admirably, and the best is still to come." ■

Jim Giles



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EMPICS

Q&A: Klaus Töpfer

Among those paying close attention to the European Union (EU) summit meeting on greenhouse-gas emissions in Brussels last week was Klaus Töpfer. As German minister for the environment and reactor safety from 1987 to 1994 and under-secretary-general of the United Nations and director of the UN Environment Programme in 1998–2006, Töpfer has been keeping an eye on international climate and energy diplomacy for two decades. He talked to **Quirin Schiermeier** about the EU's commitment to cut overall greenhouse-gas emissions by at least 20% by 2020, compared with 1990 levels. These cuts would rise to 30% if the United States and other industrialized countries were to commit themselves to 'comparable' emissions cuts after 2012, and if large developing countries including China contribute 'adequately'.

What do you think of the summit's outcome?

EU leaders know well enough that a 20% reduction is the absolute minimum, that's why they have offered 30% as an additional option. It is the maximum outcome that takes into account the political preconditions in the enlarged EU. In any case, it is a remarkable success for the German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

What more would you have hoped for?

The agreements must be specified further, and, importantly, they must be of a binding nature. We need to go for the 30% target and be aware that the 20% target for renewable energy would benefit from a more structured and more detailed decision on different renewables.

What do you think about the French proposal to treat nuclear energy on equal terms with renewable energies?

Whether or not to use nuclear energy to achieve the target must be the sovereign responsibility of each member state. This is also the EU's position, and it is a very wise decision. [But] increasing nuclear's share in a way that it would make a real contribution to substituting use of fossil energy would vastly increase political, safety and resource issues. We have to do our utmost to invent a nuclear-free energy supply structure.

Do you think the EU agreement will have a positive impact on international climate negotiations for the post-2012 period?

Yes, without a doubt. The

leadership the EU has taken gives a clear signal, especially to the fast-growing economies in Asia, that we are aware of the Rio de Janeiro principle of 'common but differentiated responsibility'.

Which concrete measures — technological, political and regulatory — are needed to make sure the EU can achieve the goals agreed on?

With regards to technology, we need a revolution in energy efficiency. Energy efficiency is a chance to achieve a short-term, high return on investments to reduce energy intensity. And this is going over the whole range of energy demand, from buildings to mobility to electrical goods. In political terms, these positive, far-reaching results should pave the way for a Kyoto follow-up beyond 2012. As far as the regulatory framework is concerned, the most important thing is the need to internalize the costs of carbon dioxide in the energy price of fossil fuels. ■



A. BECKSTEIN/REUTERS

Klaus Töpfer is upbeat about the EU's environmental targets.