

Saclay, September 4th, 2003

Dear members of the DAPNIA visiting committee,

We are writing to inform you about a direct and immediate threat to DAPNIA's scientific activities. In July 2003, the new head of the CEA (French Atomic Energy Commission) has presented a document called PMLT (Plan a moyen et long terme, for "Middle and long term planning") that sets guidelines for CEA in the period 2004-2012. We learn from this document that DAPNIA's staff will undergo a continuous decrease, of over 100 positions between Jan. 2004 and mid-2006, but steadily going on afterwards. (Let us recall, as you are well aware, that this comes after a reduction from 900 to 650 positions since DAPNIA's creation in 1992.) The largest decrease is foreseen in 2004, i.e. in the budget that is currently in the final discussion steps (it should be adopted in the first days of October 2003). This decrease is much larger than can be accommodated by natural departures, by at least a factor four. DAPNIA's budget diminishes correspondingly, by 10% or more, so that there will also be a dramatic decrease in all aspects of our activities : experiments, R&D, travel, as well as PhD students and Postdocs funding.

Thus, DAPNIA would inevitably be forced to cancel ongoing programs, and to defer indefinitely future activities. Students will soon turn away from a lab with such a dim future. It is our belief that DAPNIA will not survive such a decline.

No scientific reason pertaining to DAPNIA's research quality have been put forward as an explanation. The motivation seems to be that some sectors of CEA have immediate and very serious financial problems ; the top CEA management has apparently chosen to "solve" this problem by declaring that basic research is no longer a primary goal of CEA.

Nobody in DAPNIA's management has refuted any of the above information.

We thus need the immediate help of our colleagues, especially those who have an excellent knowledge of our activities.

We are asking you to make your feelings known, as soon as possible, to :

- the head of CEA, Mr. Alain Bugat;
- the high commissioner for Atomic Energy, Mr. Bernard Bigot;
- the french minister for research and technology, Mme Claudie Haignere, and her closest adviser, Mr. Philippe Braidy.

We thank you in advance for the valuable time this will take off your normal duties. Please feel free to communicate this information to anyone who may be of help. We would appreciate if you inform us of any action you have taken, and if you can provide us with copies of your letters.

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