

The 2005 special EUROBAROMETRE (N°227)

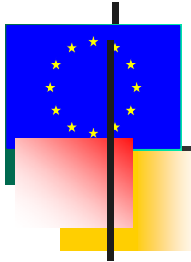
***The European citizens and the  
radioactive waste***

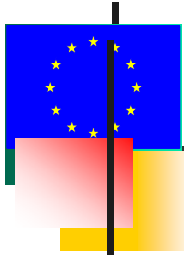
Ute Blohm-Hieber  
European Commission

PIME 2006

13-02-06

# The nuclear waste saga: take-off – but no place to land on?





## Radioactive Waste in the EU-25 – how much?

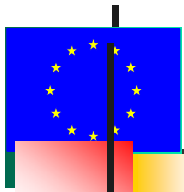
- Total rad. waste per year:  
40.000 m<sup>3</sup> = 90 cm<sup>3</sup> per Person

Whereas...

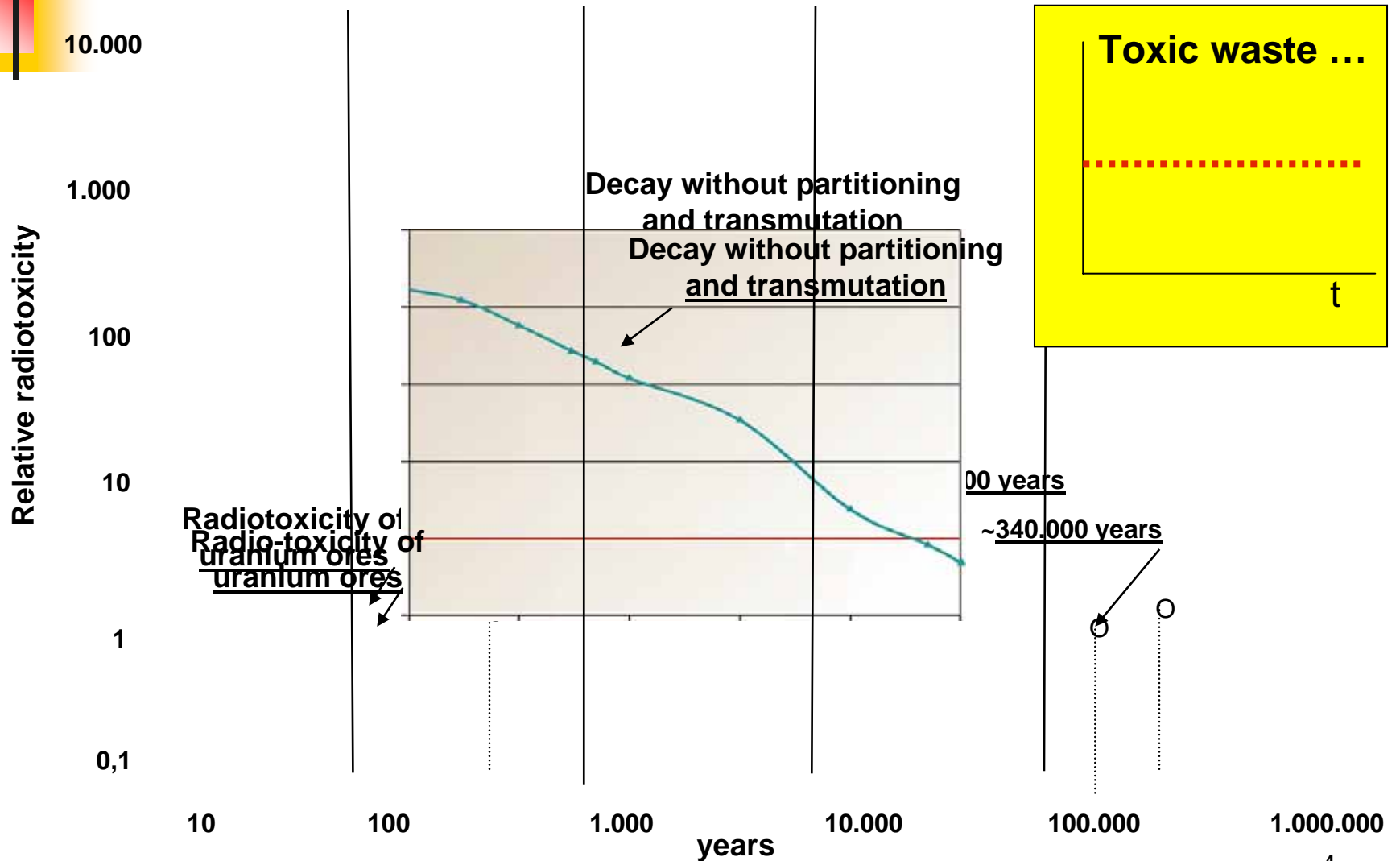
- Long lived low level waste: 3000 m<sup>3</sup> = 7 cm<sup>3</sup> p.p.
- High level waste, vitrified : 240 m<sup>3</sup> = 0,5 cm<sup>3</sup> p.p.
- Spent Fuel: 1730t = 4 g p.p.

