

**RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMMES IN OECD/NEA MEMBER COUNTRIES**

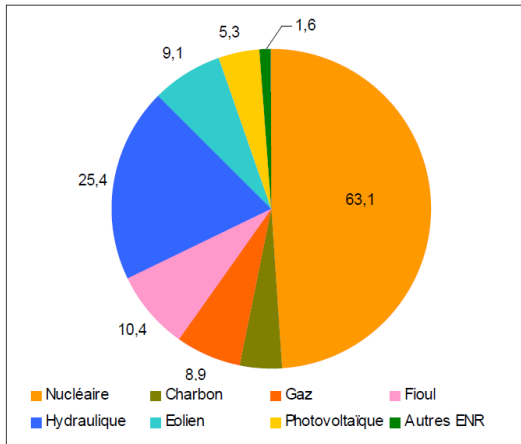
**FRANCE  
[2016]**

**Nuclear Energy & Radioactive Waste Management**

**NATIONAL NUCLEAR ENERGY CONTEXT**

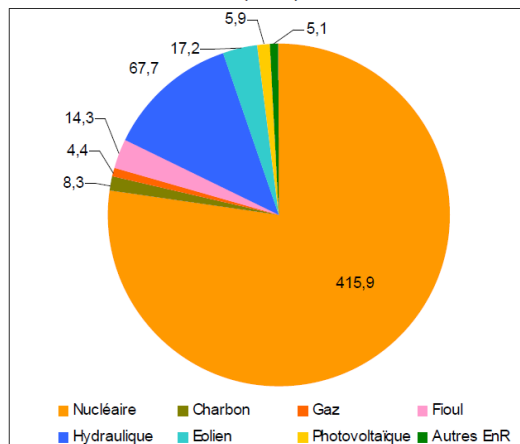
Commercial utilisation of nuclear power in France started in 1959 and by 2011 there were 58 electronuclear reactors (run by EdF, the French utility), meaning 129 GW of installed power. In 2014, they generated 415.9 TWh of net electricity, representing 77% of the total electricity production.

**Fig. 1 : Puissance installée en France au 31/12/2014 (GW)**



Source : DGEC à partir du bilan électrique 2014 de RTE

**Fig. 2 : Production d'électricité en France en 2014 (TWh)**



Source : DGEC à partir des données du SOeS

*Installed electrical power (left) and electricity production (right) in France by origin (2014)*

The last nuclear power plant (NPP) to be commissioned was the Civaux NPP (with its two 1540 MWe N4-type reactors connected to the electricity grid in 1999). The average availability factor of French nuclear power plants is around 80%.

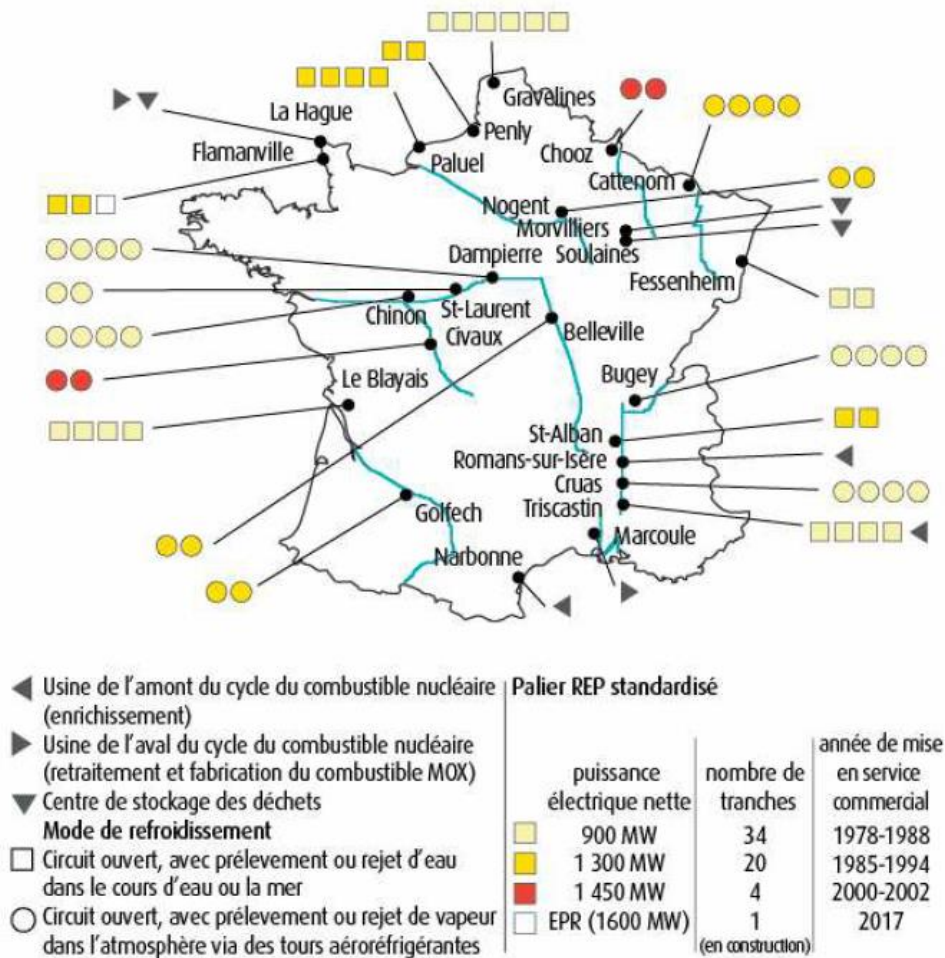
As far as new NPP development is concerned, EdF was granted in 2006 a building licence for

an EPR type reactor to be sited at Flamanville (near the two currently existing PWRs). Construction is under way and commissioning is expected by 2017 according to EDF.

The current capacities for nuclear fuel fabrication are 750 tonnes heavy metal per year (HM/year) of uranium fuel for light water reactors and 140 tonnes HM/year of mixed oxide (MOX) fuel also for use in light water reactors. Spent fuel storage capacity is 24,450 tonnes HM, and the yearly amount of spent fuel is approximately 1,135 tonnes HM.

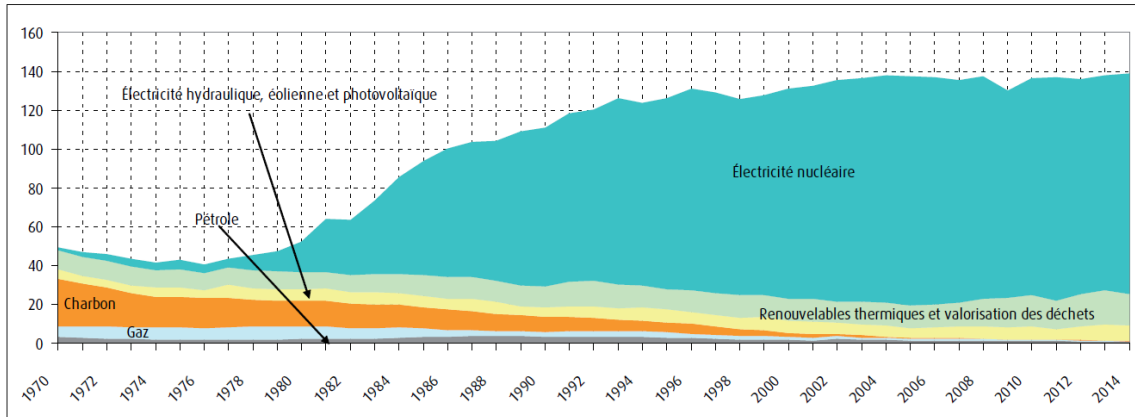
In France, spent nuclear fuel is not considered as ultimate waste and is reprocessed for recovery of reusable materials. Commercial reprocessing is carried out at the La Hague plant operated by AREVA. The two facilities at this plant have the combined capacity to reprocess up to 1,700 tonnes HM/year of spent fuel and they supply commercial services to national and foreign customers.

