

GREENPEACE

FRANCE-RUSSIA: RADIOACTIVE TRAFFICKING CONTINUES



January 2026

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The [original French version](#) prevails.

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Greenpeace is an international organization that acts according to principles of non-violence to protect the environment and biodiversity and to promote peace. It is independent of any economic and political power and relies on a movement of citizens committed to building a sustainable and fair world.

Glossary

Natural uranium: mine-extracted uranium in powder form, referred to as “yellowcake” or U_3O_8 (triuranium octoxide).

Converted uranium: natural uranium must be processed into converted uranium in order to be enriched.

Enriched (natural) uranium: natural uranium that is chemically processed and “enriched” or “concentrated” to increase its U-235 content (the fissile isotope) from 0.7% to around 4%.

Reprocessed uranium (RepU): uranium that is recovered from the reprocessing of spent fuel at the La Hague plant. The only place in the world able to convert reprocessed uranium for its re-enrichment and re-use as **enriched reprocessed uranium (ERU)** is the Tomsk facility in Seversk, Russia.



Unloading of enriched Russian uranium at the port of Dunkirk in October 2025.

© Greenpeace

Introduction

Nearly four years after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the steady procession of uranium-loaded cargo ships between Russia and France continues amid a troubling lack of transparency. These shipments, via Russian territory and containing either uranium enriched or re-enriched in Russia, or natural uranium from Kazakh or Uzbek mines, supply French and European nuclear power plants.

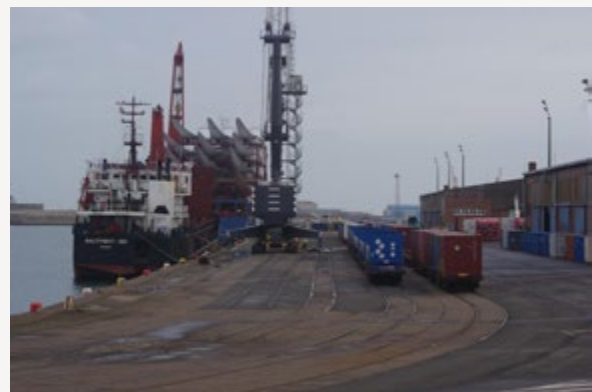
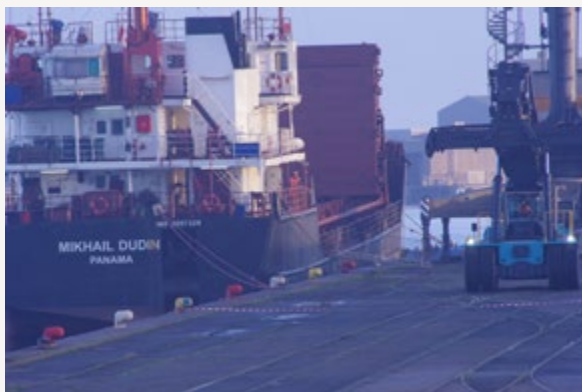
In fact, uranium trade between France and Russia increased in November 2025 with a new shipment to the Tomsok plant in Siberia of dozens of containers of reprocessed uranium (RepU) owned by EDF¹, despite a halt to exports of this RepU by the French government three years earlier after Greenpeace France revealed² the existence of this radioactive trafficking³.

While cargo ships such as the *Mikhail Dudin* and the *Baltiyskiy 202* no longer sail under the Russian flag, they are still chartered by Russian shipowners. Tracing the tangled web of companies behind these vessels leads to a Russian oligarch linked to Vladimir Putin's regime: Vladimir Lisin.

1 <https://www.greenpeace.fr/espace-presse/en-pleine-invasion-globale-russe-de-lukraine-la-france-reprend-les-exportations-duranium-de-retraitement-vers-la-russie/>

2 <https://www.greenpeace.fr/dechets-nucleaires-stop-aux-trafics-radioactifs/>

3 <https://www.greenpeace.fr/espace-presse/sanctions-de-lue-a-lencontre-de-la-russie-le-nucleaire-epargne-alors-quun-cargo-russe-est-au-port-de-dunkerque-pour-charger-des-dechets-nucleaires/>



The *Mikhail Dudin* and *Baltiyskiy 202* in the port of Dunkirk, in November and December 2025, respectively.

