

NUCLEAR MONITOR

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MONITORED THIS ISSUE:

CHERNOBYL: COMMEMORATION AND ANTI-NUCLEAR STRUGGLE

More than 230 actions in 18 countries from Indonesia to Morocco, are listed on the Chernobyl-Day website, many in France and Italy. It shows that the legacy of Chernobyl can still be felt and the accident is becoming over time more and more a symbol of a dangerous technology. It is now time to think about actions for next year's 25th anniversary of the catastrophe.

(708.6040) WISE Amsterdam - To view the list go to www.chernobyl-day.org but we will pay some attention to anti-nuclear actions in two countries: Germany and Belarus

Germany: 'renaissance' of the movement

Without any doubt, the largest anti-nuclear actions took place in Germany. More than 140,000 people took to the streets on April 24 not only to commemorate the catastrophe of Chernobyl, but to demand an immediate end to nuclear power. Demonstrators formed a 120-kilometer (75-mile) human chain that stretched from the nuclear power plant in Krümmel through the city of Hamburg along the Elbe River to the nuclear plant in Brunsbüttel, on the North Sea coast. Police in the German state of Schleswig-Holstein told the AFP news agency that there were "clearly more than 100,000 participants." Organizers estimated the total number at about 120,000. But it was only one of three large actions. In southern Germany, 17-20,000 demonstrators surrounded the reactor of Biblis and in Ahaus some 7,000 protested at the interim radioactive waste storage facility. After the large demonstration in Berlin, last September, when 50,000 people participated just before the general elections, this is a

clear signal that large parts of society are objecting to the planned decision by Chancellor Angela Merkel to revoke a law that would shut down nuclear plants by 2020.

Although it was expected that tens of thousands of people would take part in the protests, the numbers exceeded all expectations. Political commentators claiming it is a rebirth of the movement and reminded at the 1970s and 1980s when nuclear power was a central issue in dividing society. Activists say it is not a rebirth of the movement, because they've always been there, but it is definitely a 'renaissance' of the anti-nuclear power movement.

Belarus: Chernobyl and anti-nuclear struggle

On April 26, the anarchist initiative Antinuclear Resistance held a few actions dedicated to the anniversary of Chernobyl disaster. It is common knowledge that a traditional demonstration "Charnobyli Shlah" is held on this day organized by different political forces of the country. For more than 5 years anarchists have represented the most active and (for the last 2 years) the most numerous group of protesters. This year was different. Not only did anarchists not attend the demonstration, but called to boycott it and hold other

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antinuclear actions. They made their action in front of a movie theater in Minsk, playing samba-rhythms, shouting out anarchist and antinuclear slogans and delivering a speech explaining anarchists position concerning construction of the nuclear reactor. Apart from this, the actioners distributed leaflets, attracted attention by flags and fuseses.

During this picket a small group of activists attended the traditional Charnobylski Shlah to distribute other leaflets named "Why are anarchists absent from Charnobylski Shlah?" Three main reasons were listed:
1. this year the authorities made a fence with metals detector points,

searching and filming everyone who entered the place of the demo.

2. The demonstration is losing its protest character, becoming rather a mournful event. Most of the people there don't care about the new power plant, they only want to commemorate the Chernobyl victims. Some of the official organizers even claimed that they will give anarchists and gays to the police as instigators and wanted to ban anarchist speeches and drum music during the event.

3. Presence of the far-right and clear fascists on the latest demonstrations without any protest from other "liberals". It's become clear that the opposition

would tolerate everyone to have more mass actions and will take the side of those if anarchists try to attack them. Anarchists will never march peacefully with the fascists, even if that prevents them from expressing our view in public.

For these reasons anarchist groups don't see a point in participating in "Charnobylski Shlah" this year (and maybe any more).

Sources: www.chernobyl-day.org / German press reports, 24 & 24 April 2010 / Email: Anarchist initiative Antinuclear Resistance, 27 April 2010
Contact in Belarus: antiatombel[at]riseup.net

AUSTRALIA: ABORIGINAL LANDOWNERS OPPOSE RADWASTE STORAGE

Aboriginal landowners in Australia's far north are battling government plans to construct this country's long-term nuclear waste storage facility on their land. Diane Stokes, an indigenous woman from the Warumungu and Warlmanpa tribes in the Northern Territory, is opposed to radioactive waste being dumped on her clan's land at Muckaty Station, a former cattle station located some 200 kilometres north of the Territory town of Tennant Creek. "We don't want it to come to the Northern Territory. Nobody wants it there," said Stokes at a public meeting held in the southern city of Melbourne on Apr. 21.

(708.6041) WISE Amsterdam - The question of what to do with Australia's radioactive waste from the country's medical, industrial, agricultural and research use of nuclear material has been ongoing for decades and remains far from resolved. The waste is currently stored at numerous sites around the country and some Australian radioactive waste is also stored at reprocessing plants at Europe (UK and France).

