

ORAL QUESTION H-0039/04

for Question Time at the part-session in February 2004

pursuant to Rule 43 of the Rules of Procedure

by Uma Aaltonen

to the Commission

Subject: Closure of the Sosnovy Bor nuclear power plant on the expiry of its operating permit

At Sosnovy Bor, close to St Petersburg, there is a nuclear power plant with four 1000-MW reactors. They are all of the same RMBK type as at Chernobyl. At the insistence of the EU, the nuclear plant, at Ignalina in Lithuania, also of this type, will close when Lithuania joins the EU. According to a report published on 21 January 2004 by the environmental organisation Bellona, the Sosnovy Bor plant is characterised by poor working practices. Thefts have taken place there, for example, and the used nuclear fuel storage has been over-filled for several years. The plant is situated some 200 km from Helsinki and Tallinn. It constitutes a significant safety risk to Estonia and Finland in particular, but also to Europe as a whole. Last autumn the original operating permit for the oldest of the Sosnovy Bor reactors expired, and a request was made for it to be renewed for another 15 years.

Now that an application is pending for an operating permit for this reactor, and similar applications will be made for the other reactors in future, does the Commission propose to open negotiations with the Russians concerning the closure of the dangerous Sosnovy Bor nuclear power plant?

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