**Fig. 3 : Les sites nucléaires en France au 30 juin 2015**



Source : SOeS

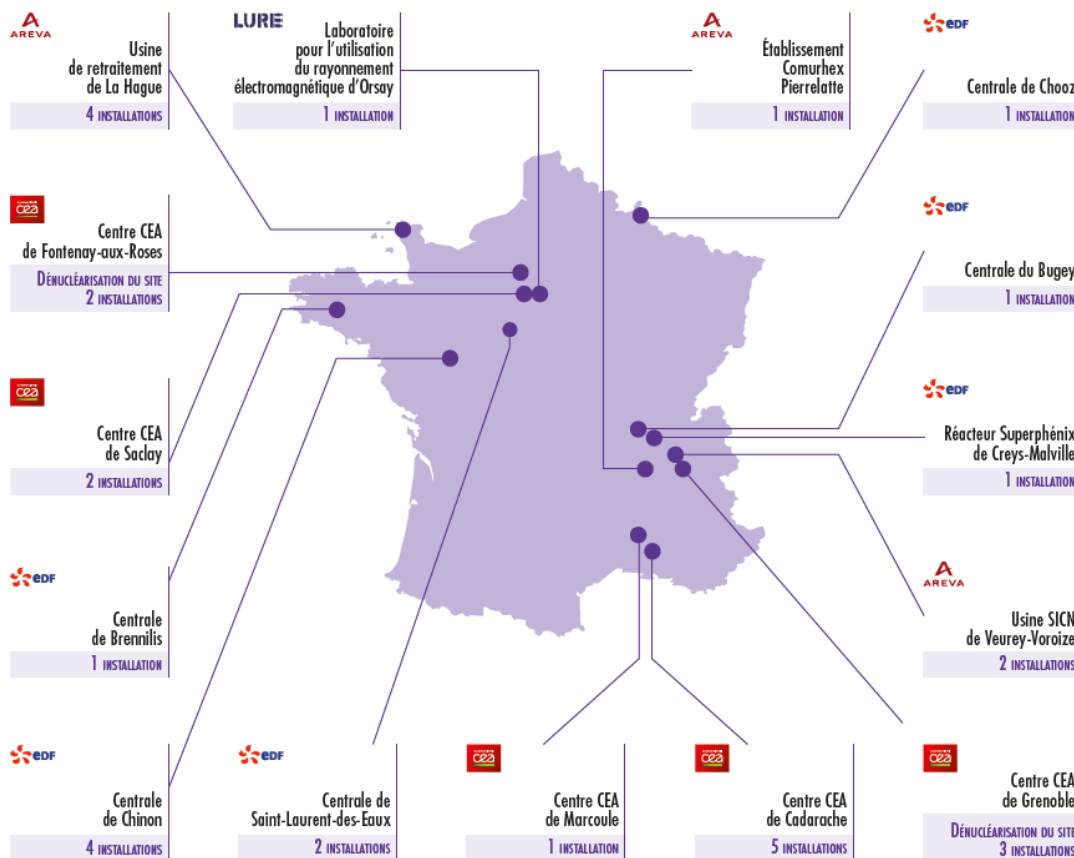
Map of nuclear facilities in France (Status in June 2015)



Source : calculs SOeS, d'après les sources par énergie

Evolution of gross electricity production in France among years (Source DGEC)

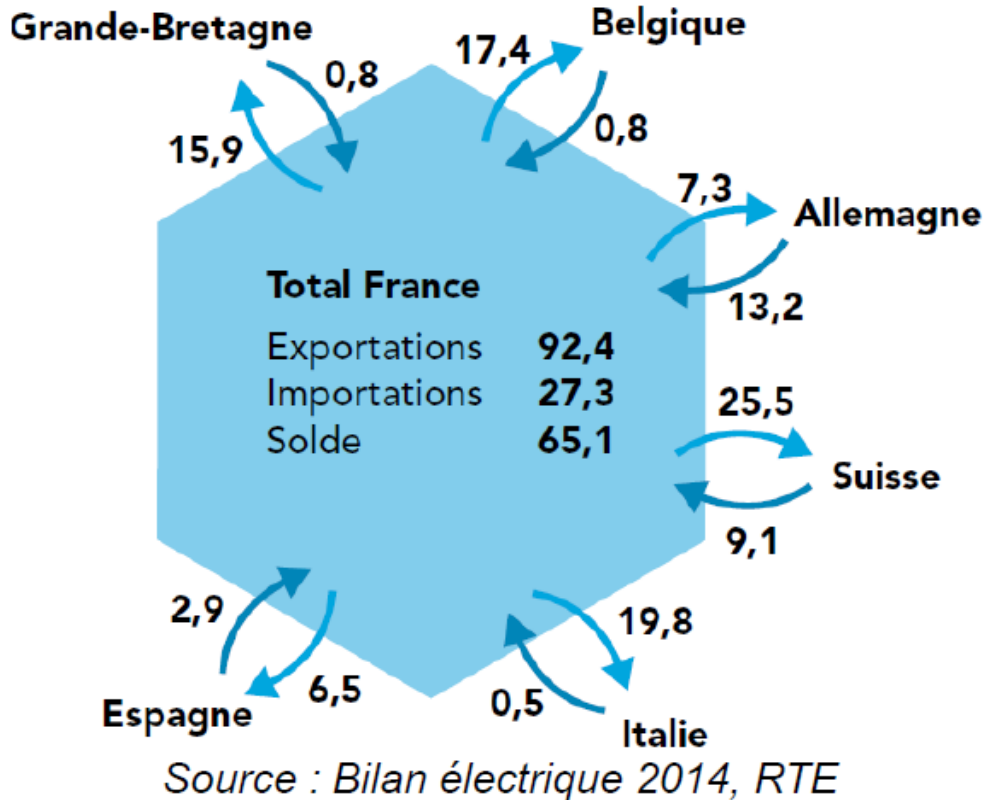
LES INSTALLATIONS à l'arrêt définitif ou en cours de démantèlement en 2014



Map of decommissioned or being decommissioned nuclear facilities in France (Status in 2014 – source ASN)

Out of the total electricity production, the balance between importation and exportation is quite positive (source DGEC) in terms of physical exportation but it is negative in terms of contracts with Germany (see 2<sup>nd</sup> figure below).

**Fig. 7 : Bilan des échanges contractuels en 2014 (TWh)**



Balance of exchanges with neighbouring countries in 2014 (source DGEC)

**SOURCES, TYPES AND QUANTITIES OF WASTE**

Most of the radioactive waste in France is generated as a result of electricity production. The remainder arises from the use of radioactive materials in medical, research, defence and industrial applications. To meet the requirements for its safe management, waste classification considers four categories according to activity level. Then each waste category is subdivided according to half-lives of the radio-nuclides it contains as shown on the figure below.

