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Nuclear waste

EU Commission must intervene to prevent reckless transport of nuclear waste from Hungary

The Hungarian authorities are planning to transport damaged nuclear fuel to a Russian reprocessing site, via Ukraine, with no plan for any return (1). The Greens have called on the European Commission to intervene to prevent this. Commenting on the situation, Greens/EFA co-president **Rebecca Harms** said:

"The plans to transport damaged nuclear fuel from Hungary through Ukraine to Russia should be cancelled immediately. Transporting this highly dangerous nuclear waste through a country in a conflict situation would be grossly irresponsible. Those that produced this waste and benefited from the nuclear power should also be responsible for dealing with the consequences. The European Commission has to intervene and ensure this waste stays in Hungary, where it will be subject to EU safety standards. The Hungarian authorities must make the necessary preparations to deal with this nuclear waste."

Green nuclear spokesperson **Michèle Rivasi** added:

"It is only thanks to civil society that this significant nuclear safety and radioprotection issue has come to light. Whistleblowers have been raising the alarm for months, highlighting the possible infringement of the EU nuclear waste directive to the European Commission (2). If there is a transfer of ownership between the Hungarian operator MVM and the Russian fuel company TVEL, it would be a clear infringement. The Commission has to intervene and make sure that this waste stays in Hungary and subject to EU safety standards."

Hungarian Greens/EFA MEP **Javor Benedek** concluded:

"Transporting and dumping this dangerous waste in one of the world's most polluted areas - in Mayak, Russia - is completely unacceptable. The Hungarian government is under pressure, as the original lifespan of the 2nd block at the Paks nuclear power plant, where the waste is currently stored, runs out in September 2014. As it is planned to expand the lifetime of the reactor, the authorities are trying to deal with this problem very quickly. This cannot be a reason for taking an unacceptable risk by transporting this dangerous waste through an instable state. Instead, the Hungarian government should take this episode as a wake-up call that the inherent and unacceptable risks linked to nuclear power should be a clear reason not to pursue any development in the sector. This means dropping the plan to build two new blocks at the Paks plant."

(1) The nuclear fuel was damaged during a nuclear incident that occurred 2003 in Unit 2 of the Paks

nuclear power plant. The Hungarian authorities plan to transport it to the Russian nuclear site Mayak for reprocessing but without planning for any return.

(2) Notably, the European network Nuclear Transparency Watch.

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Michèle Rivasi

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