



GREEN WORLD

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Open letter to the Norwegian Minister of Trade and Industry
from the Russian non-governmental organisations Green World, Kola Environmental Center, Public
Fund for Nature and Movement for Nuclear Safety.

Norway should take responsibility for its spent nuclear fuel

We have learned that the Norwegian Stranden committee in their report (NOU 2011:2) suggests that Norway sends several tons of its spent nuclear fuel to reprocessing in France. We are surprised and disappointed of this suggestion that might become Norwegian policy.

Previously, Norway has argued against reprocessing, with good reason. Reprocessing is a dirty industry, originally created to make plutonium for nuclear bombs. The area around the Siberian facility Mayak is among the worst contaminated places on earth. Norway's work to stop the pollution from Sellafield is well known. La Hague is the same kind of facility as Mayak and Sellafield.

As we work together with Norges Naturvernforbund to close old nuclear reactors in Northwest Russia, it is natural for us to give advice on Norway's nuclear policy.

Compared to other countries, Norway has small amounts of spent nuclear fuel and radioactive waste. Still, how these dangerous substances are treated is important, and it sends signals to the international community on what is acceptable and what is not.

We are familiar with the specifics of metallic uranium and aluminum casing, which makes the spent nuclear fuel dangerous to store without surveillance. According to nuclear industry information, this fuel must be treated before put in a repository, and the industry proposes reprocessing.

The suggestion from the committee is based on a report from a “technical committee” with representatives from Norwegian IFE and the Swedish company Studsvik, both with commercial interest in the nuclear industry. We recommend that independent experts look at the specifics of the Norwegian fuel to find environmentally sound solutions.

Our opinion is that:

- Transport of radioactive substances, and spent nuclear fuel in particular, should be limited as much as possible.
- We regard it obvious that Norway will not send any spent nuclear fuel to the Mayak facility for reprocessing. The problems in the surrounding region have been clearly shown.
- Although La Hague admittedly has less releases and better clean-up than Mayak, all reprocessing creates additional radioactive wastes and should not be considered to be a solution for spent nuclear fuel.
- There is also the important principle that each country should take responsibility of its own wastes. Sending the spent nuclear fuel out of the country contradicts this principle, even when parts of the residues from reprocessing is shipped back.

It is our advice that Norway should therefore find a national solution for all its spent nuclear fuel. Mid-term storage while working to find better solutions is preferable over a hasted decision to transport the spent fuel to another country for reprocessing.

With regards



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