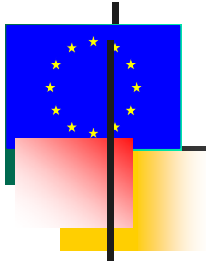
In comparison (EU-15, 2000):

- Toxic waste: 36 million t = 100 kg p.p.



the long time spans! Yes, however





## Solution for radioactive waste?

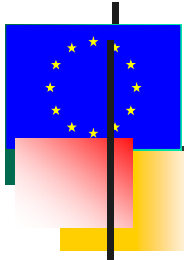
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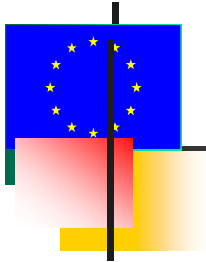
- Agreement: **Deep underground Repositories**

But...

- Public concern on long term safety
- Lack of national decisions
- In the majority of EU Member States
  - Temporally stored only
  - **Retrievability in case of deep repository**

It appears solutions for radioactive waste are nevertheless stuck, for unclear reasons...





## Public opinion - *Eurobarometer 2005*

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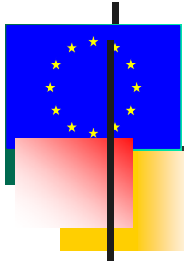
**No decision on the final disposal of highly radioactive waste in most countries. EU public opinion:**

92%: Develop solutions now...

81%: Decisions are politically unpopular...

79%: No safe solution yet...

45%: Underground disposal is the most appropriate solution (38% disagree).



## EU – public knowledge - *Eurobarometer 2005*

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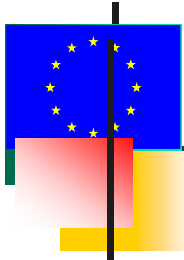
**25%:** feel that they are well informed about radioactive waste.

*this proportion is much higher in northern Europe than in southern Europe: (51% in Sweden - 15% in Portugal)*

