



Shedding Light on Nuclear Power

A Campaign for Transparency in Romania



Nuclear facilities often resemble fortresses, but information about their operations is too important to stay locked away.

BACKGROUND

Romania has a substantial nuclear power industry. It has two active uranium mines and 22 others that are closed or temporarily shuttered. It has a first-stage ore processor at Feldioara which produces yellow cake (semirefined uranium ore), and a second-stage processor at Pitesti which turns out nuclear fuel. It produces electricity at the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant and heavy water at ROMAG in Turnu Severin. Meanwhile, the general public has scarce access to information about safety issues related to nuclear activities. The data that does exist is often contradictory and difficult to obtain. Public institutions lack a clear idea of what information should be public and what should be classified.

OBJECTIVES

The project team aimed to:

- produce materials for citizens about how to obtain information on the various problems related to nuclear activities in Romania;



Leading NGO
Arin, the Romanian
Association of Nature Lovers

Project leader
Mihaela Codruta
Stan Nedelcu Tudor

NGO contact information
Al.Cinematografului
No. 2, Bl.H3, Sc.2, Ap.27
6100 Braila, Romania
Tel: (40-2-3) 967-0376
Fax: (40-2-03) 967-0376
Arin_br@softhome.net

- create a framework for discussions between different stakeholders;
- ensure that public-information systems run in accordance with the Classified Information Law and the principles of the Aarhus Convention; and
- create a practical instrument for NGOs and citizens to exercise their rights as outlined in the Law on Free Access to Information (with the application standards), the Law on Environmental Protection (re-published in 2000) and the law which ratified the Aarhus Convention.

METHODOLOGY

To achieve its aims, the project team:

- developed questionnaires and disseminated informational materials about nuclear activities;
- identified key players that have information on nuclear activities;
- organised meetings with authorities and operators of facilities with nuclear-related information; and
- identified ways to change the secretive treatment of such information and open the topic to discussion with stakeholders.

ACHIEVEMENTS

The team managed to:

- draw together people with different interests and involve them in finding ways to create more transparency and give the public more information;
- highlight the need to harmonise laws about the sensitivity of nuclear information and open a dialogue between stakeholders on the subject;
- create the first website in Romania <www.nuclearinfo.ro> with a broad range of information on nuclear problems;
- establish an international discussion group, Cernavoda2, whose members include NGOs that are mainly based in South Eastern Europe;
- draw the interest of journalists to the issue (inquiries were made by RFERL, Radio Romania Actualitati, Adevarul and Academia Catavencu); and
- pique the interest of Bulgarian NGOs, who applied the Espoo Convention to get the Romanian government to send the environmental impact assessment on the Second Unit of the Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plant to the Bulgarian government (public debates on the plant were to be arranged in Bulgaria).

FOLLOW-UP

Information dissemination will continue through the website and other channels, depending on the success of a proposal recently sent to the Europa Fund. Based on identified legal obstacles to information access, authorities will try to look for solutions.

