

5 December, 2005

Dr. Mohamed ElBaradei
Director-General
International Atomic Energy Agency
P.O. Box 100
Wagramer Strasse 5
A-1400 Vienna, Austria

Dear Director General ElBaradei,

We are writing to you concerning an illegal nuclear transport of 450 tons of depleted uranium waste on the ship *Kapitan Kuroptev*.

We invite you and your staff to monitor and verify this shipment, which left the Pierrelatte uranium enrichment plant on 1 December 2005, bound for dumping in Siberia after travelling through the English Channel, North and Baltic Seas.

We also enclose a new report from Greenpeace, [“Europe’s Radioactive Secret”](#), in which we document an illegal nuclear waste trade between Europe’s industry and the Russian Federation. The waste is created at the Cogema/Areva reprocessing facilities at the Hague, Normandy and depleted uranium (DU) results from enrichment at the Eurodif/Areva de Pierrelatte facilities in France and the Urenco facilities in Gronau in Germany, Almelo in the Netherlands and Capenhurst in the UK.

While the industry claims that the uranium waste, including depleted uranium, is sent to Russia for reprocessing and will be returned, this report shows that only 10% of the waste sent to Russia has been returned to France. As such a large proportion of the materials remain, the Russian Federation is actually being used as a nuclear waste dumping site by Europe’s largest nuclear companies, such as EDF, EoN and Vattenfal, both of Europe’s enrichment companies, Urenco and Eurodif, and the reprocessing company Cogema/Areva.

In addition, these transportations violate Russian Atomic Laws, under which the importation of nuclear waste for storage or disposal is not permitted.¹

In addition, Greenpeace does not believe that the DUF6 containers being used to illegally transport this waste into Russia meet IAEA standards, and calls on the IAEA to verify that the containers being used are in compliance with IAEA TS-R-1, the standard required for conveyance between states. The establishment of Working Groups or Coordinated Research Programmes does not address the routine and ongoing fire hazards and occupational health and safety dangers posed by these kinds of containers in use today, and nor does it address the lack of standards applied to dangerous materials regularly being taken through and in close proximity to high density population areas.

We look forward to a response from the Agency’s experts on the content of this report, in particular the two items drawn to your attention above.

¹ Article 48, paragraph 3 of 2001 federal law on Environmental Protection

Far from it being “good news”¹ that Russia is prepared to accept nuclear waste, Greenpeace believes that there is ample evidence that Russia is an inappropriate site for such a dump, both with regard to safety standards and hazards posed by vast transportation distances, and the proliferation risks posed by corruption of the security sector due to the prevalence of mafia networks and activities.

Such enthusiasm is clearly misplaced in light of the woefully inadequate environmental impact assessments and community consultations conducted to date. After many decades of vilifying Russia as undemocratic, it is ironic that the current democratic deficit there may be used to inflict nuclear waste on one country for short-term economic gain and long-term liability, to ease pressure on national waste dumps and address the “not in my back yard” syndrome painfully experienced by governments and the industry elsewhere. Such an undemocratic process is to be deplored when the promotion of good governance is recognized and promoted by the UN as one of the principle forms of conflict prevention.

Rather than cloak the activities of the IAEA in facilitating, brokering and refereeing between clients on behalf of the nuclear cartel and the counter-productive promotion of a dirty, dangerous and expensive industry beneath the term multilateral nuclear approaches, we urge to follow its own Statute and conduct its activities in accordance with the purposes and principles of the United Nations to promote peace and international co-operation, and in conformity with policies of the United Nations furthering the establishment of safeguarded worldwide disarmament.

Sincerely

Dr. Gerd Leipold
International Executive Director

¹ Interview with Mr. Cirincione at the Carnegie Conference in September 2005.