The current Kevin Rudd-led government, as well as the previous government under John Howard, have regarded these sites as temporary and have looked to develop a permanent facility at which to store the waste. A bill presently before parliament rules out the possibility of using one of three previously nominated sites on Australian Defence Force land in the Northern Territory, effectively leaving Muckaty Station as the only potential site currently up for consideration.

While the Minister for Energy and Resources, Martin Ferguson, said that

the bill "means that a site can no longer be automatically imposed on a community in any state or territory," the proposed legislation also recognises the "voluntary" nomination of the Muckaty site made by Ngapa clan members in 2007. The clan is one of several aboriginal family groups who are the traditional owners of land at Muckaty Station. "We made our decision; we nominated our land because we wanted to make a better life for our children," said Ngapa spokeswoman Amy Lauder at a senate hearing into the bill on Mar. 30.

Lauder and her kin are expected to receive upwards of A\$12 million Australian dollars (US\$11.14 million) as compensation for building the waste facility on their land. "We are satisfied that the waste can be stored safely, provided it has been through the environmental impact process to be followed over the next few years. We are united on this decision as the Ngapa clan," Lauder told the senate committee. It is a position supported by the

Northern Land Council (NLC), which represents aboriginal landowners in the north of the Northern Territory. The NLC nominated the Muckaty site on behalf of the Ngapa clan in 2007. Kim Hill, chief executive officer of the NLC argues that "not one person is disputing that the area in question belongs to the Lauder clan."

But that is exactly what appears to be in dispute. "The waste dump that they're going to put in that land is not Amy Lauder's country," Diane Stokes, an indigenous woman from the Warumungu and Warlmanpa tribes in the Northern Territory, told those in attendance at the Melbourne public meeting April 21. And Stokes is not alone in disputing the issue of land ownership. A joint letter from members of the Milwayi and Wirntiku clans, as well as other Ngapa clan members, was read out at a second senate hearing on April 12. The letter states that the proposed site is actually on Milwayi land rather than on land belonging to Lauder's family group. "We are demanding to see the

anthropologists' evidence provided to the Northern Land Council regarding Ngapa clan," say the letter's signatories.

"Numerous traditional owners outlined how they and their people were completely excluded from the shared decision making process, which is the norm in aboriginal custom on issues to do with kinship of land. Despite claims to the contrary, it is clear that they were not consulted and have never given consent," says Australian Greens senator Scott Ludlam. He has called for Muckatj to be scrapped as a potential

site for radioactive waste storage as the nomination process for the site was "flawed."

Dave Sweeney, an anti-nuclear campaigner at the Australian Conservation Foundation (ACF), has slammed Minister Ferguson for breaking away from the principles set out by his own party regarding radioactive waste. The ACF activist said that in 2007 the governing Australian Labor Party promised "a new process, a new site selection study based on community inclusion and consent, based on best

science, based on robust and transparent processes and principles."

Source: IPS, 26 April 2010

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U.S.: NATIONAL GRASSROOTS SUMMIT & FORUM ON RADWASTE POLICY

Earlier this year, the Obama Administration's Dept. of Energy announced the creation of its "Blue Ribbon Commission (BRC) on the Future of Nuclear Power in America", ostensibly to "study and recommend" what the U.S. should do about its radioactive waste problems. Many of us watched or attended the first meeting of the Commission in April -- and are deeply disturbed by what we have seen and heard.

(708.6042) Summit planning group - As a response to the first meeting of the Commission a number of organizations have come together to create a National Grassroots Summit and Forum on Radioactive Waste Policy -- to articulate a national radioactive waste policy for the other 350 million Americans the DOE Panel seems intent on ignoring.

Having both an educational and strategic planning component, this Summit and Forum in June will create an activist tool to tell the DOE and Administration what the real public wants in terms of radioactive waste disposal; educate ourselves and interested members of the public on radioactive waste options and techniques; and establish a "Peoples Green Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Waste Future" on radioactive waste policy that will monitor and critique the work of the BRC, and develop its own list of recommendations and body of public testimony to be offered to the DOE as guidance in developing national radioactive waste policy.

Goals of the Summit will be to identify common ground (geographically and in terms of challenges, concerns and

goals) and bottom lines. We will work in small groups and as a spokes council in addition to sharing time all together. In addition, a Green Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Waste Future will be elected and charged to produce a report which will provide an alternative plan from that of the federal Blue Ribbon Commission on America's Nuclear Future. In order to set the outlines of the debate, we will issue the Green Ribbon Commission Report before the federal Blue Ribbon Commission issues its report over the next 18 -- 24 months.

