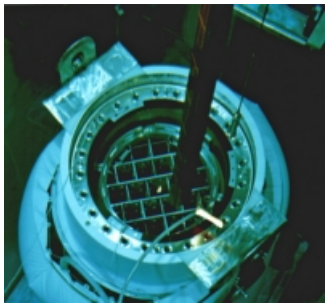
GNS Rückführung von deutschen Wiederaufarbeitungsabfällen

History and Responsibility



Loading of irradiated fuel elements for transport to Sellafield

The "fuel" for the operation of nuclear power plants is contained in the so-called fuel elements. After several years of operation, these have reached the end of their operational lifecycles and are replaced. From 1976 to 2005 the reprocessing of fuel elements was a disposal method provided for by law in Germany, and until 1994 it was even the only possible and legally required method.

German nuclear power plant operators have shipped a large part of their spent fuel elements for reprocessing to La Hague/France (5,379 tons) and Sellafield/Great Britain (859 tons). To this end, they have concluded comprehensive contracts with the operators of the reprocessing plants, which also include the obligation to take back the waste.

In addition, the Federal Republic of Germany has committed itself under international law to France and the United Kingdom to take back this waste. The necessity of retrieving this radioactive waste from France and Great Britain has also been confirmed to date by all federal governments.