



KIMO RESOLUTION 6/01

Presented by KIMO UK

ELIMINATION OF INPUTS OF RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES INTO THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT AND THE SELLAFIELD REPROCESSING PLANT

In 1998 all the Signatories to the OSPAR Convention for the prevention of marine pollution in the North East Atlantic agreed on progressive and substantial reductions of radioactive discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances, with the ultimate aim of concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring radioactive substances and close to zero for artificial radioactive substances.

All contracting states, including the states with reprocessing industries, namely France and the UK, agreed that discharges, emissions and losses of radioactive substances are reduced by the year 2020 to levels where the additional concentrations in the marine environment above historic levels, resulting from such discharges, emissions and losses, are close to zero.

In addition the OSPAR states noted the concerns expressed by a number of Contracting Parties about increases in technetium-99 discharges from Sellafield and their view that these discharges should cease.

At the OSPAR 2000 annual meeting OSPAR Decision 2000/1 was adopted calling for a review of all discharges from reprocessing plants with a view to implementing the 'non-reprocessing option' for spent nuclear fuel, i.e. dry storage.

At OSPAR 2001 several contracting states called for an immediate reduction in the technetium-99 discharge authorisation levels at Sellafield to the level that existed before it was increased substantially. Continued concerns were expressed at technetium-99 discharges from Sellafield, levels of which have increased six-fold since 1996 along the Norwegian coast and which a recent study found increased levels in the Barents Sea and other northern seas.

OSPAR 2001 agreed that the review of discharge authorisations from reprocessing plants, with a view to implementing the non-reprocessing option for spent fuel, which was adopted as policy in 2000 should be carried out "as a matter of urgency". The UK, France and Switzerland abstained from the vote. (OSPAR Decision 2001/1)

Against this background of this international concern over the widespread pollution caused by radioactive discharges from Sellafield, there are now new

fears that radioactive discharges from Sellafield will increase over the next three years according to British Nuclear Fuels documents. Some discharges will increase either two-fold or four-fold, peaking in time for the next meeting of at the OSPAR 2003 Environment Ministers Meeting. The increased discharges fly in the face of commitments made by the UK to reduce radioactive discharges at the 1998 Ministerial Meeting.

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Having regard that radioactive discharges present a real threat to communities around Northern Seas and that Northern Seas communities all rely on clean seas - and a public perception of clean seas - for their seafood, tourist and agricultural industries,

Having concerns for the increasing discharges of radioactive wastes from Europe's nuclear reprocessing plants, in particular Sellafield and discharges of technetium-99,

Having regard for the views of the majority of Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Convention that the 'non-reprocessing option' should be adopted for spent nuclear fuel,

Agrees to,

(1) Support the efforts of the Contracting Parties to the OSPAR Convention in reducing radioactive discharges all radioactive discharges to 'close to zero' by 2020

(2) Support the calls by the majority of OSPAR Contracting Parties for the adoption of the 'non-reprocessing option' for spent nuclear fuel

(3) Support the concerns over existing and the proposed increased discharges from Sellafield, in particular discharges of technetium-99

(4) Call on all Northern Sea States to take all possible actions to support the above aims

(5) submit this Resolution to all National Government, the European Commission and other relevant agencies

*This Resolution was agreed unanimously by Delegates at the 11th KIMO International Annual General Meeting in Göteborg, Sweden on October 14th 2001 and became KIMO policy upon that date.