Half-life Activity	Very short lifetime Half-life < 100 days	Short lifetime Half-life ≤ 31 years <sup>(1)</sup>	Long lifetime Half-life > 31 years <sup>(1)</sup>
Very low level	Stored to allow radioactive decay on the production site then disposed of adopting conventional solutions.	Surface disposal facility (Very-low-level waste disposal facility in north-eastern France (Aube))	
Low level		Surface disposal facility (Low- and intermediate-level waste disposal facility in north-eastern France (Aube)) <sup>(2)</sup>	Near-surface disposal facility <sup>(3)</sup> studied in accordance with Article 4 of the Planning Act of 28 June 2006 on the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste.
Intermediate level			Deep disposal facility <sup>(4)</sup> studied in accordance with Article 3 of the Planning Act of 28 June 2006 on the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste.
High level		Deep disposal facility <sup>(4)</sup> studied in accordance with Article 3 of the Planning Act of 28 June 2006 on the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste.	

(1) The half-life of caesium-137, which is 30.07 years, marks the boundary between the notion of short-lived and long-lived. This figure is rounded up to the nearest whole number in the table for the sake of simplicity.

(2) The LILW disposal facility has taken over from the CSM disposal facility (Manche), which was closed in 1994.

(3) Near-surface means between the surface and a depth of 200 metres. A search is currently underway to find sites suitable for a new LLW-LL disposal facility.

(4) Deep disposal means at a depth of more than 200 metres. Andra is working on a repository project in the 250-square-kilometre transposition zone defined around the Meuse/Haute-Marne underground laboratory in 2005. The aim is to dispose of high-level and intermediate-level, long-lived waste in a single repository in a clay layer (Callovo-Oxfordian) 500 metres below the surface.

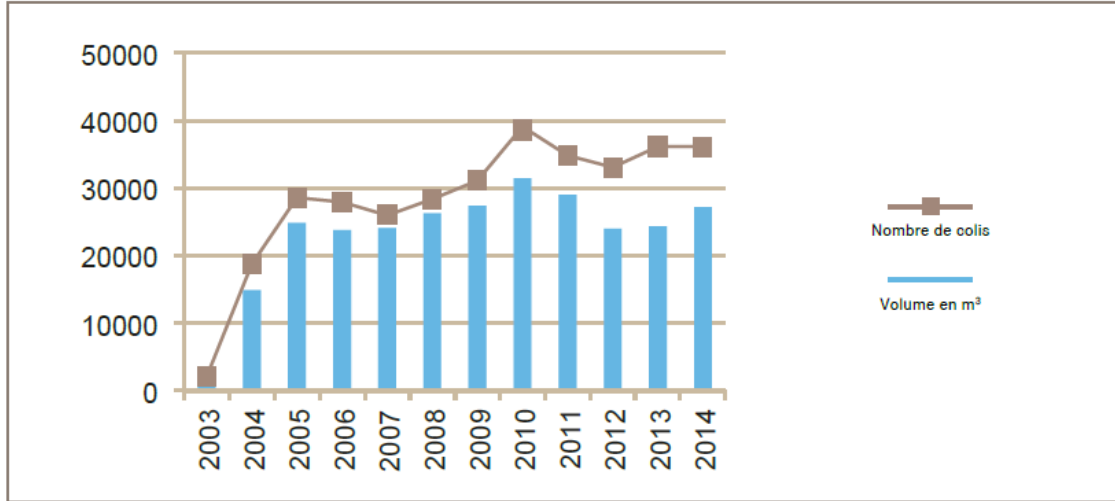
Starting by the lowest levels of activity, these four categories are: very low-level waste (VLLW), low-level waste (LLW), intermediate-level waste (ILW) and high-level waste (HLW). For each of these four categories, a further distinction is made between the waste containing radio-nuclides with a short half-life (less than 31 years) and those with a long half-life (more than 31 years). The very specific case of very-short-lived waste, mainly medical use, (Half-life below 100 days) is not considered in this document as it is managed through radioactive decay and then disposed of as current waste.

The rate of generation of VLLW is estimated to range from 15,000 to 40,000 m<sup>3</sup>/year for the next 10 years (which means an average of 25,000 t/year). This waste contains various radio-nuclides and has an average activity of around 10 Bq/g. It is disposed of in a recent surface repository (commissioned in 2003), the CIRES (previously called CSTFA but since 2012 with extended activities in terms of grouping & sorting & storage), located at Morvilliers, a few kilometres from the existing CSA (previously called CSFMA) disposal facility (for low- and intermediate-level short-lived radioactive waste) in the Aube department. This repository has an initial total capacity of 650,000 m<sup>3</sup> and is planned to operate during 30 years, although it may be less since delivered volumes are higher than initially expected (43% of the total volume already filled in 12 years).

The amount of waste disposed of at the CIRES in 2014 was 27,112 m<sup>3</sup> corresponding to 36,153 waste packages and including two Chooz-A reactor steam-generators (meaning four steam-generators in total).

At the end of 2014 and since its commissioning in 2003, the CIRES has disposed of 278,873 m<sup>3</sup> (341,937 waste packages) corresponding to 43% of the total capacity of 650,000 m<sup>3</sup>.

#### Evolution du stockage depuis 2003



#### Evolution of the waste volume and number of packages disposed of in the CIRES since 2003 (source: Andra)

Since late 2012, two other activities of the CIRES have been commissioned:

- Grouping and sorting of waste produced by small-scale nuclear activities (non-electronuclear), with, when relevant, shipment to installations for incineration or treatment
- Storage of radioactive waste produced by small-scale nuclear activities (non-electronuclear), when there is no available final solution.

Also in order to perform also treatment and conditioning of such waste, an extension of the grouping & sorting workshop was licenced in 2015 and construction is underway for a commissioning planned by beginning 2016;

The short-lived LLW and ILW waste are disposed of in engineered, surface disposal structures at the CSA disposal facility, located at Soulaines-Dhuys in the Aube department. Most of this waste is originated either by the electronuclear industry (EDF, AREVA, cycle front-end) and the CEA, while the remainder, with 3% comes from “small-scale nuclear” activities such as hospitals, universities, industry and sometimes private individuals (the so-called “house-hold” radioactive waste with legacy items such as former needles or radium fountains, etc).

The amount of waste disposed of at the CSA facility in 2014 was 11,803 m<sup>3</sup> corresponding to 10,704 waste packages. In 2014, 2 pressure-vessels heads were disposed of (which means that since 2004, a total of 53 pressure-vessel heads were delivered and disposed of). As well, in 2014, 14 lateral neutron protection panels (PNL) from Creys-Malville fast breeder reactor (Superphenix) were disposed of.

At the end of 2014 and since its commissioning in 1992, the CSA has disposed of 291,975 m<sup>3</sup> (357,107 waste packages) corresponding to 29 % of the total capacity of 1,000,000 m<sup>3</sup>.