**79%:** all radioactive waste is dangerous.

**74%:** storage of low-level waste presents a high risk.

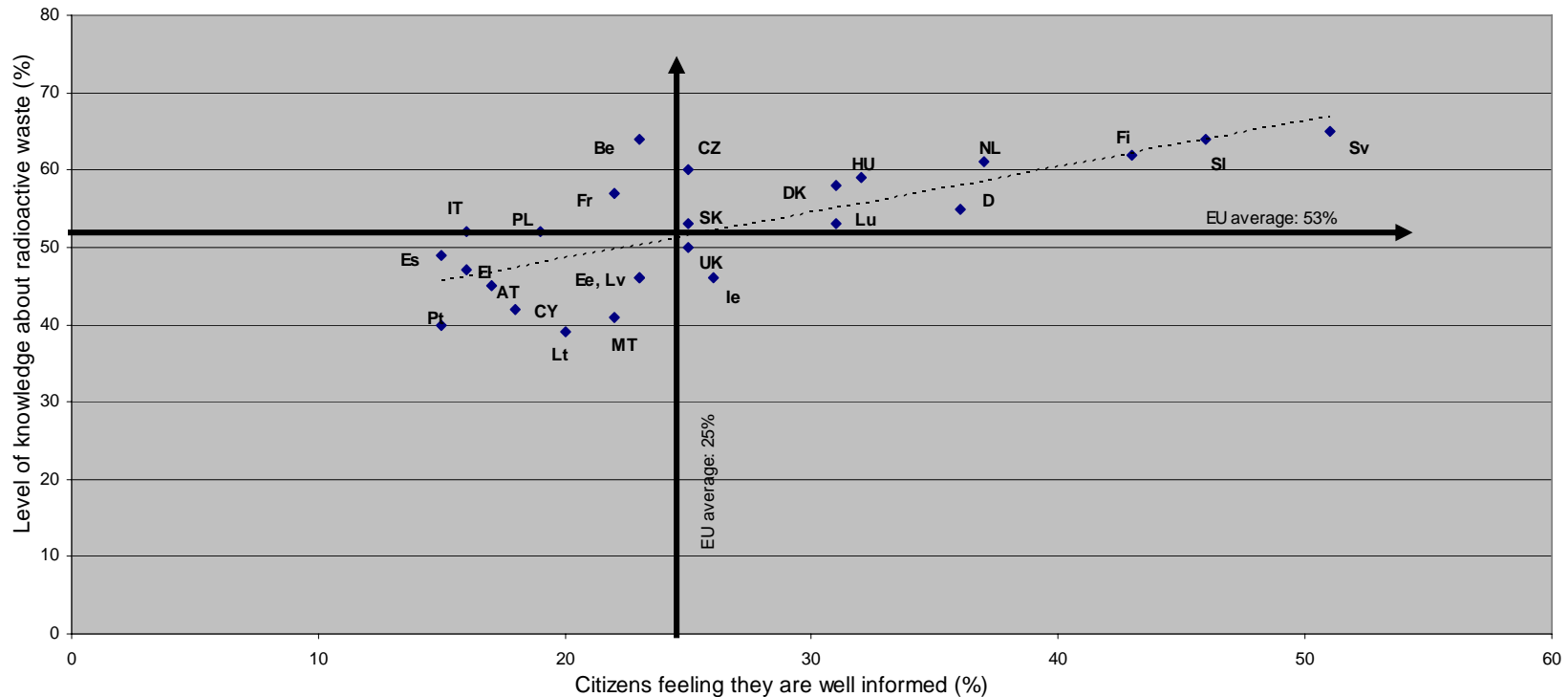


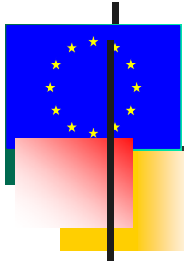


# Information and knowledge of the EU Public

*There is a correlation between average knowledge about radioactive waste within MS and the perception the citizens have of being well informed. In EU 25, the correlation coefficient value is 0.73!*

Level of knowledge about radioactive waste (% of good answers) = f(% citizens feeling they are well informed )





## Public opinion - *Eurobarometer 2005*

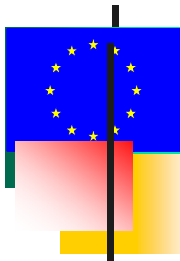
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### **Acceptance of nuclear energy. EU public opinion:**

