



Source : <https://www.sortirdunucleaire.org/The-Roussely-Report-saving-the>

Réseau Sortir du nucléaire > Informez

vous > Nos dossiers et analyses > Rapport Roussely : déroute de l'EPR et perspectives dangereuses > **The Roussely Report : saving the French nuclear industry with outrageous measures**

21 mai 2012

The Roussely Report : saving the French nuclear industry with outrageous measures

The outline of the Roussely report presented to the French President last May and classified "Secret Defence" was made public by the Elysée Palace on Tuesday 27 July 2010.

The French nuclear industry : disastrous economic and industrial results

The Roussely report recognises the scale of the setbacks experienced by Areva and EDF at the EPR reactor construction sites in France and Finland : "the credibility of both the EPR model and the French nuclear industry's ability to build new reactors has been severely eroded by the difficulties encountered at the Finnish construction site of Olkiluoto and at the site of the third tranche of the Flamanville plant." At fault is the "complexity of the EPR" which "without doubt hinders its construction and consequently impacts on its cost."

By stating that "the nuclear industry must become sufficiently competitive to attract private investment", Roussely admits that the nuclear industry has so far never been competitive nor economically efficient, in contrast with the claims made by Areva, the merchant of nuclear plants. Roussely points out the inadequate performance of the French nuclear reactors : "whereas global average nuclear plant availability has significantly increased during the last 15 years, nuclear plant availability in France has seen a marked decrease in the last few years."

The failure of the EPR is such, according to Roussely, that "it is the credibility, and therefore the very existence" of the French nuclear industry which is at stake. In the face of this, Roussely uses all available means to recommend various equally outrageous "emergency measures".

Passing the cost onto the consumer and misuse of public

funding

Roussely recommends “a moderate but regular increase of electricity tariffs, opening the way towards financing the renewal of nuclear installations”. Is nuclear power too costly ? That’s no problem, the consumer can pay. By becoming “regular”, the tariff increase is unlikely to remain “moderate” for any length of time...

Roussely proposes the diversion of some of the funding available for renewable energy to benefit the nuclear industry. The uranium used in nuclear plants is a finite mineral resource and is non-renewable : nuclear power is a fossil energy as much as oil and coal. Yet Roussely suggests “taking firm political action to ensure that all multilateral funds for renewable energy should also be available to the nuclear industry”.

Savings at the expense of safety

The Roussely report confirms a dangerous trend : the reduction of safety and security requirements in the face of economic constraints : “Continually increasing safety requirements cannot be the only rational way forward”. Roussely calls for the optimal realignment between safety requirements and economic constraints. This politically correct jargon means that safety requirements are governed by the industry’s criteria of profitability and profit. “Safety indeed, but only if we can afford it !”

Nuclear energy is not “attractive enough for private investment”, so the construction of new reactors is not a foregone conclusion. Roussely recommends an increase in the lifespan of French nuclear power stations to 60 years, when they were designed to operate for 30 ! The oldest French reactors have already experienced incidents far more numerous than the average across nuclear installations as a whole. To pretend they can operate for another 30 years is therefore a high-risk strategy, totally irresponsible. Several hundred million euros would be needed to repair each reactor, which would still be cheaper than the 5 billion required to (maybe) build an EPR. And how much would a major accident like Chernobyl cost, in euros and in human lives ?

Given the economic constraints, Roussely gives little thought to the appalling working conditions of the 20,000 external workforce employed by 600 subcontracting firms. Last May, 8 temporary workers were forced to go on strike at the CEA site at Carradache : they were not being paid and had to buy their own radioactive protection gear ! Yet Roussely only proposes a working conditions “charter”, i.e. a non-binding list of commitments left to the goodwill of companies...

Gagging a cautious French Safety Authority (Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire, ASN)

Roussely calls for a reduction in the scope of the Autorité de Sûreté Nucléaire in favour of the government : “the government must define a balanced modus vivendi with the ASN, it must re-establish a sovereignty which it shouldn’t relinquish to an independent authority.” This is clearly a way to reduce the small margin of autonomy available to the official organisation controlling the nuclear industry.

Although very muted, criticisms from the ASN remain an embarrassment for Areva and EDF : “events with very limited effects [i.e. incidents and design errors documented by the ASN] should not result in undeserved suspicion of [nuclear] technology as a whole.”

The Roussely report confirms the fact that the government sees the ASN as a useful alibi, a tool to “reassure” the population. Does the French Safety Authority only have authority in name ?

Making nuclear waste acceptable to the public

Roussely admits that “public acceptance [...] is an essential condition for developing the civilian nuclear industry”. Roussely points out that “[nuclear waste] is the most convincing argument against nuclear power for 60 to 70% of French people”.

Yet there is no solution to the serious problem of nuclear waste, some of which remains dangerous for hundreds of thousands of years. Roussely lets slip a telling confession : “a list of realistic specifications” is yet to be drawn up for the nuclear waste burial site at Bure, due to become operational in 2015. So Roussely admits in veiled terms that all the fine words uttered for years by the Andra (Agence nationale pour la gestion des déchets radioactifs, the French National Radioactive Waste Management Agency) are not “realistic”.

Thus, one shall not be surprised that Roussely is panicking to such an extent that he addresses all the industry’s players : “It is now essential that ANDRA determines as a matter of urgency the detailed operational plans being set up for 2015 in relation to the deep disposal centre. To achieve this, it is proposed that ANDRA urgently involves EDF, AREVA and the CEA (French Atomic Energy and Alternative Energies Commission) in defining the best possible specifications for the deep disposal centre and its completion.”

Download the report synthesis (english) or [read it on Nuclear Engineering International Magazine website](#)



Roussely : analyse en anglais



Roussely : synthèse en anglais