This event is the next step in a dialog that has been on-going since the first pile of nuclear waste was generated by the Manhattan Project -- most irradiated fuel is still sitting on the reactor sites where it was made. The cancellation of Yucca Mountain creates an enormous new set of questions and challenges for the nuclear industry and the public interest. Similarly, the restriction of waste allowed at the Barnwell, South Carolina so-called "low-level" waste dump in 2008, leaves nuclear power plants (the primary generators of this waste in the civilian sector) in more than 30 states with no place to bury this enormous, and often highly radioactive waste category; similar challenges exist in the military waste world. The new

plan to expand both the civilian reactor fleet and the nuclear weapons production complex threaten our heart-felt goal to see the end to more radioactive waste production.

Come join this discussion on June 4, 5, 6 at the Loyola University, Lake Shore Campus, Chicago.

For more information on the Summit contact Mary Olson at NIRS – [maryo\[at\]nirs.org](mailto:maryo[at]nirs.org) (+1 828-252-8409 or Alfred Meyer at [Alfred.c.meyer\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:Alfred.c.meyer[at]gmail.com), (+1 202-215-8208).

WEST VALLEY: DOE DELAYS 10 MORE YEARS ON REPROCESSING WASTE CLEANUP

On 16 April, The US Department of Energy (DOE) announced its decision for only partial cleanup of the West Valley nuclear waste site 30 miles (45 km) south of Buffalo and upstream of Western New York's main water supply. Members of the West Valley Action Network which includes local, state, national and international environmental, religious, labor, recreational, sports and government entities advocating full clean up of the intensely radioactive site, expressed extreme disappointment, but not surprise.

(708.6043) NIRS - The New York State Energy Research and Development Authority's decision on the site is expected later in April. Major concerns include Department of Energy's giving only lip-service to the clear call by all sectors of the public for full cleanup decision now, ignoring the state-funded, ground-breaking independent study on long-term health and economic effects on the region of leaving nuclear waste buried at West Valley, the lack of commitment to full legal Environmental Impact Statement process for Phase 2 (which involves the majority of the radioactivity at the site), and the appearance of a setup to allow the rest of the deadly waste to be left in the highly erosion-prone ground permanently.

DOE chose to split the cleanup into phases: the first to cleanup one major building and part of a spreading radioactive leak already in groundwater and making its way to creeks that flow to Lake Erie. Meanwhile, DOE will take up to a decade to decide whether to carry out a second phase, which could be to leave the rest of the waste, which comprises the majority of the radioactivity, buried there. The high level radioactive waste tanks with intensely radioactive sludge from reprocessing, radioactive burial grounds with long-lasting waste from 1960s and 70s nuclear power and weapons reactors, including damaged irradiated fuel will be left to potentially leak more.

DOE will begin to clean up *part but not*

all of a spreading plume of dangerous radioactivity that was first detected in the early 1990s which they attribute to a 1968 spill in the reprocessing building.

"inform" the decision on whether to remove all waste from the rest of the site or to leave the buried waste and merely cover it over.

The West Valley site

West Valley is a complex radioactive waste site with long-lasting nuclear waste mainly from atomic weapons and power production and some other generators. The site has high-level, so-called "low-level," transuranic and mixed (radioactive and hazardous) wastes buried, stored and leaking. Burial of radioactive waste in 20-30 foot deep trenches began in the early 1960s and continued until 1974 when water filled up the trenches, burst through the trench caps and flowed into surrounding streams that run into Cattaraugus Creek, through Zoar Valley and the Reservation of the Seneca Nation of Indians, into Lake Erie, upstream of the intake water intake for Buffalo and other major cities in the US and Canada.

From 1966-1972, irradiated nuclear fuel from both atomic weapons and commercial power reactors was brought in and reprocessed (to extract uranium and plutonium remaining and formed in the fuel rods), resulting in high worker exposures, high levels of radioactive contamination into the streams that drain the site and gush into the Great Lakes, and many fires. Reprocessing wastes were also buried at the site. Plans to resume reprocessing were cancelled when earthquake dangers were identified and improvements were projected to cost too much. Shortly thereafter the US decided to stop all reprocessing of commercial nuclear fuel because of the nuclear weapons proliferation danger. Geologically, the site is in a bedrock valley that is expected to erode into the Great Lakes in centuries to come, but the nuclear waste buried at the site will remain dangerously radioactive much longer than the projected erosion rate.
(NIRS Radioactive Waste Project)

That huge building is slated to be dismantled in phase 1, but some of the underground pipes could be left in the ground. Studies will be carried out to

"Phase I will only address 1% of buried radioactive waste. The public must have a say in the final cleanup; we cannot afford to allow federal and state government agencies to merely walk away from the remaining 99% of buried radioactivity in the high level underground tanks and the two radioactive burial areas," according to Barbara Warren, Executive Director, Citizens' Environmental Coalition.