The management of long-lived LLW (especially radium-bearing waste and graphite waste) was the subject of disposal studies performed by Andra, which have been postponed following socio-political siting problems in 2009. Long-lived ILW is presently kept in at the sites where it is generated, awaiting the availability of a dedicated disposal facility. Following an expression of interest expressed by the group of municipalities where the CIRES and CSA are already located, a preliminary geological siting campaign has been launched to assess the feasibility and characterise the local geology (see the French National Plan for the Management of Radioactive Materials and Waste 2013-2015: <http://www.french-nuclear-safety.fr/Information/Publications/Others-ASN-reports/French-National-Plan-for-the-Management-of-Radioactive-Materials-and-Waste-2013-2015> ).

HLW arising from spent fuel reprocessing is vitrified. The resulting canisters are stored in dedicated facilities at the production sites, at La Hague and Marcoule. They will remain there for a few decades, until their disposal. The related vitrified HLW production to be derived from French reactors spent fuel is about 700 glass canisters per year out of the La Hague plant as the Marcoule plant has stopped its reprocessing activity.

Spent fuel (with the exception of spent fuel from research and National Defence reactors), as it contains recoverable materials, is not considered as final waste according to the French regulation and, as such, is not disposed of.

### **Quantities of waste presently in interim storage facilities**

The volume of radioactive waste in interim storage facilities at the end of 2013 (Source: National Inventory issued in 2015<sup>1</sup>), by main individual category, was as follows:

- Short-lived ILW (tritiated waste): 5,900 m<sup>3</sup>;
- Long-lived ILW: 44,000 m<sup>3</sup>;
- HLW: 3,200 m<sup>3</sup>.

These figures exclude any waste either originating from a foreign country or arising from the reprocessing of foreign spent fuel, which, in compliance with the Environment Code, is to be returned to the foreign owners after the necessary storage period.

They also exclude long-lived LLW containing radium and graphite, which amounts by end 2013 at 91,000 m<sup>3</sup>. This last figure does not consider the future graphite from former UNGG (natural-uranium gas-graphite) reactors which have not been yet dismantled; radium-bearing waste (originating mainly from chemical industry dealing with rare earths) needs as well to be taken into account. The total volume of this type of Long-lived LLW once conditioned can be expected to reach approximately 120,000 m<sup>3</sup> by 2030 (see next page).

### **Radioactive waste inventory**

An observatory of radioactive waste in France has been published on a yearly basis by Andra from 1993 until 2003. This observatory listed all the sites on which radioactive waste was present, including contaminated sites.

In 1999, the government decided to widen the objectives of this inventory by including the so-

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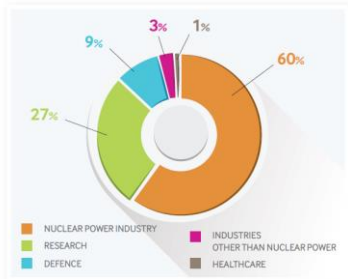
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.inventaire.andra.fr/?gclid=CNC256fLlcoCFWXkkgodIsAI7Q>

called committed (or pending) waste and all recoverable radioactive materials. The first edition of this inventory, to be updated every 3 years, was issued in 2004 with the status of radioactive waste and recoverable materials at end 2002 and a prospective forecast until 2020. The latest version of this inventory was issued in 2015 with the status at end 2013 and prospective forecast until 2020, 2030 and up to the end of the nuclear facilities operation.

Volumes of radioactive waste produced by end 2013 (and their distribution) and expected quantities by 2020, 2030 and up to the end of the nuclear facilities operation are shown in the tables below. This is based on the following assumptions:

- An average operating life of 50 years for all reactors
- Start of dismantling operations and LL-LL graphite waste production by around 2025
- Reprocessing of all spent fuel production (some 1 000 tonnes HM/year).

► BREAKDOWN OF TOTAL WASTE VOLUME BY INDUSTRY



► BREAKDOWN BY VOLUME AND RADIOACTIVITY LEVEL OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE PRESENT AT THE END OF 2013



### Volume and activity breakdown by economic sector by end 2013 (source: Andra)

► FORECAST OF RADIOACTIVE WASTE VOLUMES (m<sup>3</sup>) AT THE END OF 2020 AND 2030 AND FINAL FORECASTS ACCORDING TO WASTE HOLDER SCENARIOS

CATEGORY	STOCKS AT END OF 2013	FORECASTS FOR END OF 2020	FORECASTS FOR END OF 2030	FINAL FORECASTS
HLW	3,200	4,100	5,500	10,000
ILW-LL	44,000	48,000	53,000	72,000
LLW-LL	91,000	92,000	120,000	180,000
LILW-SL	880,000	1,000,000	1,200,000	1,900,000
VLLW	440,000	650,000	1,100,000	2,200,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	~ 1,460,000	~1,800,000	~2,500,000	~4,300,000

### Volume by end 2013, 2020, 2030 and up to the end of the operation of all current nuclear facilities (source: Andra)



## **RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES**

### **Waste management policies**

Management of radioactive waste and other industrial waste, is subject to the general legal framework prescribed by article L.541 of the Environment Code (following Act n° 75-633 of 15 July 1975), and the associated decrees about recycling of materials and disposal of waste. The basic principles enshrined in this Environment Code are prevention of waste production, the responsibility of waste producers for their waste until it is safely disposed of, the traceability of waste, and the need for public information. In addition it is only when waste cannot be reused or recycled under current technical and economic conditions that it may be disposed of (concept of final waste).

The underlying concept is that facilities should be designed with all aspects of waste management in mind, from generation to reuse, recycle or safe disposal, and with regard to the interactions between inter-dependent waste management operations. In this way a system may be created that is optimised as part of an overall approach to waste management and which takes account of safety, traceability and volume reduction issues.

As regards the policy for waste management, broad guidelines were set out in article L.542 of the Environment Code, following the Waste Act of 30 December 1991, the Planning Act concerning the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste of 28 June 2006 and the Energy Transition for the Green Growth Act of 17 August 2015, as follows:

- The sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste, resulting notably from the operation and dismantling of nuclear facilities using radioactive sources and materials, shall be carried out with a concern to protect human health, safety and the environment. Relevant means to ensure the final safety of radioactive shall be developed and implemented with a view to preventing and limiting the responsibilities to be borne by future generation. Any producer of spent fuel and of radioactive waste shall be liable for these substances, without any prejudice to the liability of their holders as responsible for nuclear activities;
- Radioactive waste from foreign origin, as for instance arising from the reprocessing of foreign spent fuel, is to be shipped back to the originating country after the technically necessary storage period. It cannot, in any way, be disposed of in France;
- More specifically:
  - A National Radioactive Waste Management Agency, Andra, with the status of commercial and industrial public establishment was created in order to take care of the management of all radioactive waste produced in France<sup>2</sup>; this status gives it more independence from waste producers and places it under the supervision of the ministries for Ecology, Industry and Research;
  - A National Plan for the management of radioactive materials and waste (PNGMDR) is implemented and defines management objectives for waste without an existing disposal system (for instance radium-bearing and graphite

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<sup>2</sup> Reminder: the so-called foreign waste, as for instance waste arising from foreign spent fuel reprocessing, is to be returned abroad according to the French legal framework.

