

INFORMATION

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NEW THREATS TO CERN

We have learnt that one of the Member States is preparing new budgetary restrictions which could be fatal for our Organization.

But, first a reminder of the conditions under which the Council approved the LHC project.

In **June 1994**, seventeen Member States agreed to the proposals of the Director General concerning the new large CERN Project, the LHC, based upon the hypothesis of full annual indexation of the contributions of the Member States. But the other two, Germany and the United Kingdom refused the proposals and the Council meeting was suspended.

After difficult negotiations, these two Member States succeeded in imposing their conditions, described as very rigorous by the Director General. Remember that the Association had organized a demonstration followed by a petition signed by more than 2000 members of the personnel, insisting that the LHC be approved with realistic conditions: "LHC YES! unrealistic conditions, NO!".

On **16 December 1994**, the CERN Council resumed its meeting and approved a resolution (CERN/2075/Final) in which it decided:

- to include the Large Hadron Collider (LHC) in the Basic Programme of the Organization and to approve the Basic Programme as thus modified;
- that on the basis of current planning and expected income, the LHC will be constructed in two phases;

- to approve a Statement concerning the Funding and Approval of the LHC in which the CERN Council:

- Declared that the decision to include the LHC in the Basic Programme constituted full approval to construct a 14TeV collider, although on the basis of current planning and expected income, this would have to be accomplished in two stages.
- Declared that any non-Member State contributions would be used to speed up and improve the project, not to allow reductions in Member States' contributions.
- Noted with gratitude the commitments of France and Switzerland to make voluntary contributions to help and accelerate the LHC project.
- Declared that the overall Cost Variation Index to be applied to the Member States' contributions should be zero **in the period 1995-1997**.
- Decided that planning should proceed on the basis of the assumption that inflation would be 2% and that Member State contributions would be indexed by 1% **from 1998 onwards**.
- Agreed that the comprehensive review of the progress of the LHC, to be carried out **before the end of 1997**, would examine the question whether the LHC should be constructed in one stage instead of two.

Although these dates are not mentioned in the Council decision, it noted that the first stage could be completed in the year **2004** and the second in the year **2008** (see CERN/SPC/695 – CERN/CC/2072, Further funding options for the large hadron collider and the long-term scientific programme of CERN).

France confirmed an exceptional outlay of 64.5 MCHF and accepted to index its contribution **from 1998 onwards** during the construction period by 2%, assuming inflation was 2%, with the aim of improving the project (curiously nothing is clearly foreseen in the case where this hypothesis turns out to be unrealistic).

Switzerland similarly agreed to index its contributions **from 1998 onwards** during the construction period by 2%. The objective of this outlay was exclusively to strengthen the financial resources so as to be able to complete the project within the initial timescale.

The Netherlands however expressed its concern that the conditions of the approval were not the fully the result of the usual procedure of seeking consensus among all nineteen Member States but of negotiations between a small subset of the larger Member States. It hoped that once the pressure of approving the project had been lifted, the discussion on optimising the financial and technical planning would resume in the democratic fashion that had been the basis of the Organization's success.

The Council also approved two other Resolutions, one concerning the contribution of Germany (CERN/2073/Final) according to which the contribution of Germany shall be calculated in accordance with the rules of the Organisation, **but until 31 December 1998**, the amount to be paid by Germany shall be maintained at the level of 22.5% instead of 25%, namely a reduction of 10%. After that date it shall revert to the ordinary level.

The other Resolution was concerning a double majority procedure for certain Finance Committee recommendations to Council, those relating to the Bannier procedure, which is actually suspended, the annual Budget and the Cost-Variation Index (CVI). For these recommendations in addition to the formal majorities, a majority of 70% of the Member States' contributions is also required. This rule effectively gives any pair of the larger Member States the right of a veto in any vote in the Finance Committee on these questions. It is important to note that this rule cannot officially

apply to the decisions of the CERN Council for it would violate the Convention establishing CERN whereby each Member State has one [equal] vote in the Council.

The Director General was invited to undertake negotiations with those non-Member States whose researchers expected to use the LHC to obtain financial or technical contributions. Thus, Japan has already contributed, **in May 1995**, a contribution to the LHC of 5 billion yen, some 60MCHF, and has announced other contributions of the same order. **In June 1996**, Russia committed a contribution to the LHC and to its detectors, each for 67 MCHF net to CERN.

The negotiations with other States are in progress; those with the United States in particular are at an advanced stage, and if they have not yielded all the anticipated results, they permitted the Director General to present to the CERN Council at its latest meeting in June 1996, a financial plan according to which the LHC could be built in a single stage for operation **in 2005**. It appeared that all the Member States were favourable to this idea.

Soon afterwards, on **25 July 1996**, an article appeared in the renowned scientific journal, NATURE, followed by two more articles on **1 August** which reported that according to information received from the Federal Ministry of Education, Research and Technology, Germany is proposing to ask for a reduction of its contribution to CERN of 9.3% **from next year**, in addition to the reduction that it has already obtained, and probably **until the year 2000**.

It is unlikely that the other Member States will accept such a reduction without a corresponding reduction in their own contributions leading to a global reduction of the CERN budget of the same percentage. Moreover, according to certain well-informed sources, France and the United Kingdom are going to meet Germany in Bonn at the beginning of September to reach agreement on this point.

The Staff Association is very surprised by this news; it believed when Germany and the United Kingdom had succeeded in imposing their conditions for the approval of the LHC, at least they were prepared and committed to respect them. As for France, which had accepted to pay supplementary contributions, it gives the impression of giving with one hand and taking back with the other. In addition, such a volte-face can not avoid raising serious

doubts on the part of the non-Member States as to the reliability of the Member States and their willingness to respect their commitments, just at the time it is asking these non-Member States for voluntary contributions supposedly, according to the Council decision of **December 1994**, *to be used to speed up and improve the project, not to allow reductions in Member States' contributions.*

The Association is also very preoccupied because the budget reductions requested and the possible absence of new contributions from the non-Member States coupled with the Draconian conditions, can but lead to a delay, perhaps fatal in the construction of the project and the suppression of other programmes, threatening the mission of the Organization or even its existence.

The justification given for the reductions are the Treaty of Maastricht and the agreed criteria for membership of the *"single European currency"* [which will without doubt be at best, a common money for a few States of the European Union]. It should be remembered that the treaty and criteria have existed **since 1992**.

According to NATURE, Germany is also proposing reductions in its contributions to the following European laboratories:

- European Molecular Biology Laboratory
(EMBL) - **4.5%**
- European Southern Observatory
(ESO) - **2.8%**
- European Synchrotron Radiation Facility
(ESRF) - **10.2%**
- Institute Laue-Langevin
(ILL) - **6.4%**

In contrast DESY has been promised level funding for next year, a decision which is defended on the grounds that while CERN, despite its financial difficulties, is still able to find money for new scientific experiments, this has recently become virtually impossible at DESY. Moreover according to the **August 1996** number of another scientific journal, Physics Today, the budgets of the Max Planck Society and the national science foundation, DFG will be increased by 5%.

NATURE believes that if governments insist on 10% cuts, the LHC project may collapse. If compromise is possible, the LHC's future will surely depend on the political astuteness of CERN's management and influential supporters.

In this respect, in his Press Release dated **21 June 1996** entitled *"CERN looks forward to exciting future"* the Director General made reference to a report "Assessment of the Large Hadron Collider" published by the Department of Energy of the United States which concludes that *"the project [LHC] has experienced and technically knowledgeable management in place and functioning well . This strong management team, together with the CERN history of successful projects, gives the committee confidence in the successful completion of the LHC project."*

TIME WILL TELL