Thanks to its sphere of influence in Europe, Rosatom—Russia’s civil and military nuclear industry, serving the interests of Vladimir Putin’s regime—has so far avoided European sanctions⁴.

Since last year, discussions at the EU level have focused on whether to sanction Russia’s nuclear sector in application of the Roadmap to fully end EU dependency on Russian energy⁵ published by the European Commission in May 2025. But France is fighting hard in Brussels to prevent sanctions on its Russian economic partner⁶, and French companies such as EDF, Orano and Framatome continue their nuclear trade with the criminal company Rosatom⁷.

In March 2023, Greenpeace France published “Russia, the uranium hub” (in French), a report that included its field observations at the port of Dunkirk, uranium imports and exports in figures found in customs documents, as well as the various uranium routes⁸.

Nearly four years after Russia launched its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the present report sets out the most important information to date and updates the above-mentioned report:

- **France continues to import Russian uranium** — both natural enriched uranium and enriched reprocessed uranium (ERU)⁹. The information needed to distinguish between the two is not accessible to the public.
- Unlike Germany, which publishes the tracking slips of uranium imports, **trade in France remains murky**. Civil society groups can only access piecemeal customs data. In 2024 and 2025, nearly **half of enriched uranium imports came from countries that cannot be identified because they are listed as “unclassified” in customs records**.
- **France remains 100% dependent on Russia to make use of its reprocessed uranium (RepU)**, 35,000 tonnes of which are stored at Tricastin. No viable alternative appears economically feasible at present¹⁰.
- Every year, France **imports nearly half of the natural uranium it needs** from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. Although alternative routes have been developed since 2023, **a large part still transits under Rosatom’s control through Russian territory**, for delivery to the ports of Dunkirk and Rotterdam and **onward to Orano facilities**¹¹.

4 <https://euractiv.fr/news/guerre-en-ukraine-la-pression-monte-sur-lue-pour-quelle-sanctionne-rosatom/>

5 <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52025DC0440>

6 https://www.contexte.com/eu/article/energy/why-pulling-the-plug-on-russian-nuclear-may-prove-tricky_250524

7 <https://www.greenpeace.fr/espace-presse/investigation-framatome-continue-a-cooperer-avec-une-entreprise-detat-russe-criminelle/>

8 <https://www.greenpeace.fr/rapport-la-russie-plaque-tournante-de-luranium/>

9 ERU is produced by converting and re-enriching reprocessed uranium at the Tomsk site in Siberia — the only facility in the world capable of doing so.

10 <https://www.latribune.fr/article/entreprises-finance/energie-environnement/85063272583788/uranium-recycle-le-plan-d-edf-pour-se-defaire-de-la-russie-tombe-a-l-eau>

11 <https://www.greenpeace.fr/espace-presse/nucleaire-rosatom-livre-une-importante-cargaison-duranium-enrichi-a-la-france/>

