

French report published on benefits of waste incineration alternatives

On the 3 October 2007, the French Group of Scientific Experts on the Dangers of Incineration (GESDI) published a report entitled **“National expertise regarding alternatives to incineration and waste: environmental, health and socio-economic aspects”**. The report, which investigates health concerns (cancers, congenital malformations) and environmental problems (emissions of CMR substances (carcinogenic, mutagenic, and reproductive toxicity) and greenhouse gas emissions) associated with incineration, was handed to Jean-Louis Borloo, Minister for Ecology and Sustainable Development, and Michèle Alliot-Marie, Minister of the Interior.

The report highlights the illegality of current waste incineration practices in France, which violate several European Directives and a law dating from the 13 July 1992, placing waste incineration at the end of the waste hierarchy, after re-use and recycling. Also denounced in the report is the use of ash residues from incineration in construction applications, which not only leach toxic constituents into the soils and water, but are also illegal.

In response to these failings the report presents the ecological, health and socio-economic benefits of the alternatives to waste incineration and disposal, such as waste prevention, re-use and recycling, together with the significant benefits associated with dealing with waste close to source.

On the 6th October demonstrations against waste incineration, organised by French Doctors' associations, took place around France, notably in Clermont-Ferrand, Marseille, Toulouse, Valenciennes, in Corsica, and in the Haut-Rhin. At the heart of these protests was the city of Clermont-Ferrand, site of a proposed incinerator, despite opposition from 507 doctors and the support of tens of thousands of members of the general public. As part of the demonstrations, doctors handed copies of the report to the mayors of the cities.

A press conference was held at the launch of the report, attended by:

- Dr. Jean-Michel CALUT, spokesperson for the National Medical, Health and Environment Coordination
- Dr. Alain LAFFONT, spokesperson for the group of 507 doctors opposed to the proposed municipal waste incinerator at the borough of Clermont-Ferrand
- M. Serge GODARD, Mayor of Clermont-Ferrand, President of the Clermont community
- M. Dany DIETMANN, Mayor of Manspach, spokesperson of the group of communes at the gateway to Alsace
- Pr. Dominique BELPOMME, Oncologist, President of ARTAC (HEAL member organisation)

Written on 16th October 2007.

<http://www.env-health.org:80/a/2670>