Despite requests from the West Valley Action Network that DOE study HOW to cleanup the rest of the site, DOE is choosing to continue analyzing WHETHER to clean it up.

The 2008 West Valley Full Cost Accounting Study by independent scientists analyzed the geology, economics and radiological consequences of full clean up versus leaving buried waste at the erosion-prone site. The study assessed long range costs whereas DOE discounted and ignored future economic and environmental costs and risks. The report concluded that it is less expensive in the long run and more protective of health to dig up the West Valley waste before it leaks into the Cattaraugus Creek and Lake Erie.

Source: Press Release: NIRS, Sierra Club, CHEJ, 16 April 2010

Contact: Diane D'Arrigo at NIRS

COMPLETION OF KHMELNITSKA 3 & 4 TOO EXPENSIVE GAMBLE

On April 21, 2010, the Government of Ukraine approved a Credit Facility Agreement with Russia for completion of two units at Khmelnytska nuclear power plant. However, the prospects for expanding nuclear power capacity of Ukraine resemble a gamble rather than strategic investment in Ukrainian energy infrastructure. The National Ecological Centre of Ukraine considers the government's plans to be unrealistic.

(708.6044) National Ecological Centre

- Atomstroyexport JSC (Russia), the company that won the tender for the construction of Unit 3/Unit 4 at Khmelnytska nuclear power plant and chief design engineer of nuclear reactors abroad, has production limitations and is already burdened with international commitments that add greater skepticism to the plans to complete construction of Khmelnytska 3 & 4 by 2016. Moreover, there is not a single operating VVER-1000 (V-392B) reactor in the world, which is planned to be built at Khmelnytska nuclear power plant. Only Russia is planning its construction, but that work is not currently running. Availability of half-built facilities at Khmelnytska nuclear power plant will only make it technically more difficult to make any modifications to the unit design.

As the situation with the construction of nuclear reactors in Belene (Bulgaria) shows, it is very difficult to find financial resources for such projects--the leading international financial organizations are not willing to provide funds for that type of construction due to significant, largely financial, risks. At present, Ukraine does not have its own funds to finance completion of Khmelnytska 3 & 4. Statements that Russia is going to provide a loan for completion of the reactors is doubtful, because the same statements were heard regarding the construction of reactors in Bulgaria, but the project has not yet been implemented.

"There is already an excess of installed capacity in Ukraine and no expected growth of electricity consumption is

occurring. Thus, in late February, that is at the peak of power consumption, 5 out of 15 operating nuclear units did not supply electricity into the grid for a variety of reasons", - says Arthur Denysenko, Energy Coordinator for National Ecological Centre of Ukraine. "Ukraine should focus its efforts on increase of energy efficiency of our economy"

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BELARUSIAN NPP PLAN FAILS TO CONVINCE AT PUBLIC HEARING IN KYIV

In July 2009 a complaint about the planned Belarusian NPP was developed by the European ECO Forum legal team and submitted to the Implementation Committee of the Espoo Convention by Ecoclub, NGO (Ukraine).

(708.6045) Ecoclub - The Committee of the Espoo Convention reviewed the provided information and agreed to gather further information on the proposed activity, and whether the Government of Belarus had taken the necessary measures to implement the provisions of the Convention. The Committee requested the Chair to write to the Government of Belarus seeking relevant information and asking for a reply.

The Committee also decided to contact affected Parties identified by the NGO (Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Ukraine) to enquire into their experiences, if any, in the application of the Convention to the proposed activity. The Committee

requested the secretariat to inform the NGO of the actions taken. The Belarusian Side agreed with Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine to conduct public hearings concerning the project.

After a public hearing in Vilnius on March 2, concerning the planned construction of the Belarusian NPP, several environmental initiatives – the Belarusian Green Party, the Russian group Ecodefense!, a movement called "Scientists for a Nuclear-Free Belarus," and the non-governmental organisation Ecodom – prepared and distributed a document called "Critical notes on the 'Statement on Potential Environmental Impact of the Belarusian NPP.'"

The document includes a 23-item list elaborating the errors and oversights on the part of the official environmental evaluation statement's authors. The main conclusion in the Critical Notes claims that the official statement downplays significantly the NPP's anticipated impact on the surrounding environment and the health of the local population both as part of standard-mode operation and in case of an accident.

Since last September, however, neither the official environmental impact statement's authors nor Belarusian authorities have offered any response to the criticism.

On March 31 the third Public hearing

took place in Kyiv (Ukraine) to evaluate the environmental impact (EIA) power plant construction project 2000MWt in Belarus.

During the hearing everyone had the opportunity to represent their respective positions. In the beginning Belarusian officials represented the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) of the planned Belarusian NPP.

