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“Cigéo” –The French Industrial Project of Deep Geological Repository Developed by Andra

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Andra is a publicly owned industrial and commercial body, set up by the French radioactive waste management and research Act of 1991. It is responsible for the study and the design of Cigéo, the future industrial deep geological repository devoted to the French high and intermediate level waste. It will also be the future operator of the repository. The license application of Cigéo is currently being prepared and the first operations should start in 2025.

The inventory of Cigéo covers conditioned waste originating from the activities and the dismantling of 50 years of operations of the French nuclear installations licensed to date. In agreement to French policy, irradiated fuel is being reprocessed. As a result, the license application of Cigéo will not include the disposal of fuel assemblies.

Safeguards have been integrated as an early stage in the industrial project according to safeguards by design approach:

- Participation of Andra and French Authorities to international working groups (ASTOR, ESARDA...);
- First official contact with Euratom in 2014 in order to launch a regular technical exchange process. The idea is to identify potential difficulties and introduce specific control needs as soon as possible in the project.

The technical important specificities to take into account are :

- The mass of nuclear material in the packages are declared to Andra by waste producers ;
- Cigéo does not extract any nuclear material from the waste ;
- Once a waste package has been emplaced in the underground disposal facility, it cannot be retrieved without being detected ;
- The exact location and movement of all waste packages is permanently known ;
- Information on the inventory disposed of is kept with no duration limit (at least several centuries).

Country or International Organization

France

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