- **Kazakhstan is France’s leading supplier of natural uranium.** While it is true that the French company Orano extracts uranium in Kazakhstan, in 2024 for example **France imported three times more uranium from Kazakhstan than can be attributed to Orano’s mines in the country.**
- **The Russian state maintains tight control over Kazakhstan’s mining sector,** adding to the other geopolitical and economic interests that tie Russia to Kazakhstan. Uranium One¹², a subsidiary of Russia’s Rosatom, **is the largest foreign stakeholder in uranium extraction in Kazakhstan,** despite changes in the ownership structures of the country’s mines in the past two years.
- **This uranium trade also enriches Vladimir Lisin, a Russian oligarch subject to sanctions by several countries,** and the owner of a maritime company sanctioned by the European Union. Even if the two cargo ships tracked by Greenpeace (the *Mikhail Dudin* and the *Baltiyskiy 202*) are not directly subject to sanctions, **it is outrageous that France continues to rely on vessels owned by a war profiteer for its uranium trade.** (More information is available in Greenpeace France’s analysis in the annexed document on the use of uranium cargo ships linked to Russia (“Enquête sur les cargos d’uranium liés au régime russe” (in French)).¹³
- Some of the natural uranium arriving in France transits through the port of Rotterdam. Among the companies authorised by the Dutch Authority for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection (ANVS)¹⁴ **to transport uranium on Orano’s behalf** are TAM International and Transard. Among the consignors of uranium shipped by these companies are **Kazakh mines co-operated by Uranium One.** This information raises a number of questions that only industry can answer: do Orano and EDF receive uranium from mines co-owned by a subsidiary of Rosatom? If so, how much? Do these French companies thereby indirectly help finance the Russian regime?

12 Rosatom’s Uranium One Group manages the company’s mining activities outside Russia.

13 <https://cdn.greenpeace.fr/site/uploads/2026/01/Greenpeace-enquete-sur-les-cargos-duranium-lies-au-regime-russe.pdf>

14 https://puc.overheid.nl/anvs/doc/PUC_769253_32/1/
https://puc.overheid.nl/anvs/doc/PUC_772079_32/1/

1. Overview of French uranium imports and exports via Rosatom

Detailed multi-year figures are presented in an annexed document¹⁵ updating the uranium import and export data contained in the March 2023 Greenpeace France report: “Russia: the uranium hub” (in French).

1.1 Uranium imports

Imports of natural uranium transiting through Russia

According to customs data, between 2022 and September 2025 close to half (between 40% and 50%) of France’s natural uranium imports came from **Kazakhstan** (between 23% and 30%) and **Uzbekistan** (between 14% and 20%), two former Soviet republics with strong logistical and economic ties with Russia. Some of this uranium arrived by cargo ship at the port of Dunkirk, as documented by Greenpeace France’s monitoring of the arrivals of the ships¹⁶.

Imports of enriched Russian uranium

Customs figures show that the share of enriched Russian uranium imports in France’s total uranium imports fell from 67% in 2022 to 54% in 2023, then to 24% in 2024. According to the same data, enriched uranium was imported only once between January and September 2025. Greenpeace also documented the presence of a significant shipment of enriched uranium in Dunkirk on 18 December 2025.

However, in 2024 half of all uranium imports came from countries “unclassified” in customs records. In 2025 and in 2024, France imported enriched uranium mainly from Germany and the Netherlands. It cannot be ruled out whether the uranium used in enrichment plants in those countries originated from a zone within Russia’s sphere of influence, after transiting through other European countries.

¹⁵ <https://cdn.greenpeace.fr/site/uploads/2026/01/Annexe-Uranium-Chiffres-a-jour-181225docx.pdf>

¹⁶ <https://www.greenpeace.fr/espace-presse/nouvelle-livraison-duranium-enrichi-russe-framatome-edf-continuent-de-commercer-avec-la-russie/>

1.2 Uranium exports

Very little enriched and depleted uranium has been exported from France to Russia in recent years. We do not know how customs authorities classify reprocessed uranium (RepU). First-hand observations by Greenpeace France at the port of Dunkirk are the only way to obtain information on this trafficking. They show that the last two exports of reprocessed uranium observed by Greenpeace France took place on 28 September 2022 and 15 November 2025, after a three-year pause¹⁷.

In the face of non-transparent customs data and a lack of any official figures on the subject from the ministry or nuclear companies, Greenpeace France will continue work on the ground to shed light on this radioactive trade.