Then members of different NGOs represented an alternative view on the project, for instance:

- * The EIA was presented only as a brief non-technical overview and the full version of the EIA is not accessible
- * It did not become clear from the presented form of the EIA, how the Belarusian side means to deal with nuclear

waste and spent fuel management

- * There was no information on the decommissioning of the planned NPP
- * In the event of a severe accident emissions will be higher than officially stated
- * The EIA ignores the fact that the NPP could affect Ukrainian territory

In the official protocol the following conclusion is written:

- * Environmental NGOs expressed concern about incomplete and poor quality of EIA preparation;
- * arguments from the Belarusian side on environmental safety of planned nuclear power plant construction were considered insufficient;
- * the design and construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant were opposed.

According to the Espoo Convention Be-

larussia has to take the comments they received into account. We will see if and how they do.

The complaint on non-compliance by Belarus with its obligations under Espoo Convention in the course of construction of a nuclear power plant and submitted by the Ecoclub NGO (Ukraine) is available at: <http://www.rac.org.ua/index.php?id=106&L=1>

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Finland: building nukes for electricity export? On April 21, the Finnish government proposed two new nuclear power plants. The parliament will make the final decision on the issue earliest in the summer, but most likely in the autumn. Each reactor will be voted on separately - there are possibilities to have 2, 1 or 0 new nuclear plants. Building two nuclear power units would lock Finland's energy consumption to unrealistic, artificially high levels, and are clearly aimed for electricity export. However, Parliament has taken the line that it opposes the construction of generating capacity for export purposes.

Minister of Economic Affairs Mauri Pekkarinen (Centre Party) insisted on April 21, that Finland would adhere to this principle of opposing the construction for export. But the Greens are accusing Pekkarinen of turning his coat on the matter by endorsing two new reactors just a year after saying that Finland's need for new nuclear energy units was "zero, or one at the most". "Now he is proposing two units on the basis of the same electricity consumption estimates. This certainly shows how poorly founded Pekkarinen's proposal is", Sinnemäki says. The Greens also point out that the forest company UPM, a part owner of TVO, has put forward the idea of electricity exports. "Nobody in Finland -not even the forest industry- has proposed such a fantasy in electricity production that this proposal would not mean export. It becomes clear even in all of the most daring consumption estimates. We simply cannot consume this much electricity."

Environmental organizations are organizing a large anti-nuclear demonstration in Helsinki on May 8.

Helsingin Sanomat (Int. edition) 22 and 24 April 2010

Japan: Restart Monju expected in May. The Monju prototype fast-breeder reactor, which was shut down in December 1995 after sodium leaked from the cooling system, is set to resume operations in May. Fukui Governor Issei Nishikawa signaled his willingness to approve reactivation of the experimental reactor, located in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, during a meeting with science and technology minister Tatsuo Kawabata and industry minister Masayuki Naoshima on April 26. In the 1995 incident, the reactor operator was heavily criticized after it was found to have concealed information about the accident. During the past 14 years or so that Monju has been in limbo, the operator has come under fire for delaying reports on alarm activation incidents and flawed maintenance work.

Under the government's plan, the next stage in the fast-breeder project will be the construction of a demonstration reactor, which is larger than Monju, around 2025. It would be followed by the development of a commercial reactor around 2050. But the outlook for the plan is bleak, to say the least.

Some 900 billion yen (US\$ 9.6 billion or 7.3 billion euro) of taxpayer money has already been spent on the construction and operation of the Monju reactor. It will require additional annual spending of about 20 billion yen (US\$ 215 million / 162 million euro).

More on the history and current status of Monju and Japan's fast breeder program: Nuclear Monitor 702, 15 January 2010: "Restarting Monju – Like playing Russian roulette"

The Asahi Shimbun (Japan), 27 April 2010

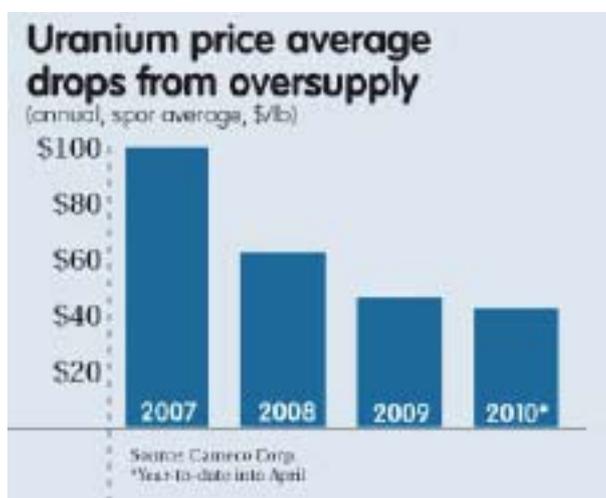
Belene construction halted until investors are found. Belene construction was halted in search for Western strategic investors after Bulgaria dismissed an offer from Russia to finance the coming two years of construction with an option for a complete Russian take-over of the project. The Bulgarian government has opened a tender for a financial consultant to work out a new financial model for the project. This consultant is expected to be chosen in June 2010. On the basis of this new financial model, strategic investors will be invited for participation. After EU Energy Commissioner Günther Öttinger warned Bulgaria for the dependency that a fully Russian Belene project would create, Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borissov made it clear that Belene only will be continued if it can pay for itself and if it is developed under participation of European and/or US partners. Russia was not to expect more than a 25% participation, if any at all. In his straightforward way, Borissov characterised Belene as either a European project or no project.

