



**KOMMUNENES INTERNASJONALE MILJØORGANISASJON
LOCAL AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL
ORGANISATION**

PRESS RELEASE

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Proposed Ultra Hazardous Radioactive Cargoes near European Coastlines Present Terrorist Targets

North Sea Ministers Treat Coastal Communities as Second Class Citizens

North Sea Ministers who will meet in Goteborg, Sweden next week (May 4 & 5) are being asked to tighten up safety and security arrangements with regard to the transportation of Ultra Hazardous Radioactive Cargoes near coastal communities.

A recent report compiled by KIMO, which represents coastal authorities representing over 6 million coastal inhabitants around northern Europe, has highlighted that European coastal communities are being treated as second class citizens as compared to other communities such as Japan when it comes to the transport of ultra hazardous radioactive cargoes. Future shipments of MOX in Europe are expected to be transported in a single hulled, singled engine ex-roll on roll off ferry that has less security infrastructure on board than those ships used in Japanese shipments.

The first four mixed-oxide (MOX) assemblies, which were fabricated in the Sellafield MOX Plant (SMP) were shipped to Swiss utility Nordostschweizerische Kraftwerke (NOK) in the spring of 2005, marking the start of a series of MOX and plutonium dioxide transports from the U.K. to mainland Europe.¹ Traditionally MOX has been transported to and from Japan using purpose built vessels. However as the Atlantic Osprey was used for the Swiss shipment it is likely that MOX shipments to Sweden, scheduled for next year, and possibly other destinations in Europe will use the same vessel.

The route will pass close to one of the most densely populated areas in the world and will cross some of the busiest shipping lanes, therefore increasing the potential for collision and making it easier for a potential terrorist attack. Possible routes to Sweden include; through the English Channel and the North Sea, the Irish Sea, or west of Ireland into the North East Atlantic Ocean; all of which pass through oilfields and/or fishing grounds and sensitive eco systems.

¹ Nuclear Fuel / Volume 30 / Issue 12 / June 6, 2005
First SMP-made MOX assemblies delivered to NOK

The lack of emergency planning in the event of a marine accident involving nuclear material; the questionable integrity of the flasks used to transport nuclear fuel; and evidence that ship borne fires last longer on average and at a more intense heat than the safety criteria used in flask stress tests are major issues for the organisation who have been campaigning for higher standards for many years. The question of liability and compensation in the event of a nuclear accident at sea is also a major concern.

KIMO International President Councillor Angus Nicolson stated,

“KIMO remains convinced that the transport of nuclear materials should be halted and that such materials should be stored at the point of production. However should these shipments go ahead North Sea Ministers should be insisting that the same standard of ship and security arrangements are in place to protect their citizens.

This means that the Best Available Technology (BAT) should be applied to the ships and flasks used in European shipments and should be at least to the same standard to the ships that are used for MOX shipments to Japan. The arrangements surrounding these proposed European shipments are flawed and second rate. We are asking North Sea Ministers to take national action to ensure that their national pollution and security plans take into account a nuclear accident near the coast and that these shipments should be escorted by the own naval ships for protection. These are actions which they can commit to themselves with breaking any international regulations.

It is absolutely irresponsible in this day and age where we are requiring super tankers carrying oil to have double hulls to protect our marine environment that these dangerous cargoes are being transported in an ex roll on roll off ferry with a single engine and single hull through some of the most populated areas of Europe with little or no security.

KIMO stresses that if an attack by terrorists succeeds in an incident involving a severe long-term fire, breaching shipping casks and/or sinking a nuclear transport vessel, the consequences would be comparable to the most severe accident that authorities insist is too improbable to be considered.”

The full report is available on the KIMO website www.kimointernational.org

KIMO International President Councillor Angus Nicolson and other KIMO representatives will be available during the Ministerial Meeting.

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