¹⁷ <https://www.greenpeace.fr/espace-presse/en-pleine-invasion-globale-russe-de-lukraine-la-france-reprend-les-exportations-duranium-de-retraitement-vers-la-russie/>



Loading of reprocessed uranium at the port of Dunkirk in November 2025. © Greenpeace

2. Russia's grip on Kazakhstan's mines

2.1 Kazakhstan: the world champion of uranium extraction

Kazakhstan is the world's leading uranium producer: in 2024, it supplied **39% of global uranium output**. It holds 14% of recoverable uranium resources, surpassed only by Australia (28%)¹⁸. France is the world's second-largest importer of Kazakh uranium after the United States. Over the coming decade, however, China is expected to become by far Kazakhstan's leading customer, due to the expansion of its nuclear capacity¹⁹.

A former Soviet republic, Kazakhstan has maintained strong economic and political ties with Russia but also sought to diversify its relationships by moving closer to China and EU countries. Russian influence remains strong in Kazakhstan despite the invasion of Ukraine and is particularly evident in the nuclear sector. Russia is omnipresent in Kazakhstan's uranium extraction industry, **with Rosatom expected to lead an "international consortium" for the construction of Kazakhstan's first nuclear reactor**, despite Chinese and French interest in the project²⁰.

Russia's influence on Kazakhstan's nuclear industry, and more broadly the country's geopolitics, is described in more detail in Greenpeace France's 2023 report "Russia, the uranium hub"²¹.

18 <https://world-nuclear.org/information-library/nuclear-fuel-cycle/mining-of-uranium/world-uranium-mining-production>

19 Kazatomprom, Investor Handout, November 2025

20 <https://www.cirsd.org/en/horizons/horizons-winter-2025-i> ;
<https://jamestown.org/rosatom-to-build-kazakhstans-first-nuclear-power-plant-part-one/>

21 <https://www.greenpeace.fr/rapport-la-russie-plaque-tournante-de-luranium/>

2.2 Rosatom's central role in Kazakh mines

As of early 2026, Rosatom — through its subsidiary Uranium One — **remains the main foreign stakeholder in mining extraction in Kazakhstan**, despite changes in the ownership structures of the country's mines in the past two years. It is worth noting that while Kazakhstan seeks to increase control over its mineral resources²², recent legislative developments do not affect existing joint ventures or, at this stage, call into question the strong grip of foreign actors — particularly Rosatom — over the country's uranium.

Four mining companies are currently owned by Kazatomprom (Kazakhstan's national mining company) and Uranium One: **Akbastau JSC and Karatau LLP** (owned equally by the two entities), **Southern Mining Chemical Co. LLP (SMCC)**, and **the Budenovskoye LLP venture**²³. **Uranium One's purchase of almost half of the shares in the latter**, under conditions that raise transparency concerns²⁴, enabled Rosatom to maintain and potentially strengthen its control over part of Kazakhstan's mineral resources, even as Rosatom simultaneously sold its stakes in two other mines to Chinese stakeholders. **The Budenovskoye site**, where Rosatom is heavily present, **is set to account for over 10% of global uranium production** by 2026²⁵. Projections suggest it could be one of the **largest uranium sources in the world**²⁶.

Uranium One holds by far the largest uranium reserves among foreign players in Kazakhstan. Based on Greenhouse France's estimates²⁷, Russia is by a wide margin Kazatomprom's leading foreign partner: it holds 52% of the reserves attributable to foreign partners (excluding Kazatomprom's shares), i.e. 24% of the total reserves of mines operated in Kazakhstan (including Kazatomprom's shares).

22 https://www.kazatomprom.kz/en/media/view/announces_amendments_to_the_subsoil_use_code

23 Kazatomprom NAC, Annual Report, 2022. ;

<https://ecfr.eu/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Kazatomprom-Deals-with-CNNC-and-Rosatom.pdf>

24 <https://kaztag.kz/en/news/russia-uranium-deal-caused-manager-exodus-at-kazakh-mining-giant>