On April 16, it was announced that the Bulgarian Energy Holding, which was set up in 2008 to create a pool of assets that could lure possible lenders to the Belene project, will be dismantled before summer. Deputy Minister for Economy, Energy and Tourism Maya Hristova said that BEH was set up to secure the construction of Belene by the assets generated in the holding, "but this is no longer feasible." She told the Bulgarian press agency BTA that the assets of all state-owned energy companies are of lower value than the estimated value of Belene. Daily Dnevnik announced that there is currently a discussion to bring the electricity assets of BEH, including the Kozloduy nuclear power plant and the Maritsa East power station under in state utility NEK and the gas assets in a separate holding.

Email Jan Haverkamp, Greenpeace EU Unit, 26 April 2010

U-price low: "explosive growth in nuclear power hasn't yet happened". The spot price of uranium has dropped below US\$42/lb (1 lb = 453.59 grams) through in April, down almost US\$4 from the 2009 average of US\$46 as, according to Purchasing.com, weakening demand has depressed transaction pricing. Lyndon Fagan, an analyst at RBS in Sydney Australia, tells Bloomberg that spot prices indeed have weakened in recent months because the explosive growth in nuclear power hasn't yet happened. Current uranium prices are well down from the levels reached in 2007, when the prices spiked to nearly US\$140. Supply concerns drove the price up at that time, and while there's no guarantee that prices could once again reach those levels, such past performance does imply that the potential for such dramatic price moves is possible. Meanwhile, Admir Adnani, CEO of US-based UraniumEnergy, tells Reuters that a renewed focus on nuclear energy and current mining shortfalls are likely to drive prices of uranium, higher in the coming years. "In the next two to three years, we will see a period of rising uranium prices," Adnani says. "There is absolutely no doubt that the nuclear renaissance and the construction of new reactors plus the existing reactor requirements will bring growing demand... and we need uranium prices to be higher for new mines to be built." But in the Canadian province of New Brunswick, for instance, only two companies have done exploration work over the past couple years, a notable drop from the 10 or so firms that were searching for uranium back in 2007, according to the Canadian Department of Natural Resources.

www.purchasing.com, 14 April 2010 / Telegraph Journal (Canada), 21 April 2010



Regulators investigating Olkiluoto piping. Nuclear safety authorities in Finland, France, the UK and US are assessing the significance of undocumented welding on primary circuit piping for the EPR reactor under construction at Olkiluoto, Finland. However, Petteri Tiippana, director of the nuclear reactor regulation department at the Finnish Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority STUK, told Platts in an interview on April 8, that regulators from those four countries are not preparing a joint statement on the piping quality issue. He reacted on a statement made by a commissioner of French nuclear safety authority ASN,

The piping was manufactured by Nordon, a subcontractor to Areva, the French vendor which is supplying the nuclear part of the Olkiluoto-3 unit under a turnkey contract to utility Teollisuuden Voima Oy. Nordon, based in Nancy in eastern France, is a unit of the Fives group and has long been a major supplier of piping for nuclear power plants. In October 2009, STUK found that small cracks in piping made for the main coolant lines of Olkiluoto-3 had been repaired with welding procedures that were not documented. Tiippana said the piping is still in France and that analysis of the significance of the undocumented welding could be finished within several weeks. STUK will then do final inspections, probably before summer, he said. Until the piping is approved by STUK, it cannot be transported to Olkiluoto. The design of Areva's EPR reactor is under regulatory review for construction in the UK and the US.

Platts, 8 April 2010

Australian uranium for India? Not that long ago, Australia took a firm stand against selling uranium to India (or any Non-Nuclear proliferation Treaty signatory for that matter): in January 2008, Australia's new Labor government outlawed uranium sales to India. Stephen Smith, Australian foreign minister emphasizes that in saying in October 2009: "We have had a long-standing principal position which is not aimed at India, it is the long-standing position that we do not export uranium to a country that is not a party to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty,"

Now, just over a half year later, Australia is planning to change its domestic rules to allow India to import uranium from the country.