- waste); it is updated every three years (last issue covering the 2013-2015 period<sup>3</sup>, the new one will cover 2016-2018);
- In the specific case of HL and LL-IL waste, 3 three complementary venues with their milestones have been prescribed:
    - Partitioning and transmutation of long-lived radioactive elements, with notably an assessment of industrial prospect by 2012 and a pilot facility by 2020. This venue is entrusted to CEA (a report has been issued at the end of 2012 as notified)
    - Reversible geological disposal with a licence application to be filed by Andra in 2015 and, subject to that licence, a commissioning of the repository expected by 2025;
    - In term of storage, creation or modification of the current facilities by 2015 to meet future requirements. This venue is entrusted to Andra.
  - In terms of financing, it specifies:
    - the provision scheme to be implemented by waste producers with Nuclear Basic Installations (INB status<sup>4</sup>) in order to cover the long-term dismantling and waste management costs and its review by an independent commission;
    - the various additional taxes to be paid by these same waste producers for funding both the R&D carried out by Andra concerning HL and IL-LL waste geological disposal and the outreach scheme for the hosting communities of the current URL and later the possible geological repository.

## Programmes and projects

### Radioactive waste treatment, packaging and tracking

In the interests of optimising the management of short-lived LLW and ILW, both technically and economically, Andra and the waste generators have jointly developed an integrated waste management system that covers all phases of waste processing and conditioning, transportation and disposal. In this context, and for compliance with safety regulations, Andra has a further responsibility to develop technical specifications for waste packages. Under this arrangement, waste generators are required to submit, for Andra's approval, a waste acceptance file on each type of package they plan to produce.

A major component of this integrated waste management system involves tracking the waste from its production through to its final disposal. This is based on a computer network linking waste generators to the Andra headquarters, which records the characteristics of each package, checks compliance, authorises shipment, and then tracks the packages to their final location.

### Radioactive waste disposal facilities

The CSM waste disposal facility located in the Manche department and adjacent to the AREVA La Hague reprocessing plant, was commissioned in 1969 for surface disposal of short-

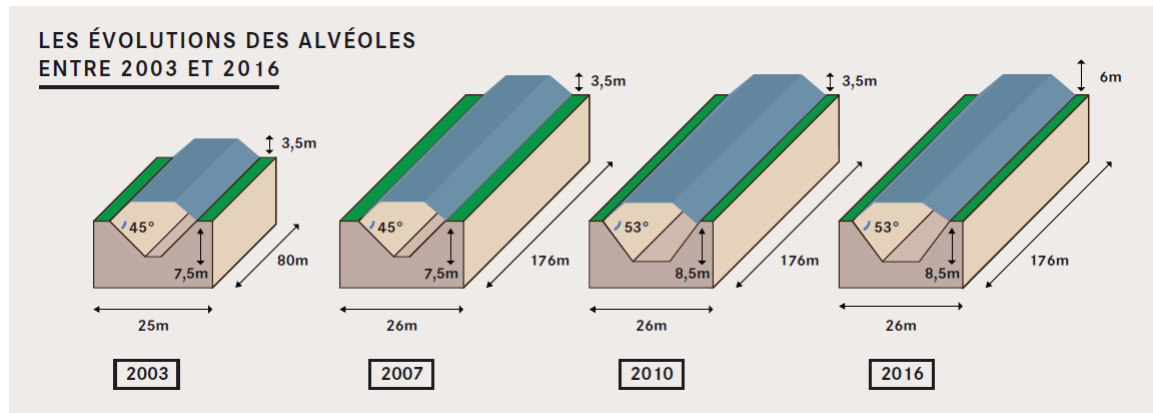
<sup>3</sup> <http://www.french-nuclear-safety.fr/Information/Publications/Others-ASN-reports/French-National-Plan-for-the-Management-of-Radioactive-Materials-and-Waste-2013-2015>

<sup>4</sup> The term « INB » covers basically all major nuclear installations such as commercial or research reactors, nuclear fuel cycle plants and nuclear-related National Defence plants (for the latter the term is INBS).

lived low- and intermediate-level radioactive waste and received 527 000 m<sup>3</sup> of waste up until June 1994 when disposal operations were terminated. It was covered with a multi-layer, engineered cap and has been actively monitored since 1997. In January 2003, it was licensed to enter its post-closure phase of institutional control. The transition from operation to institutional control was the subject of a licensing process similar to that for construction and commissioning of a nuclear installation, including a set of public inquiries

In the mid-1980s, in preparation for closure of the CSM, Andra designed a new surface disposal facility, the CSA, located 250 km east of Paris in the Aube department. Its design took stock of the lessons learnt at the CSM and it was commissioned in January 1992. It comprises waste conditioning facilities and a disposal area covering about thirty hectares. It is licensed to dispose of one million cubic metres of packaged, short-lived LLW and ILW and is expected to meet France's needs until at least 2040.

Andra subsequently proposed creation of a separate surface repository specifically for disposal of VLLW. After all necessary site investigations and public enquiries, the CIRES facility, located at Morvilliers in the Aube department, was commissioned in August 2003. The repository has a capacity for 650 000 m<sup>3</sup> of VLLW and an expected operational lifetime of 30 years. It represents another essential component of France's overall system for radioactive waste management and will accommodate most of the waste resulting from the dismantling of facilities in which radioactive substances have been used. Since its commissioning, Andra has improved the efficiency of the disposal process by optimising progressively the disposal vault design and therefore volume from initially 10 000 m<sup>3</sup> (single vault) to a 25 000 m<sup>3</sup> double-vault design (in 2007) and with now 34 000 m<sup>3</sup> for the last planned vault (deeper and higher double-vault with steeper walls as described below).



CIRES disposal vault evolution from 2003 up to 2016 (source: Andra)

### Development of new disposal systems

Andra is required to carry out investigations with a view to proposing the means for disposal of those waste categories for which no permanent solution currently exists. These include long-lived LLW, such as radium-bearing residues, graphite and tritiated waste. They also include HLW and long-lived ILW.

These projects are carried out according to the objectives and milestones prescribed in the article L.542 of the Environment Code, following the Waste Act of 30 December 1991 and the Planning Act concerning the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste of 28

June 2006 (see § waste management policies). The National Plan for the management of radioactive materials and waste (PNGMDR) has been created to precise and follow up these objectives, with a regular 3-year updating according to research programme results and implementation plans.

The management of long-lived LLW (especially radium-bearing and graphite waste) was the subject of studies performed by Andra. Other waste such as disused sealed sources or bituminous waste could be added to this inventory, meaning a total up to some 151,000 m<sup>3</sup> by 2030. The disposal concepts are based on shallow disposal within a low-permeability clay host-formation at a depth varying from some 15 meters excavated from surface if the formation is outcropping (radium-bearing waste) or down to 200 meters through an underground installation if the formation is deeper (graphite waste).

A call for expression of interest has been launched by mid-2008 to identify volunteering municipalities among some 3000 ones with a potentially suitable geology for shallow disposal. By the deadline of end October 2008, some 40 municipalities did show an interest. On the basis of the Andra report submitted by end 2008 to the Ministry for Ecology and Energy and its review and opinion provided by respectively the regulator (ASN) and the National Assessment Board (CNE), a final selection of two municipalities was proposed by Andra to the Ministry, who endorsed it by mid-2009. But following pressure from opponents, these two municipalities withdraw in the same year and the socio-political process was reviewed. The National Plan for radioactive waste and materials management required Andra to submit by end of 2012 a report on the different technical solutions contemplated for managing the radium bearing waste as well as the graphite waste. Following this report, various sites – including the ones hosting already a BNI (Basic Nuclear Installation) - were identified as potential ones. More specifically, local contacts with the group of municipalities where both CIRES and CSA (Aube department) are located, expressed an interest for this project. Preliminary geological investigations (eg boreholes) have been launched in 2013. As required by the PNGMDR 2013-2015, Andra has submitted by July 2015 an interim report on the feasibility of a shallow disposal of such waste in the vicinity of the CSA-CIRES facilities and which is currently reviewed by the evaluators (ASN, CNE2).