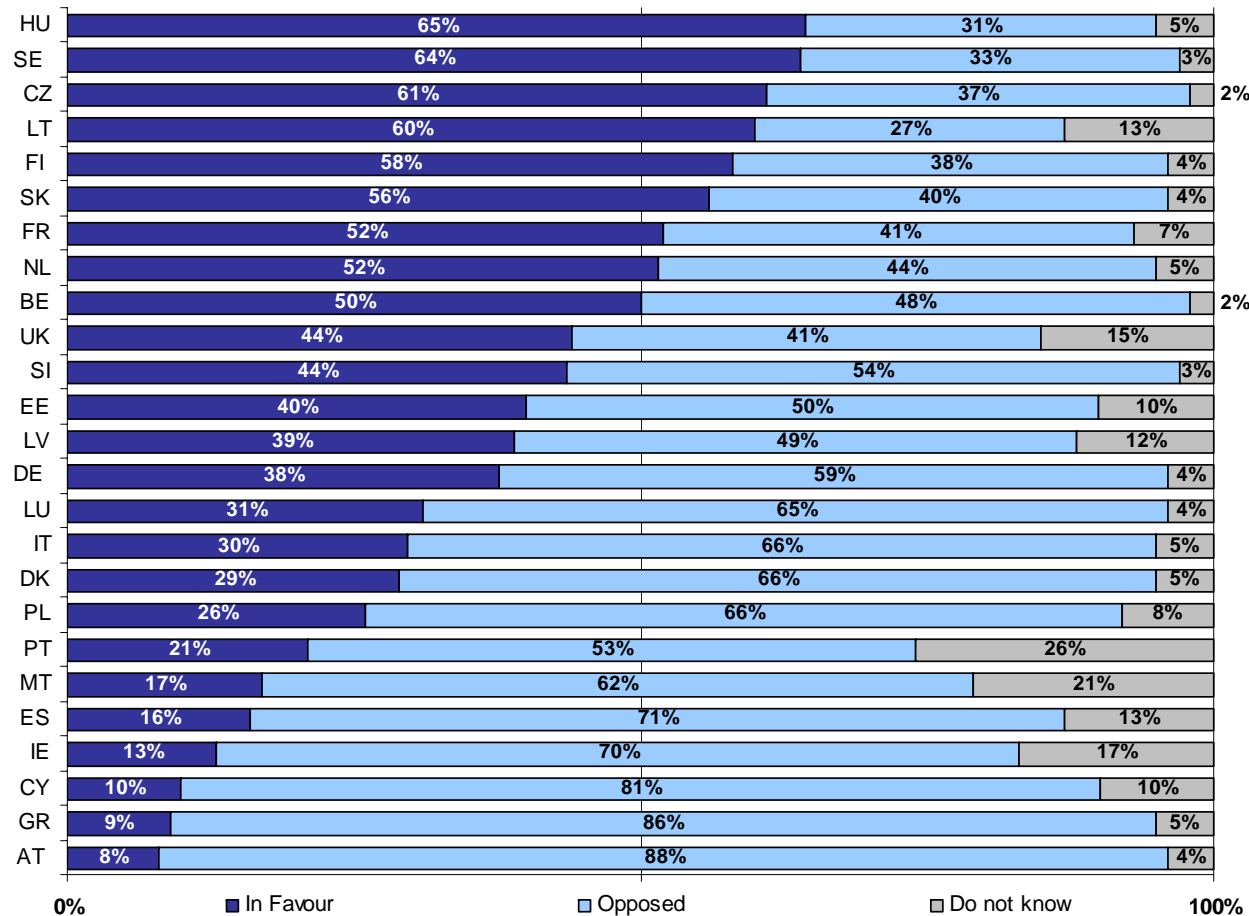
**37.0%:** citizens in favour of the nuclear energy.

*This proportion is higher in northern EU15 Europe than in southern Europe: (65% in Sweden - 40% in Portugal).*

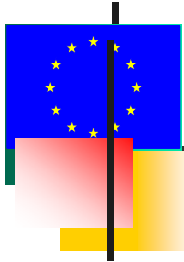
**57.9%:** citizens in favour of the nuclear energy if the waste problem was solved.



