

Press release, 12 March 2002

For immediate publication

**WISE-Paris lodges a complaint against person or persons unknown
for forgery and the use of forged documents
Handling and dissemination, for defamatory purposes, of documents pertaining to the
study for the European Parliament on La Hague and Sellafield**

WISE-Paris has decided to lodge a complaint with the Paris County Court (*Tribunal de Grande Instance*) against person or persons unknown. A document containing an internal non-scientific review of a report conducted by WISE-Paris on behalf of the European Parliament has obviously been forged and distributed to the press with the aim of damaging WISE-Paris' reputation. According to the weekly newspaper *La Manche Libre*, Mr. Bernard Cazeneuve, French Member of Parliament and Mayor of Cherbourg - a city close to the La Hague plant - has admitted having distributed the contentious document to the press.

Since November 2000, when the European Parliament's Directorate General for Research commissioned a study on the possible toxic effects from the nuclear reprocessing plants at Sellafield (UK) and La Hague (France)¹, WISE-Paris has had to face a barrage of unprecedented libellous remarks. WISE-Paris has hitherto not responded so as not to fuel the controversy sparked by various officials in the nuclear industry and politicians who serve as effective relays for this industry. However, a turning point seems to have been reached with the dissemination of a forged official report. WISE-Paris has thus chosen to lodge a complaint so that responsibilities may be clarified.

What is this all about? On 10 November 2001, the daily newspaper *La Presse de la Manche* published an article entitled "Crash on Cogema: the Wise report taken apart" ("*Crash sur la Cogema: le rapport Wise démonté*") based on a document allegedly issued by a "scientific advisory group of the European Parliament". This document was widely distributed to the press by Cherbourg's municipal administration and WISE-Paris was thus able to obtain a copy. When questioned on this, an official in the European Parliament's Directorate General for Research replied that "*no such document was issued by a so-called 'Scientific Advisory Group'*". He added that it would appear to him that the article in *La Presse de la Manche* is "*based on a forged document*". On 5 December 2001, this response was officialised via a letter from Paul Engstfeld, Head of the Division Industry, Research, Energy and Environment and STOA.

Mr. Engstfeld also stated that "*during its meeting held on 23 October [2001], the European Parliament's STOA Panel decided to publish the study carried out by WISE-Paris with the reviews made by the experts selected by the STOA panel, including the internal appraisal made to STOA by Dr Gaillochet of the OPECST*", the French Parliamentary Office for Evaluation of Scientific and Technological Options (*Office parlementaire des choix*

¹ This study is part of the European Parliament's program to assess scientific and technological questions (Scientific and Technological Options Assessment or STOA). The STOA program is supervised by a panel of 33 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs). To consult the report, see http://www.wise-paris.org/english/stoa_en.html

scientifiques et technologiques)². Subsequently, Mr. Philippe Gaillochet sent a letter to STOA in which he indicated that he was resigning as a reviewer and “*formally forbade STOA to publish his review*”. According to Mr. Engstfeld, the contentious document “*is indeed the document written by Dr. Gaillochet, but it has been altered*”. To our knowledge, Mr. Gaillochet has never replied to the letter sent to him by STOA officials requesting an explanation.

WISE-Paris strongly objects to the multiple attacks it has come under and which aim to discredit the scientific value of its work. It would very much like to see the debate and the controversy focusing on the content of its work.

The report conducted by WISE-Paris was made public by the European Parliament along with the opinions of three external reviewers. Contrary to what some people try to make the public believe, all three (see Annex) support and justified the publication of this report for the Members of the European Parliament. Even if some people do not like the results of the study, it may be noted that, to date, the European Parliament’s Directorate General for Research has not received one single technical opinion calling into question the content of the study.

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² Following the positive review reports, the STOA panel decided unanimously (minus one abstention) to publish the report conducted by WISE-Paris.

Since its publication in November 2001, the 170-page report has been downloaded over 4000 times, merely from the WISE-Paris Internet site. It is also available on the European Parliament’s website.

Annex

The external experts' opinions of the STOA report confirm the scientific quality of the study conducted by WISE-Paris on the La Hague and Sellafield plants.

Three external scientific reviewers analysed our report, following a proposal by Members of the European Parliament (including those most opposed to the study), **on behalf of the Scientific and Technological Options Assessment (STOA) Panel**. Their conclusions are quite clear, as can be seen by the following extracts:

Jean-Claude Zerbib, radioprotection engineer, advisor to the director of the IPSN (State Institute for Nuclear Protection and Safety) and the CEA (Atomic Energy Commission) (France): *"The WISE-Paris Report constitutes an important study of the problems linked to the [nuclear] fuel reprocessing at the Sellafield and La Hague plants. (...) If it is possible to find in the technical literature certain elements covered in this report, we have to stress that the latter does not have any equivalent when it comes to taking into account globally and to critically approach the problems of the "back end" of the nuclear fuel cycle. The numerous technical annexes that accompany the report constitute a useful complement for the Report that merits for all these reasons a large publication"*.

(Translation by WISE-Paris)

Dr. Peter I. Mitchell, Department of Experimental Physics, National University of Ireland, Dublin: *"The report contains a wealth of background information for legislators and regulators and, in the main, provides a lucid and uncomplicated description of the main issues attending the reprocessing of spent nuclear fuel at the present time. (...) All this I have found to be helpful and informative. (...) The report deals objectively with the subject of doses to individuals and critical groups..."*.

Dr. Ian Croudace and **Dr. Phillip Warwick**, Geosciences Advisory Unit, Southampton: *"Overall this is an interesting document that has assembled an array of data from various sources in an attempt to build a persuasive case for ceasing reprocessing operations in France and the UK. We suspect, however, that these countries (perhaps reluctantly) have already accepted the case and that a slow wind down is planned. The STOA document provides good reasons for curtailing nuclear reprocessing in favour of fuel storage on safety and financial grounds. The rate at which all of these seemingly inevitable changes will occur is the key question."*

In addition, the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII) analysed the WISE-Paris report on behalf of the Irish government³. RPII's "general comments" are as follows:

"The report brings together a large body of information and presents it in a manner that is well structured, easy to read and well referenced throughout. The use of Annexes for dealing with specific topics or presenting large amounts of technical data contributes significantly to the readability of the report."

³ Letter dated 12 December 2001 sent by P.A. Colgan to Joe Mooney, Nuclear Safety Division, Department of Public Enterprise

“It is particularly valuable that all aspects of reprocessing - economic and political considerations, legal requirements, non-reprocessing options for dealing with spent fuel, health issues etc. -are dealt with in the one document. As a result the report gives a very good overview of the interplay between the various issues and is a valuable reference for those working in this field.”