Geological disposal of HLW and long-lived ILW is today Andra's major project. In 2006, at the end 15 year period prescribed by the December 1991 Waste Act and the following the results<sup>5</sup> achieved in 2005 notably through the experimental programme carried out at and around the LSMHM underground research laboratory at Bure (Meuse department), basic feasibility of the reversible geological disposal in the Callovo-Oxfordian argillite near Bure (Meuse department) was confirmed.

As per the Planning Act concerning the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste of 28 June 2006, reversible geological disposal of such waste is now the reference solution and Andra is entrusted to file a licence application for a geological repository (Cigeo project, standing for "Centre industriel de stockage géologique). This application which was initially planned for 2015, is now to be filed by 2018 and, subject to the granting of this licence, repository commissioned is planned towards 2025.

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<sup>5</sup> The results of R&D programme concerning reversible geological disposal in a clay formation were compiled in a report "Dossier 2005 Argile", which was reviewed by the Nuclear Safety Authority (ASN) and its technical support (IRSN), the National Review Board (CNE) and a Group of International Experts under NEA aegis (the latter through a Peer Review process upon the French government's request).

The reversibility issue will be submitted to the Parliament through a bill expected by 2016 and setting up reversibility conditions to be voted before licence granting.

An important phase of the beginning of the Cigéo licencing process was the mandatory national public debate to be held before any file application for such projects and it is worth mentioning its process and its conclusions. It was carried out from May 15<sup>th</sup> until December 15<sup>th</sup>. Following the boycott through perturbations by opponents during the first public meetings, such meetings were cancelled by the Organizing Commission and the debate initially planned to end by September 15<sup>th</sup> (precisely May 15<sup>th</sup> until July 31<sup>st</sup>, then a break in August and from September 1<sup>st</sup> until October 15<sup>th</sup>) was extended until mid-December. The conclusion report which was issued by the Commission in February 2014 is an important input document for the decision-making process. These conclusions were endorsed by a decision of Andra Board of Administrators in May 2014 ([http://www.andra.fr/download/andra-international-en/document/press\\_release/press-release-on-the-cigro-public-debate-follow-up.pdf](http://www.andra.fr/download/andra-international-en/document/press_release/press-release-on-the-cigro-public-debate-follow-up.pdf)) and it did pave the way to the current file application process (see above).

### Andra presents the actions to be taken following the public debate on the Cigéo project.

On Tuesday, 6 May, Andra presented the actions it intends to take following the public debate with regard to the Cigéo project. These decisions were approved unanimously by its Board of Administrators on 5 May. To take account of the opinions and expectations expressed during the debate and to maintain the stepwise approach initiated by the 1991 Law, the Agency has decided to continue the Cigéo project, implementing four new developments, clarifying its proposals on reversibility and making a number of commitments for the future.

To decide on what action to take on the Cigéo project and to present the government with proposals, Andra took the results of the public debate and the opinions expressed during the citizens' conference into account, as well as the various opinions and recommendations it received over the course of 2013 from its assessors (ASN, IRSN, CNE), the French Environmental Authority and the French High Committee for Transparency and Information on Nuclear Safety.

#### • FOUR CHANGES

##### 1. The integration of a pilot industrial phase when the facility starts up

This pilot industrial phase will make it possible to test, under real conditions, all of the disposal functions: the technical measures taken to control operating risks, the capacity to remove waste packages being disposed of, the disposal monitoring sensors, the techniques for sealing cavities and galleries, etc.

Cigéo will move into normal operation after Andra has reviewed the pilot industrial phase.

##### 2. The establishment of a regularly revised master plan for disposal operations

Andra proposes to develop a master plan for the operation of disposal, drawn up in consultation with stakeholders. State-approved and revised regularly, this plan will be a genuine disposal management tool for the entire operational period.

##### 3. Changes to the calendar

Andra has decided to prepare the license application to create (DAC) Cigéo in two stages:

- In 2015, the government will receive the master plan for the operation of disposal and the Nuclear Safety Authority a set of security options and technical retrievability options
- Completion of the DAC at the end of 2017 on the basis of this information and the final pre-project studies in order to obtain the license decree for construction of Cigéo in 2020.

Subject to approvals, the construction of the disposal facility could begin in 2020 and the commissioning, beginning with a pilot industrial phase, could take place in 2025.

##### 4. The involvement of civil society in the project

To allow for greater involvement of civil society in decision-making regarding the Cigéo project, Andra has decided to conduct a consultation process to draw up and revise the master plan for operating Cigéo, to contribute to the development of pluralistic expertise on the management of radioactive waste, to explore ways of opening up the Permanent Observatory of the Environment and to set up a pluralistic committee to provide guidance on the consideration of societal issues in its activities.

#### • A PROPOSAL REGARDING REVERSIBILITY

To meet the demands in terms of the reversibility of disposal, the conditions for which are to be laid down by the French Parliament, Andra will use a phased approach that will allow the next generations to choose how to pursue the disposal operations, including the ability to retrieve waste packages during the hundred years of operation, if they so wish.

#### • COMMITMENTS

Andra is making three commitments for the project going forward: to ensure safe disposal, which remains the absolute top priority, to preserve and develop the local area in close collaboration with local stakeholders, and to control disposal costs, without reducing the level of safety and security.

### [Press release by Andra following the decision by the Board of Administrators \(May 2014\)](#)

According to the June 2006 Planning Act, Andra has proposed by end 2008 to the government an overall general management scheme for disused sealed radioactive sources (DSRS), which is integrated in the 2010 issue of the PNGMDR but still needs complementary studies. While nearly 83% of DSRS would be disposed together with LLW, 15% could be managed at the CSA and the remaining 2% through geological disposal.

### Summary of programmes and projects

The results of the work described above are depicted in the table below, which shows the disposal routes, or “channels”, for the main categories of radioactive waste.

Activity/period	Very-short-lived (Half-life < 100 days)	Short-lived (Half-life ≤ 31 years)	Long-lived (Half-life > 31 years)
Very-low-level	Management by <i>in situ</i> radioactive decay	CIRES waste disposal facility (Morvilliers in the Aube department) (*). Recycling channels (under investigation)	
Low-level		Surface disposal at the CSA waste disposal facility (Aube department)	Dedicated subsurface disposal facility designed for radium-bearing and graphite waste under study (see Planning Act 2006-739 of 28 June 2006)
Intermediate-level		Tritiated waste: under study (see Planning Act 2006-739 of 28 June 2006)	Waste management solutions under study in the framework of Planning Act 2006-739 of 28 June 2006
High-level		Waste management solutions under study in the framework of Planning Act 2006-739 of 28 June 2006	

(\*) Waste residue from uranium ore processing has its own specific disposal facilities provided for in the vicinity of the production sites.

## RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

As described under “Programmes and projects”, Andra is carrying out one major R&D programme as per the National Plan for the management of radioactive materials and waste:

- Following a specific report issued by Andra (December 2009) and its later endorsement by the Ministry, the process of the implementation of a geological repository for HLW and long-lived ILW has progressed in 2010 with the focus over a 30 km<sup>2</sup> zone (the so-called ZIRA due to host the future underground installations of the geological repository) for detailed investigation and located within the 250 km<sup>2</sup> transposition zone of the URL sited in Bure (Meuse department);
- The LSMHM URL licence was granted in August 1999 until end 2006 and later extended in 2006 until end 2011. Therefore Andra has filed an application to renew it until 2030. The public inquiry was held from October 26<sup>th</sup> to November 30<sup>th</sup> and the licensing decree was granted on December 20<sup>th</sup> 2011;
- Andra has as well sited a Technological Exhibition Facility (ETe) in Saudron (Haute-

Marne department) in the near vicinity of the URL.

Studies of different solutions to deal with radium-bearing and graphite waste management have been tasked to Andra, with a first report issued by end 2012 and an interim report concerning the specific area near the CSA-CIRES sites in 2015 (see PNGMDR in previous chapter).

Another major R&D programme is entrusted to CEA and concerns the partitioning and transmutation of long-lived radioactive elements, with notably an assessment of industrial prospect by 2012 and a pilot facility by 2020. A comprehensive report has been issued by the CEA in 2012, presenting the main results of CEA's R&D in the field of partitioning and transmutation, and also giving the rationale and the main guidelines for the design of the ASTRID sodium-cooled fast reactor prototype, which could be operated, if decided, from around 2025. The main R&D goals for the period 2013-2015 are the following:

- Basic design of the ASTRID prototype, and related research and development;
- Multirecycle of plutonium in fast reactors (optimizing reprocessing and recycling of Pu-bearing fuels)
- Partitioning and transmutation studies, with a focus on americium

As mentioned in the National Plan for the management of radioactive materials and waste (PNGMDR), the Institute for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety (IRSN - Institut de radioprotection et de sûreté nucléaire) performs research on safety of geological disposal with the view to developing and maintaining its expertise function.

## **DECOMMISSIONING AND DISMANTLING POLICIES AND PROJECTS**

### **Current status**

The Environmental Code requires that the final shutdown and the decommissioning shall be licensed by a specific decree. The November 2<sup>nd</sup> 2007 decree lays down that operator shall update the decommissioning plan at least three years before the final shutdown. Then in its file application, the licensee must provide a detailed decommissioning plan presenting the main principles with the technical steps and the planned schedule. After completion of the decommissioning/dismantling operations and the clean-up of the site, should a residual contamination or activation remain, the former nuclear site may be still covered by some restrictions of use, after a public inquiry. The ASN guide n°6 published the 18 June 2010 on decommissioning and the associated appendix 1 and 3 gives the lists and the content of the documents to be provided by the operator for decommissioning/dismantling of the installation.

In addition, a ASN's draft guide n°14 has been published the 26 June 2010. This guide provides recommendations for methodologies of complete clean-up of contaminated or activated structures (notably concrete structures) in BNIs. This guide is applicable whatever the situation of the nuclear facility is, under decommissioning or under operation. The purpose is to provide recommendations on the modification of the waste zoning of the nuclear facilities, where

decommissioning addresses the modification of all the nuclear zones to non-nuclear zones to allow the implementation of the termination of the license process.

It is clearly up to the nuclear operator to present to the regulator its decommissioning plan for the concerned decommissioned facility as the regulator does not prescribe any timetable. Nevertheless, and in agreement with the regulator recommendation, most of the current plans so far implemented aim at a quick dismantling without waiting for long decay period, in order to take advantage of the facility knowledge by the current operating staff. A deferred dismantling schedule, of 50 years or so, would in some cases mean a safer reduced-radioactivity environment, but as drawback, the loss of the facility memory since the operating staff would not be anymore involved.

Most of the French decommissioning projects are concerned with either civilian nuclear facilities or those associated with defence activities.

There are three major civilian nuclear operators in France, running Basic Nuclear Installations (INB<sup>6</sup>).

- Électricité de France (EdF) operates the nuclear power plants. All of its 6 UNGG (natural-uranium gas-graphite) nuclear reactors and one HWGCR (Heavy-water gas-cooled) have been definitively shut down, as have the Superphenix fast breeder reactor and one Chooz (Ardennes) PWR reactor.
- AREVA operates nuclear fuel-cycle plants including chemical reprocessing facilities, uranium production facilities, gaseous diffusion plants, and other facilities. Currently several former fuel reprocessing plants in La Hague are currently undergoing decommissioning and the application file for the decommissioning of the gaseous diffusion plant Georges Besse 1 is expected in 2015.
- CEA operates most of the nuclear R&D facilities. Many installations such as research reactors, laboratories, pilot plants, etc. have already been dismantled, are presently being dismantled, or are on a waiting list for dismantling. CEA is as well entrusted with the technical support of nuclear activities for National Defence.

### **Accounting for dismantling costs**

See § on financing.

## **TRANSPORT**

French legislation for the safe transport of radioactive materials is based on the Regulations for the Safe Transport of Radioactive Substances of the International Atomic Energy Agency edition of 2012. Transport safety is secured by classifying materials according the hazards associated with radioactivity, nuclear criticality and dispersibility, and by providing appropriate

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<sup>6</sup> The term « INB » covers basically all major nuclear installations such as commercial or research reactors, nuclear fuel cycle plants and nuclear-related National Defence plants (for the latter the term is INBS).



packaging and shipping arrangements. Radioactive waste shipment programmes are drawn up in discussion with all relevant bodies and authorities, and with due regard to the different recycling or disposal routes available. After notification of the shippers, subsequent shipment of waste is monitored by the authorities.

Radioactive waste is generally transported by road or rail from its site of production to an appropriately authorised facility, such as the melting and incineration SOCODEI plant operated by CENTRACO (currently not operational following the explosion of a furnace), or the disposal facilities operated by Andra. The aim is to dispose of waste through an appropriate route, or channel, as soon as possible, in order to minimise the amounts of waste stored at their production sites.

A particular feature of radioactive material transport in France is the trans-boundary movement of spent fuel and radioactive waste associated with spent fuel reprocessing operations carried out at La Hague on behalf of foreign utilities (for instance German, Japanese, Belgian, Swiss and Dutch customers). The reprocessing contracts with foreign utilities contain a clause stipulating return of the waste to its country of origin. This waste is packaged in a form suitable for safe transport and storage, while protecting public health and the environment. These trans-boundary movements are carried out in compliance with the comprehensive international, European and national regulations, and related international conventions, regarding safety, security, physical protection and public order. Trans-boundary movements within Europe are mainly by rail. Transport to Japan is by sea and port infrastructures complying with the requirements of nuclear safety have been built in France and Japan. There has been no significant incident compromising safety, security or radiation protection during these transport shipments in recent years.

## **COMPETENT AUTHORITIES**

### **Regulatory body**

The "Transparency and Security in the Nuclear Field" Act of 13 June 2006 created an independent administrative authority (ASN) in replacement of the former DGSNR which was under governmental supervision. ASN is responsible for regulating nuclear safety and radiation protection.

