

**Contribution to the podium discussion by
Under-Secretary of State Bernhard Bauer
at the
International Conference on Geological
Repositories: A Common Objective, A
Variety of Paths (ICGR2007)
on 15.10.2007
in Berne**

CONTENTS

1. Einleitung
2. Final repository for radioactive waste in Germany
3. Search for a site in Switzerland

- The spoken word is definitive -

1. Introduction

Nuclear plants have been in operation in Baden-Württemberg for almost 40 years. The two-unit reactors in Philippsburg and Neckarwestheim, as well as the reactor in Obrigheim up to its shutdown in 2005, have together produced approximately 900 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity. The spent fuel – more than 1000 fuel elements to date - from the electricity generation will have to be stored in interim storage facilities over the coming decades until a suitable final storage site is found. Around 65000 m³ of low-level and intermediate-level radioactive waste is presently being stored in drums and containers in the Forschungszentrum Karlsruhe, previously known as the Kernforschungszentrum. In view of these quantities being stored within its borders, Baden-Württemberg obviously has a considerable interest in the location of suitable final waste repositories that meet safety criteria. Federal Government is responsible for these and has a legal obligation in this respect.

2. Long-term storage of radioactive waste in Germany

Following a 20-year long licensing phase and the exhaustion of all legal options, work has commenced on converting the Konrad mine for the final storage of low-level and intermediate-level radioactive waste. We hope that storage can actually commence in 2013. In the view of Baden-Württemberg this would be the solution to a considerable problem – at least in terms of the quantity of waste that has to be stored. This thankfully also puts an end to the discussion of whether one final repository is sufficient for the storage of all types of radioactive waste or whether 2 such repositories are needed – one for low-level and intermediate-level waste and one for high-level waste.

However, the problem of disposal of high-level radioactive waste is not solved. Despite more than 30 years of intensive work, it has still not been possible to find a final repository that is acceptable to all those involved in the process. The German states are of the opinion that the Gorleben salt dome is a suitable final repository – in particular from a safety and security perspective. They confirmed this opinion in a resolution of the Federal Council – our State Chamber – in 2004. The Federal Environment Ministry nevertheless still believes – certainly for political reasons – that a new search should be started for a final repository for high-level radioactive waste. This difference of opinion between the Federal Environment Ministry and the German States means that there has been no recognisable progress in the planning of the final repository for high-level radioactive waste. Given our knowledge of the suitability of the salt dome in Gorleben, we do not understand why any new search should be started for a disposal site. We are fully aware of the enormous resistance of the local people in the region concerned, but this cannot be overcome through a reduction in public relations activities as presently practised in Gorleben.

3. Search for a site in Switzerland

Baden-Württemberg is directly affected by the search for final repositories in Switzerland. Its geological conditions mean that it is likely to have possible sites close to the border with Baden-Württemberg. We have already made our position clear on the use of a final repository close to the border in our statement on the licensing of the disposal of high-level radioactive waste. There are key 2 points here:

- Safety criteria must be given absolute priority over socioeconomic and regional planning considerations
- The opportunities for participation on the part of Baden-Württemberg must be equivalent to those in Switzerland

We anticipate that we will also be able to exert influence as an affected neighbour in the Sectoral Plan procedure. Our positive experience to date of working together with the Swiss bodies concerned – characterised by openness and a willingness to provide information – means that we are in no doubt about this. The Federal Environment Ministry and the State of Baden-Württemberg will provide the necessary specialist knowledge through expert groups. They will also represent the interests of people in the affected regions through working parties in which regional bodies - such as community groups, administrative districts, environmental associations and citizens' groups - are represented.

Thank you for your attention.