25 Ibid.

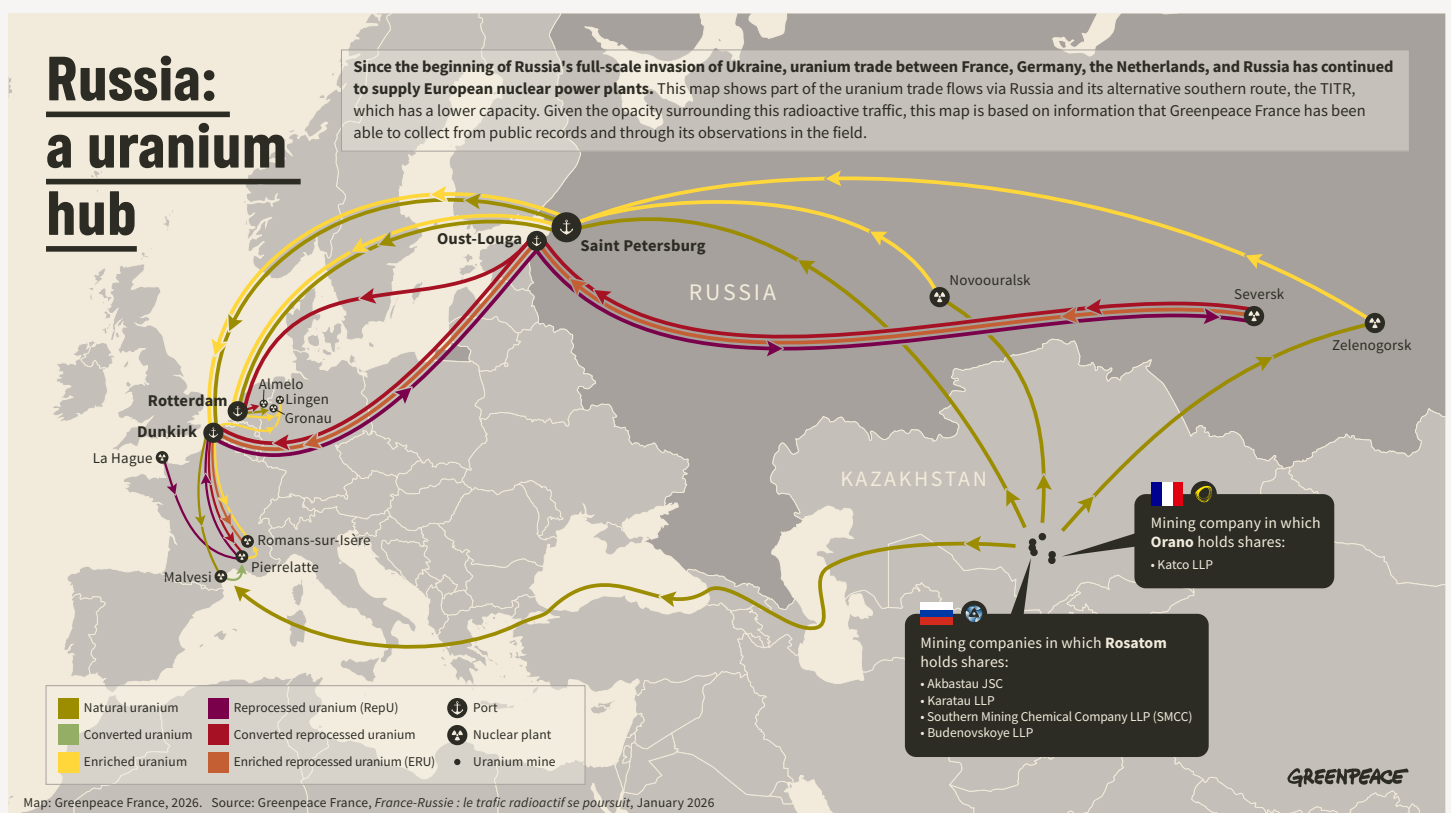
26 https://www.iris-france.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/OSFME_2023_07_14_Approvisionnement_enrichissement_uranium_Rapport.pdf

27 Estimate calculated on the basis of Kazatomprom's published data on uranium production currently attributable to each partner in a joint venture, in proportion to their shareholding. This figure may vary depending on specific inter-company agreements.

