



PRESS RELEASE

Copenhagen, Aarhus and Hurup, 16 March 2015

Danish Decommissioning and The Danish Ministry of Health cancel participation in international nuclear waste conference

Tuesday, March 24th, six green NGOs hold an international conference in The Common Hall (Fællessalen) in the Danish parliament building, Christiansborg, in Copenhagen. The subject of the conference is the environmental and safety impacts of the planned Danish final repository project for low and intermediate level radioactive waste from Risø National Laboratory. This project is still on the political agenda, although the time perspective for the political decisions has been slightly changed. Lately, the final repository project has been criticised by international experts and authorities in other countries and during the conference, some of the most prominent of these critics from Öko-Institut in Germany and The Swedish NGO Office for Nuclear Waste Review will get a chance to express their opinions. Present will also be some of the leading political decision-makers in this field and representatives of the municipalities designated to potentially host the final repository, and citizens groups against nuclear waste in these communities.

However, Danish Decommissioning (DD) and the Interdepartmental Working Group on the Establishment of a Final Repository for Low- and Intermediate Level Radioactive Waste that are responsible for the existing final repository project have now informed us that they have cancelled their participation in the conference.

For one and a half one month, the organisers of the conference have corresponded with DD and The Interdepartmental Working group in order to get them to meet up with their international critics and present and discuss their different views. Initially, DD only wanted a so-called dialogue meeting behind closed doors instead of an open conference. Here, the public, the various stakeholders, the press and the political decision-makers would not be allowed to attend. Obviously, the organisers could not accept this proposal, although we would consider any proposal from DD and The Interdepartmental Working Group regarding the composition of the conference program.

Then, The Interdepartmental Working Group informed us that a dialogue meeting behind closed doors would be a precondition for DD's and The Working Group's participation in the conference at Christiansborg. The meeting was scheduled for today at the offices of the Danish Health Ministry. However, Thursday last week The Working Group cancelled their participation in the conference as well as in the dialogue meeting. The reason we were given was that a final repository for the nuclear waste was now off the political agenda. When this turned out to be wrong, we were told that the political choice between an interim storage facility and a final repository would be made a year from now. If we still wanted a conference, we should have it then. Then DD and The Interdepartmental Working Group would participate.

"We are deeply disappointed and regret that DD and The Interdepartmental Working Group do not participate in the nuclear waste conference at Christiansborg", says Palle Bendsen from NOAH Friends of The Earth Denmark's Uranium Group. "The conference is just as relevant as it always were, because the choice between an interim storage facility and a final repository is still on the political agenda. We don't understand the reason that the responsible authorities have given us for not participating. They say that a public technical and scientific debate on the final repository is irrelevant, because the political decision is a year from now. But if we follow that logic, it would not make sense to have a public debate on an interim storage facility either".

"The organisers deeply regret the way that the experts from Öko-Institut and The Swedish NGO Office for Nuclear Waste Review have been treated" says Hans Pedersen from SustainableEnergy. "Among those who have commissioned opinions from Öko-Institut's Division on Nuclear Engineering and Facility Safety are The European Commission, The European Parliament, EURATOM, OECD and in Germany a long series of federal and state ministries. I think that a lot of people are wondering what just happened. But the worst thing is that it will now be more difficult to have a free, open and democratic debate between the public, the different stakeholders, the press and the politicians who have to make the decision what to do with the Danish radioactive waste".

Presentation by Gerhard Schmidt, senior researcher at Öko-Institut, for the cancelled dialogue meeting (not to mistake for his presentation for the conference at Christiansborg, where he is keynote speaker): <http://noah.dk/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Selected-aspects-of-the-Danish-repository-program.pdf>

Öko-Institut's working paper on the Danish final repository project: <http://noah.dk/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/Press-release-Oeko-Institut-working-paper.pdf>

Updated conference program and registration (free of charge): <http://noah.dk/atomaffaldskonference/>

The conference has been cut short an hour. The conference language is English and Danish. The organisers of the conference are NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark, SustainableEnergy, Society for Green Technology / Danish Society of Engineers, Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy, Greenpeace Denmark and The Danish Ecological Council.

For further information, please contact:

NOAH Friends of the Earth Denmark's Uranium Group: Palle Bendsen, tel.: +45 30 13 76 95, E-mail: palleat@bendsen.dk and Niels Henrik Hooge, Tel.: +45 21 83 79 94, E-mail: nh_hooge@yahoo.dk
Homepage: www.noah.dk

SustainableEnergy: Hans Pedersen, Tel.: +45 51 92 24 14, pedersen@ve.dk Homepage: www.ve.dk

Society for Green Technology / Danish Society of Engineers: Michael Søjgaard Jørgensen, Tel.: +45 99 40 29 67, (Mob.) +45 21 25 68 15, E-mail: msjo@plan.aau.dk Homepage: <http://ida.dk/netvaerk/fag/energi-miljoe-og-uland/selskabet-groen-teknologi-0>

Nordic Folkecenter for Renewable Energy: Jane Kruse, Tel.: +45 97 95 66 00, (Mob.) +45 40 60 45 51, E-mail: jk@folkecenter.dk Homepage: www.folkecenter.dk

Greenpeace Denmark: Tarjei Haaland, Tel.: +45 33 37 63 94, (Mob.) +45 28 10 90 53, E-mail: [tarjei.haaland\(at\)greenpeace.org](mailto:tarjei.haaland(at)greenpeace.org) Homepage: <http://www.greenpeace.org/denmark/da/>

The Danish Ecological Council: Christian Ege, Tel.: +45 33 18 19 33, (Mob.) +45 28 58 06 98, E-mail: [christian\(at\)ecocouncil.dk](mailto:christian(at)ecocouncil.dk) Homepage: www.ecocouncil.dk

Öko-Institut e.V. (<http://www.oeko.de>): Gerhard Schmidt, Tel.: +49-(0)6151-8191-107, (Mob.): +49-(0)175-183 4118, e-mail: [g.schmidt\(at\)oeko.de](mailto:g.schmidt(at)oeko.de)

The Swedish NGO Office for Nuclear Waste Review, MKG: Dr. Johan Swahn, Tel.: +46 (0)31-711 00 92 (Mob.): +46 (0)70-467 37 31, E-mail: [johan.swahn\(at\)mkg.se](mailto:johan.swahn(at)mkg.se) Website: <http://www.mkg.se/en/welcome-to-the-swedish-ngo-office-for-nuclear-waste-review-mkg>