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INTRODUCTION

„Taking into account the results already achieved, the expected technological developments in the coming years, and above all the existence of a well-established basis for the assessment in numerical terms of radiation hazards, the group are convinced that the optimum development of nuclear energy need not be impeded by radioactive waste management problems which will have to be dealt with“.

This quote is from the OECD report „Radioactive waste management practices in Western Europe“. It is not from the most recent report, although the wording would be the same, but from a report in 1972!

Since the beginning of nuclear power the major claim is that there will be a solution for nuclear waste soon, that the waste problem really is not a technical problem but a social problem, but, anyway, we are near a solution. So there is no reason to stop producing it or endanger the future of nuclear energy.

But as the authors describe in this worldwide overview, non of the roughly 34 countries with spent fuel (reprocessed or not) from nuclear power reactors have a final disposal facility, be it in deep geological formations or (near) surface. A very large majority of those countries are not even close. Some postpone the need for final disposal by long term interim storage of up to 100 years; and other countries use (the future option of) reprocessing as an alibi for postponing that decision.

As this worldwide overview of the state of affairs shows, siting radioactive waste repositories is seen as one of the main problems due to socio-political circumstances. Almost without exception, all radioactive waste management programs state that this generation must solve its own problems and not lay the burden of solving the waste problem on the next generations. But those same programs propose, again almost without exception, to postpone a decision on final disposal and/or reprocessing into the far-future, and consider interim storage.

Fact is that the problem of final disposal of high-level radioactive waste and/or spent fuel has not been solved, more than half a century after the first commercial nuclear power plants entered into operation and used fuel was unloaded from the reactors.

Although we briefly describe the storage and disposal of low and intermediate level waste, the focus of this report is clearly on spent (or 'used') fuel from nuclear power plants. Waste from uranium mining is not even mentioned. It is also not about fuel from research reactors, which is mostly returned to the country of origin.

Table 1;

Final disposal repository for HLW or SF; expected start of disposal.

Country	... in 1989	... in 1996	... in 2012
Argentina			2060
Armenia			?
Belgium	2030	2035	2070/80
Brazil			?
Bulgaria			?
Canada	2015/25	2025	2035
China			2050
Czech Republic			2065
Finland	2020	2020	2020/25
France	2010	2020	2025
Germany	2005/10	2010	2035
Hungary			2064
India			?
Iran			?
Italy			?
Japan			2035
Kazakhstan			?
Korea, Rep. of			?
Lithuania			?
Mexico			?
Netherlands	2010		2130
Pakistan			?
Romania			?
Russian Federation			2035
Slovak Republic			?
Slovenia			?
South Africa			?
Spain			2050
Sweden	2020	2020	2023/25
Switzerland	2025	2020	2040
Taiwan			2055
Ukraine			?
United Kingdom		2030	2075
United States	2010	2020	?

Because the limitations of the number of pages of the Nuclear Monitor, this is only a brief overview of the state of affairs, but some important historic developments are covered.

We have included many references, which should make it easier to search for more information. We did not include the url's of the references, because they tend to change frequently (and not much so annoying as dead links). Instead, we described the source as best as we could. Therefore it should be relatively easy to find it on the internet when the description is copied in a search engine. Of course, not all information used is available online. If there are questions about a reference (or something else), please do not hesitate to contact us.