# Acceptance of Nuclear Power – Details per MS



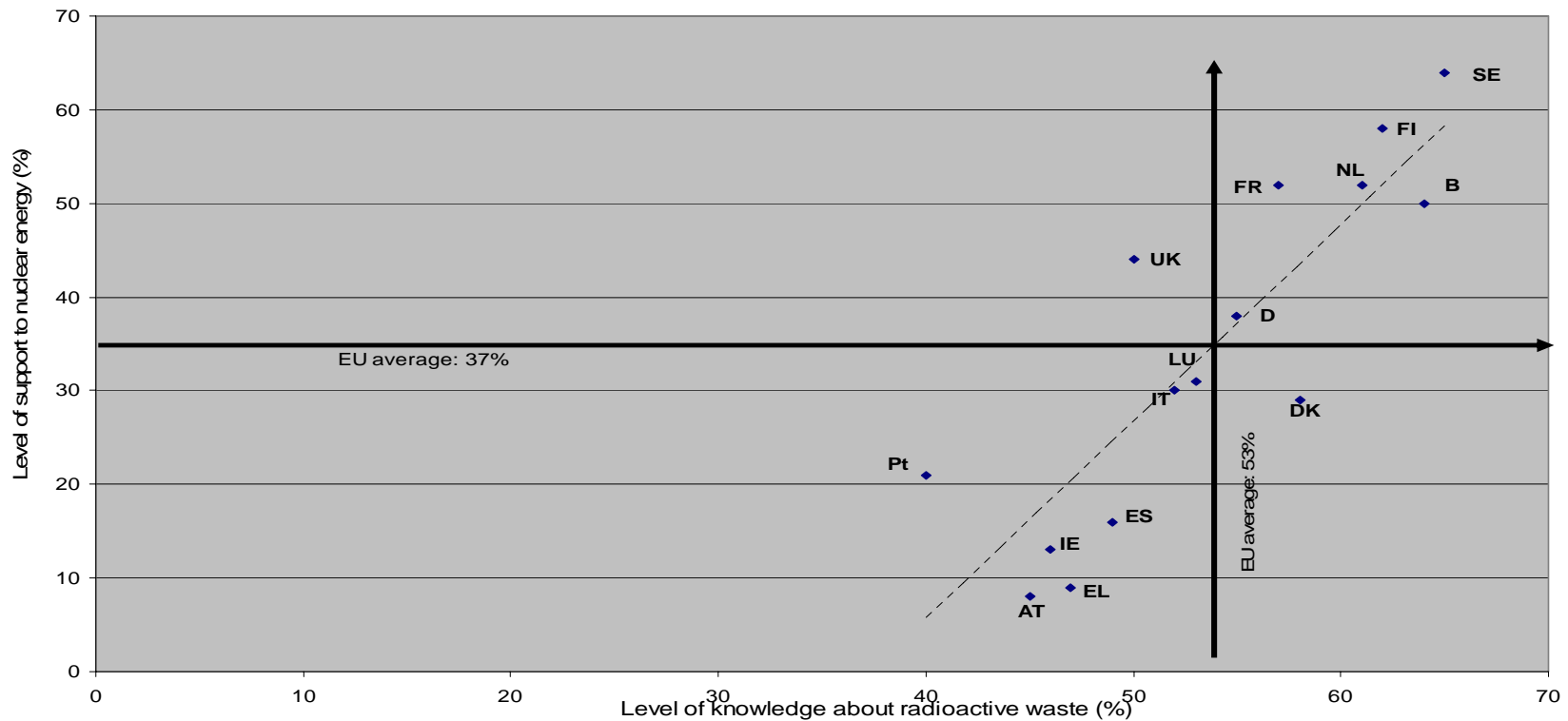
- top: Hungary, Sweden, Czech Republic, Lithuania, Finland
- most opposed: Austria, Greece, Cyprus, Ireland

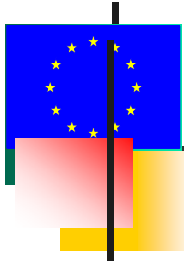


# Acceptance of Nuclear Power

*There is a correlation between knowledge about radioactive waste (% of good answers) and support to nuclear energy. In EU 15, it is particularly strong, as the coefficient value is **0.86!***

Level of support to nuclear energy = f(level of knowledge about radioactive waste) - EU15



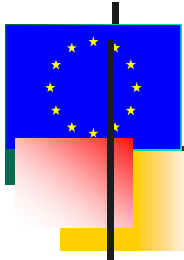


## European Dimension - *Eurobarometer 2005*

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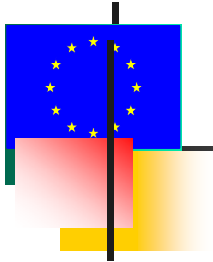
**89%:** practices should be harmonised and consistent because radioactive waste has an international impact.

**89%:** the EU should monitor national practices and programmes.



## CONCLUSIONS

- The support to nuclear energy is still limited (**37%**). However, it would increase in a significant manner if the waste issue was solved (**57.9%**).
- EU-citizens consider that a solution for highly radioactive waste should be developed now and not left for future generations (**92%**).
- There is a correlation between the perception of the level of information and the actual knowledge.
- There is a clear correlation between the actual knowledge at the MS level about nuclear waste and the support to nuclear energy.
- An exchange of best practices between MS is needed.
- **The EU has a clear role to play in monitoring national practices (89%).**



Thank you  
for your attention