



DET KONGELIGE  
MILJØVERNDEPARTEMENT

*Royal Ministry of the Environment  
The Minister*

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Secretary of State Chris Huhne  
Department of Energy & Climate Change  
Whitehall Place  
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United Kingdom

Your ref

Our ref

Date

18 MAR 2011

Norway appreciates the long-standing and constructive dialogue that we have with the United Kingdom on Sellafield. The potential consequences for Norway should an accident occur at this plant is a matter of concern for Norwegian politicians as well as the general public. I would therefore like to take this occasion to update you on some of the issues at hand, as seen from our side.

The Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority has recently released a report describing the possible environmental consequences for Norway in the event of a hypothetical accident at Sellafield. The report has already been sent to British authorities, and a copy is attached here for your information.

The scenario considered involves an explosion and fire at the storage facility for liquid high level waste at Sellafield, resulting in 1 % of the total inventory of such waste being released to the atmosphere with a subsequent air transport and deposition in Norway. Based on a typical and realistic weather scenario, the estimated fallout of radioactive Caesium would be 7 times higher than the fallout in Norway from the Chernobyl accident. The predicted consequences are severe – especially in connection to sheep and goat production.

Given the potential consequences for Norway of an accident at Sellafield, your plans for

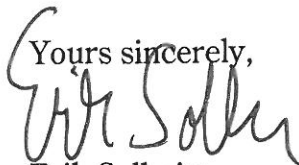
risk reduction at the plant are of great interest for us. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has issued a new draft strategy for the civil nuclear estate of the United Kingdom, which was subject to public consultations last autumn. We hope that this strategy will address the need to minimise the pollution risk to our territories in the case of an accident or incident. In this context, the inventory of liquid high level waste at Sellafield is the key issue.

I have noted with concern that the new draft strategy provides no targets, and describes no measures to ensure quick reduction of this major hazard. To provide the necessary direction, it would be useful if the strategy was made more concrete, with firm targets for the reduction of the volume of liquid high level waste, and a plan for implementing necessary incentives to ensure that those targets are met. I would also urge you to consider a moratorium on further reprocessing until the present inventory has been made passively safe. I enclose a copy of our response to the consultation for your information.

I am keen to further the ongoing constructive dialogue that has been established between key parties in Norway and the United Kingdom. The next major meeting will take place in Lofoten on 12-13 April this year. We are pleased that authorities and key parties from the United Kingdom will be represented here, including the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate, the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority, Nuclear Management Partners and Sellafield Ltd. At this meeting, we hope that your authorities will be ready to offer an update on your efforts and further plans to reduce the risks posed by liquid high level waste stored at Sellafield. In particular, it would be useful to hear more about how this issue will be addressed in the new strategy for your civil nuclear estate, and the possibility for a moratorium on reprocessing until the present inventory of liquid high level waste has been made passively safe.

I will visit the Sellafield plant myself on April 7<sup>th</sup>. I hope that we can also find a suitable occasion soon to discuss this issue bilaterally in more detail.

Yours sincerely,



Erik Solheim

**2 attachments**