Apart from its missions of regulation and control, ASN participates in informing the public in its areas of competence. Regarding more specifically the issue of waste management, ASN together with the ministry for Energy are in charge of the National Plan for the Management of Radioactive Materials and Waste (PNGMDR) and its regular 3-year update.

### **Technical and advisory bodies**

ASN relies on the expertise provided notably by the Institute for Radiation Protection and Nuclear Safety (IRSN - Institut de radioprotection et de sûreté nucléaire) and Advisory Committees of experts (the so-called GPs standing expert groups).

The IRSN was created in February 2002 and is constituted by the former Institute for Nuclear Safety and Protection (IPSN) and by part of the former Office for Radiation Protection (OPRI).

According to the 2006 Planning Act on the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste, a National Assessment Board (CNE) is entrusted to assess, on a yearly basis, the progress of research and studies on the management of radioactive materials and waste<sup>7</sup> with reference to the National Plan for the management of radioactive materials and waste (PNGMDR). The CNE cannot be considered *stricto sensu* as a regulator as it cannot grant licence and is only an advisory body, but its conclusions are very often followed by decision-makers.

### **Radioactive waste management organisation**

The implementing organisation is Andra, the National Radioactive Waste Management Agency.

It was established by the December 1991 Waste Act as a public body in charge of the long-term management of all radioactive waste, under the supervision of the Ministries for ecology, energy and research.

Its 3 basic missions defined initially by the December 1991 Waste Act, were extended and their funding secured through the 2006 Planning Act:

- a R&D mission to propose safe long-term solution for radioactive waste without current disposal system; this mission includes as well long-term storage for HLW and long-lived ILW;
- an industrial mission concerning design, construction, operation, closure and monitoring of waste repositories. This mission includes as well a public service mission in terms of i) collection of waste of the “small-scale nuclear activities” producers or owners (including the so-called “household” radioactive waste, ie waste owned by private individuals) and ii) clean-up and rehabilitation of orphan polluted sites;
- a public information mission about radioactive waste issues and programmes. It includes notably the regular publication of the National Inventory of radioactive waste and recoverable materials. This National Inventory is as well an important basis of the National Plan for the management of radioactive materials and waste (PNGMDR).

### **Waste generators**

Électricité de France (EdF) is the electricity utility that owns and operates all nuclear power plants in France. Created with a public status in 1946, it was privatised in 2004 in line with the EU directives concerning the liberalisation of electricity markets.

The Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique et aux Energies Alternatives (CEA) is a public body created in 1945 to carry out the implementation of civilian nuclear activities (energy, industry,

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<sup>7</sup> Before the 2006 Planning Act, the CNE was entrusted only with the evaluation of the 3 R&D venues prescribed by the December 1991 Waste Act and concerning HLW and long-lived ILW management (i.e. partitioning and transmutation, geological disposal, waste conditioning and long-term storage)

research and health) and to provide the necessary support to the development of National Defence activities (as Nuclear Deterrent Forces).

AREVA (formerly COGEMA) is a private company, whose main shareholder is CEA, and is involved in all stages of the fuel cycle (from mining to fuel manufacturing and reprocessing), which makes it a major waste generator.

It is as well an international leader in nuclear reactors engineering and construction.

## **FINANCING**

In France, operators are responsible for financing the management of their waste and the dismantling of their nuclear installations. It is important that financial resources (funds) will be sufficient and available when needed, notably to ensure a satisfactory safety level of the future operations as prescribed by the 2006 Planning Act on the sustainable management of radioactive materials and waste.

Each nuclear operator (in particular EdF, AREVA, CEA) of Basic Nuclear Installations (French acronym INB) manages its fund which stays inside the company as provisions backed by assets of sufficient security and liquidity.

They shall transmit every three years to the administrative authority a report describing the assessment of the costs, the methods applied for the calculation of these costs and the choices adopted with regard to the composition and management of the assets earmarked to cover the reserves.

The first reports were issued mid-2007. They included a plan for constituting the assets. Every year operators shall transmit to the administrative authority a note updating this report and inform it without delay of any event likely to modify its content.

A national financial evaluation commission (CNEF) has been created to assess the funding of the costs in dismantling nuclear installations and managing spent fuel and radioactive waste. This commission has issued a first report by July 2012 ([http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/1207\\_10\\_Rapport\\_de\\_la\\_CNEF.pdf](http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/IMG/pdf/1207_10_Rapport_de_la_CNEF.pdf)).

Apart from this scheme which concerns only long-term liability of INB waste producers both in terms of dismantling and waste management cost, the necessary R&D HLW and long-lived ILW programme is financed through an additional INB tax as prescribed by the 2006 Planning Act.

A similar scheme than the previous one with two other additional INB taxes (one for economic development and one for scientific & technological diffusion), has been implemented, as prescribed by the 2006 Planning Act, to fund the development scheme of the local municipalities and two departments concerned by the project of the Cigéo geological repository for HLW and long-lived ILW, through their respective Public Interest Group (GIP).

As far as waste arising from installations without INB status, the owner must still comply with the “waste producer pays” principle, but the above specific regulations do not apply.

Specific public funding has also been implemented in the framework of the 2006 Planning Act for the collection and management of waste from the “small-scale nuclear” activities, including “household” waste (owned by private individuals). This scheme is mobilised when financing cannot be fully supported by the waste owner or holder and as well to address the issue of clean-up and rehabilitation of orphan polluted sites (usually from former industries).

## PUBLIC INFORMATION

For more information, the websites of the relevant authorities and organisations are listed below.

### Government and Parliament

Ministère de l’Ecologie, de l’Energie, du Développement durable, du Transport et du Logement

Website: <http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/>

Ministère des Finances, de l’Economie et de l’Industrie

Website: <http://www.industrie.gouv.fr/>

Ministère de l’Enseignement Supérieur et de la Recherche

Website: <http://www.recherche.gouv.fr/>

Ministère du Travail, de l’Emploi et de la Santé

Website: <http://www.travail-emploi-sante.gouv.fr>

Ministère de la Défense

Website: <http://www.defense.gouv.fr>

Direction générale de l’énergie et du climat (DGEC)

Website: <http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/-Energie-et-Climat,123-.html>

Office Parlementaire d’Evaluation des Choix Scientifiques et Technologiques, OPECST  
(Parliamentary Office for the Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Choices)

– Sénat (Website: <http://www.senat.fr>)

– Assemblée Nationale (Website: <http://www.assembleenationale.fr>)

### Regulator and related

Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire, ASN (Nuclear Safety Authority)

Website: <http://www.asn.fr>

IRSN

Website: <http://www.irsn.org>

Commission Nationale d’Evaluation, CNE (National Review Board)

Website: <https://www.cne2.fr>

### Research

Commissariat à l’Energie Atomique et aux Energies Renouvelables, CEA (Atomic Energy & Renewable Energies Commission)

Website: <http://www.cea.fr>

Andra

Website: <http://www.andra.fr>

**Industry**

AREVA

Website: <http://www.aveva.com>

EdF

Website: <http://www.edf.com>

**Information**

Website: <http://dechets-radioactifs.com>

Public debate website: <http://www.debatpublic-cigeo.org/>