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[Publication](#) | 21.09.2006

Visit to Askola (uranium mining project in Finland)

Report from the visit in advance of the seminar "Safe and Secure Energy in Europe"

The Greens/EFA group hosted a two-day seminar in Helsinki during the Finnish Presidency of the EU, from 20-21 September, with the debate focusing on energy issues and how to achieve a safe and secure future for energy in Europe.

In advance of the opening session of the seminar, Greens/EFA MEPs took the opportunity to visit the site of a proposed uranium mining project at Lakeakallio in Askola, which is situated approximately one hour east of Helsinki.

During the early 1960s, there was a uranium research mine and enrichment facility in Lakeakallio. However, there is currently renewed interest in mining in Askola and other parts of Finland from several companies. The interest has been stimulated by the fivefold increase uranium prices over the past few years.

The vice chair of the Finnish Greens (Vihreä Liitto) and Uranium Free movement activist **Janne Länsipuro** hosted the visit. The group met the representatives from nuclear power company Areva and local officials, as well as local people opposed to the mining.

The local opposition is active and Uranium Free movement includes hundreds of local people who are worried about the consequences of possible mines on the environment and their health. They have filed several complaints with the Ministry of Trade and Industry about the mining proposals submitted by Areva and other companies. They also criticize the outdated mining legislation in Finland, which gives no room for citizens' involvement and influence. The Finnish Greens have made a proposal to revise the mining legislation.

The following delegation of Green MEPs took part in the visit: **Marie-Hélène Aubert** (France), **Margaret Auken** (Denmark), **Michael Cramer** (Germany), **Rebecca Harms** (Germany), **Satu Hassi** (Finland), **Marie-Anne Isler Beguin** (France), **Sepp Kusstatscher** (Italy), **Carl Schlyter** (Sweden) and **Claude Turmes** (Luxembourg).

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