India is signing the Indo-US civilian nuclear agreement and many other civil nuclear agreements with different

countries. The 46-member Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) has also granted a waiver to India in September 2008 allowing nuclear fuel from other nations. However, Australia being a member in that group, didn't allow India to import nuclear fuel from the country. Now, South Australia's Department of trade & economic development director Damian Papps said Australia would like to amend the current regulations to enable uranium export to India.

Press TV, 14 October 2009 / Spectrum, April 26, 2010

Further increase in heavy forging capacity. Known as a leader in the ultra-heavy forgings required for the highest capacity nuclear reactors, Japan Steel Works set about tripling its capacity and has completed its second press for ultra-large nuclear forgings. It has now completed the ¥50 billion (US\$530 million, 390 million euro) first phase of the expansion with the installation of a new forging shop complete with heavy cranes, heat treatment facilities and the necessary 14,000 ton press. JSW told World Nuclear News that the new shop was the core of the first investment phase and that the second ¥30 billion (US\$320 million, 235 million euro) investment round should be completed in 2011. At that point, JSW said, it would have tripled the nuclear capability that it had in 2007 - enough for about 12 reactor pressure vessels and main component sets per year. The increase in capacity should be felt by mid-2012 as new components are planned to emerge from the factories. Muroan also manufactures generator and steam turbine rotor shafts, clad steel plates and turbine casings for nuclear power plants. While JSW may be the current leader in the global market for large nuclear components, there are several other (Russian, Chinese and South-Korean) manufacturers tooling up to the same levels for domestic supply. Britain's Sheffield Forgemasters and India's Bharat Forge will join JSW as global ultra-heavy suppliers around 2014.

World Nuclear News, 1 April 2010

Switzerland: Canton slams radioactive waste plans. Plans for a radioactive waste disposal unit in the canton of Schaffhausen has come under fire in a study published by the local government. The National Cooperative for the Disposal of Radioactive Waste outlined two possible sites for the unit: one in Zurich Weinland and one near Sudranden in the canton of Schaffhausen. That's just a few kilometers from the city of Schaffhausen, where 80 percent of the canton's population live and work. The report published on April 21 says a disposal centre would have a detrimental effect on the town of Schaffhausen, and on the development of both the canton's economy and population. The report estimates it would lose between 15 and 33 million francs in tax revenue a year and the population would drop by up to 5,000 people.

World Radio Switzerland, 21 April 2010

U.K.: Low-level radwaste in a landfill. Five bags of radioactive waste from the Sellafield nuclear processing facility were dumped in a landfill site after a faulty scanner wrongly passed them as safe. Environment Agency inspectors have found one of the bags but is still searching for the other four at the Lillyhall landfill site near Workington, Cumbria. The bags contained waste collected in restricted areas of Sellafield where disposal of all items, including protective clothing, is strictly controlled because of the risk of radioactive contamination. The error was discovered by a member of staff who became suspicious when a scanning machine declared as safe a bag that had come from the restricted area. Staff checked the machine's records and found that five other contaminated bags had been passed as safe and sent to the nearby landfill site, which handles a mixture of household and industrial waste. A Sellafield spokeswoman was unable to say for how long the machine had been malfunctioning. The waste should have been sent for storage in concrete vaults at the Low Level Waste Repository near Drigg in Cumbria.

The incident may undermine the nuclear industry's plan to save billions of pounds by adopting lower safety standards for thousands of tonnes of low-level radioactive waste from decommissioned reactor sites. Several landfill sites have applied for permits to handle low-level waste.

Times online (U.K.), 26 April 2010

U.K. political parties and nukes. The political party manifestos for the General Election show no surprises concerning nuclear policies - and they reveal the fundamental difference on nuclear issues between the Liberal Democrats and both the other two main parties. These difference will make for some tough bargaining in the event of a hung Parliament in which no political party has an outright majority of seats.

The Conservatives commit themselves to "clearing the way for new nuclear power stations - provided they receive no public subsidy". The party is also committed to the new Trident nuclear submarine system.

Under the heading 'Clean Energy' the Labour manifesto says "We have taken the decisions to enable a new generation of nuclear power stations" and the party is also committed to the Trident replacement.

The Scottish National Party wants Trident scrapped, rejects nuclear energy and the deep geological disposal of radioactive wastes.

The Liberal Democrats don't want a "like-for-like" replacement for Trident and promise a review of the proposals. They also reject new reactors "based on the evidence nuclear is a far more expensive way of reducing carbon emissions" than renewable energy and energy conservation. According to the LibDem spokesperson on energy and climate issues, Simon

Hughes, the current government plans for a new fleet of nuclear reactors are based on a "completely foolish delusion". And he added; "they are too costly, will take too long to build, will require government subsidy and will drain investment away from the renewable energy sector". He says the party will not soften anti-nuclear stance. General elections in the UK will be held on May 6.

