

UF6-transports from Gronau to Russia – fact sheet

Prepared by Aktionsbündnis Münsterland gegen Atomanlagen, 7. Oktober 2006

1. Uranium enrichment plant (UAA) Gronau:

- opened in 1985
- owned by Urenco Deutschland GmbH (50% RWE, 50% E.ON)
- currently being expanded to a capacity of 4500 t SWU (separative work units)
- open-air cylinder yard for 38,100 t depleted uranium (DU)
- plans to build hall for 50,000 t DU



2. Transports from Gronau to Novouralsk in Russia:

- started in 1996
- currently more than 20,000 t of DU have arrived in Russia from Gronau
- up to 98% of the DU remain in Russia after re-enrichment
- transports come by ship from Rotterdam to St Petersburg and continue by train
- per shipment around 1000 t DU

3. Transportation hazards

- UF6 is very volatile
- If UF6 comes into contact with water (normal humidity is enough!) it forms:
 - o a) hydrofluoric acid and
 - o b) uranyl fluoride (UO₂F₂)
- both substances are highly toxic (skin burns, lung damage) plus radioactive hazards
- the cylinder containers (type 48Y) are not enough fire proof
- risks in case of ship accidents and/or train accidents are high
- harbour/railway workers are exposed to high levels of radioactivity

4. Reasons for transport

- Urenco saves a lot of money by exporting the DU
- Long-term storage in Germany would be too expensive for Urenco
- Possible protest in/around Gronau because of long-term storage is avoided

5. Protests against UF6-transports

- since 1986 every month protest marches in Gronau
- since 2004 regularly protests against shipments in Germany and Netherlands
- trains have been stopped by protesters several times
- anti-nuclear groups demand shutdown of Urenco enrichment plants as part of global change of energy policy and for fear of military use of enrichment technology