3. Uranium routes between Kazakhstan and Europe

As the 2023 Greenpeace report showed, most of the natural uranium extracted from Kazakh mines up to that point was routed to European countries via the port of Saint Petersburg, with the involvement of transport companies affiliated with Rosatom. While an alternative itinerary has existed since 2023, Kazatomprom still considers the Russian route to be its main export route to the West.

Kazakhstan's dependence on routes that pass through Russia to export its raw materials can subject it to geopolitical pressure from Moscow. This was demonstrated in July 2022 with the temporary shutdown of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium, an oil pipeline essential



to Kazakhstan's crude exports²⁸. The shutdown — ordered by a Russian court (officially due to document irregularities) — occurred two days after Kazakhstan offered to sell more oil to the European Union in light of the war against Ukraine. This is an example not only of Russia's leverage over Kazakhstan but also the risk of supply-chain disruption along routes that cross Russia. For several years, Kazatomprom has therefore sought to develop alternatives to its main export route for natural uranium to the West, which crosses Russia to Saint Petersburg where containers are loaded onto cargo ships. One such alternative is the **Trans-Caspian International Transport Route** (TITR).

The TITR is a rail and maritime freight system linking China to Europe. It runs from South-East Asia and China, crossing Kazakhstan, the Caspian Sea, Azerbaijan, Georgia and Turkey before reaching either Southern or Central Europe, depending on the cargo's destination. Geographically, it is the shortest route between western China and Europe.

The route has been significantly expanded since 2022, enabling 64% of trade for the West to be exported in 2023²⁹. That figure fell to 26% in 2024³⁰, with no clear explanation (it may also reflect customers' choices). The TITR nevertheless continues to face regulatory difficulties (limited volume quotas, administrative complexity due to transit through many jurisdictions) and economic challenges (volatile costs).

Uranium imports via the Netherlands

By using the MarineTraffic website to track the routes of the primary cargo ships transporting uranium between Russia and Europe — the *Mikhail Dudin* and the *Baltiyskiy 202* — Greenpeace France observed several stops made by these vessels at the port of Rotterdam before arriving in Dunkirk, or sometimes when departing from there.

The Dutch Authority for Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection (ANVS) publishes on its website the licences granted to carriers of nuclear materials. These licences confirm that some of the natural uranium from Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan (Russia is never mentioned) reaches France via Rotterdam. The quantities delivered to France are not specified.

28 This 1,511-kilometre pipeline links the oilfields of northern Kazakhstan (namely the Karachaganak field, near Oral on the Russian border, and the Kashagan and Tengiz fields in the Caspian Sea) to the Russian port of Novorossiysk on the Black Sea. Astana depends on the pipeline for over two-thirds of Kazakhstan's crude oil exports.

29 Kazatomprom, Investor Handout, November 2025

30 Kazatomprom, Operating and Financial Review for 2024, 19 March 2025.

4. Greenpeace France's demands

Greenpeace France calls on the French state:

- ▶ To elucidate the uranium trade by producing and publishing a report on France's uranium imports and exports, with a detailed breakdown of each form/category of uranium (natural uranium, enriched uranium, reprocessed uranium, enriched reprocessed uranium and depleted uranium).
- ▶ To oblige Orano, Framatome and EDF — of which it is the majority shareholder — to end their contracts and/or business relationships with Rosatom.
- ▶ To end collaboration between its institutions³¹, the French nuclear industry and Rosatom.
- ▶ To stop blocking sanctions against Rosatom at the European level, and to work actively to have Rosatom added to the list of entities subject to EU sanctions on Russia.

31 <https://www.greenpeace.fr/espace-presse/decryptage-lindustrie-nucleaire-francaise-une-alliee-du-regime-de-v-poutine/>



A demonstration in front of the iconic ferris wheel in Pripjat, an abandoned city near the Chernobyl nuclear power plant.