N-Base Briefing 649, 21 April 2010 / BusinessGreen.com, 26 April 2010

Rand Uranium: no super dump tailings in Poortjie area. South-Africa: following a successful protest march on April 23 by emerging black farmers and the Mhatammoho Agricultural Union, and the potentially affected landowners against the proposed super dump (centralized tailings storage facility -TSF) Rand Uranium decided to abandon the project. The protest march, the second in a few weeks, took place at the offices of Rand Uranium in Randfontein. Soon after the protest, Rand Uranium, which had proposed to establish the TSF within the Poortjie area on high agricultural land, issued a statement. The last paragraph of the document reads: "Through the assessments, and in consideration of planning requirements of the City of Johannesburg, Area 45 is not considered appropriate for the long term TSF." The protest was against Site 45 (Poortjie area). This means, Rand Uranium has abandoned its intention to establish a super dump in the Poortjie area.

The proposed super dump would contain 350 million tons of uranium tailings and will be established on 1 200 hectares of land. The farmers and landowners claim that the public participation process was fatally flawed and that they were not consulted. It would have impacted the Vaal Barrage Catchment, a highly compromised Catchment. In terms of the Water Research Report No 1297/1/07 (2007) only 21% of the Vaal Barrage showed no evidence of cytotoxicity (i.e. toxic to human cells). The Report suggests that the underlying problems of this catchment are largely due to heavy metals. It furthermore states: "It is clear that mining operations, even after they have been discontinued, are still having a major impact on water quality in the Vaal Barrage catchment, to the extent that it can no longer be compared with other natural water systems."

Emails Mariette Liefferink, 21 and 24 April 2010

U.A.E.: First nuclear site named. Braka has been named as the site for the United Arab Emirate's first nuclear power plant. Limited construction licence applications and environmental assessments for four reactors have been submitted. The Braka site is in a very sparsely populated area 53 kilometers from Ruwais and very close to the border with Saudi Arabia. It is closer to Doha, the capital of Qatar, than to Abu Dhabi about 240 kilometers to the east. Dubai is another 150 kilometers along the coast. The Emirates Nuclear Energy Corporation (Enec) said Braka was selected from ten shortlisted sites, all of which were suitable for nuclear build, on the basis of its environmental, technical and business qualities.

Two requests have been made to the Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR). One is for a site preparation license for the four-reactor power plant to allow Enec to conduct non-safety related groundwork at Braka such as constructing breakwaters and a jetty. The other is for a limited license to "manufacture and assemble nuclear safety related equipment." In addition, a strategic environmental assessment for the project has been submitted to the Environment Agency - Abu Dhabi (EAD) addressing environmental impacts and mitigation including for construction work. But since there is no civil society whatsoever, there will be no independent scrutiny of those documents.

World Nuclear News, 23 April 2010

Contract for ITER buildings. The Engage consortium has been awarded the architect engineer contract for the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) buildings and civil infrastructures. The contract, worth some €150 million (US\$200 million), was signed by the Engage consortium and Fusion for Energy (F4E) on 13 April. F4E is the European Union's (EU's) organization for Europe's contribution to ITER. The Engage consortium comprises Atkins of the UK, French companies Assystem and Iosis, and Empresarios Agrupados of Spain. The architect engineer will assist F4E during the entire construction process, from the elaboration of the detailed design to the final acceptance of the works. The contract covers the construction of the entire ITER complex, including 29 out of a total of 39 buildings, site infrastructure and power supplies.

Seven parties - China, India, Japan, Russia, South Korea and the EU - are cooperating to build ITER, a 500 MWt tokamak, at Cadarache. The partners agreed in mid 2005 to site Iter at Cadarache. The deal involved major concessions to Japan, which had put forward Rokkasho as a preferred site. The EU and France will contribute half of the €12.8 billion (US\$18.7 billion) total cost, with the other partners - Japan, China, South Korea, USA and Russia - putting in 10% each. Site preparation at Cadarache began in January 2007. The facility is expected to be in operation around 2018. As part of the reactor's phased commissioning, it will initially be tested using hydrogen. Experiments using tritium and deuterium as fuel will begin in 2026. Much later than expected a few years ago.

World Nuclear News, 15 April 2010

WISE/NIRS NUCLEAR MONITOR

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The WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor publishes international information in English 20 times a year. A Spanish translation of this newsletter is available on the WISE Amsterdam website (www.antenna.nl/wise/esp). A Russian version is published by WISE Russia and a Ukrainian version is published by WISE Ukraine. The WISE/NIRS Nuclear Monitor can be obtained both on paper and in an email version (pdf format). Old issues are (after two months) available through the WISE Amsterdam homepage: www.antenna.nl/wise.

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