

# Status of Uranium Exploration in Finland

## Uranium in Finnish bedrock attracts exploration companies

- Finnish bedrock contains uranium, and its abundance in some places appeals to exploring companies. Until mid-80s, uranium was also explored in Finland – and even small-scale mining operations – were carried out in Eno, eastern Finland, and Askola, southern Finland.
- Following a long hiatus, international uranium-prospecting companies have also, due to uranium price hikes, begun to show interest in Finland, especially the Uusimaa, Northern Karelia and Lapland provinces.

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- Cogema applied for uranium-prospecting reservations in Uusimaa and Northern Karelia in 2004, and Agricola Resources Plc in southern Lapland (Salla) in Northern Karelia (Eno) in 2005.
- Claim applications filed by Cogema in November 2005 applied to the regions of the Pukkila, Askola, Porvoo, Myrskylä and Pernaja municipalities in southern Finland. Its second claim application covered the regions of the Eno and Kontiolahti municipalities in eastern Finland. The claim applications involve a total of 184 claim areas and 173 km<sup>2</sup>.

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- In late 2005, the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) received both applications for claim reservations and claims from Belvedere Resources Ltd and claim applications from Scandinavian Gold Prospecting Ltd in Lapland. Granted reservations covered, for example, Kiikala, Somero, Suomusjärvi, Nummi-Pusula (all three in southern Finland) Eno and Salla, with a total area of 315 km<sup>2</sup>.
- In 2005 the discussion started first in Eastern Uusimaa (Askola and Pukkila) and little later in Northern Karelia and as last in Western Uusimaa. From local discussion it soon became national and even international.

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- If the MTI approves the claim applications, the mining companies will be permitted to explore for uranium. Claims can remain in force for many years, given that the time from the beginning of uranium exploration to the beginning of mining operations may span several years. A rule is maximum 5 years and a possible continuation of three years before entering the mining certificate phase.
- Mining operations will pay only if the uranium deposits and concentrations prove adequate in size and grade. Uranium mining is subject to a concession or a licence granted by the Finnish government.

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- The final license is based on the Government's view of the “overall good of the society”, Nuclear Energy Act, 5 §. The Environmental Impact Assessment has to be done before any mining activities.
- The Nuclear Energy Decree gives detailed demands of the licence application for an application of starting a mine activity (61-64 §). Environmental, radiation protection and even the Euratom requirements are given there.
- However, the local, regional and national critics of uranium exploration or mining have seen even a possibility of uranium mining impossible to accept.

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- Starting mining operations also requires a mining certificate (a licence required by the Mining Act), environmental permits granted by the Environmental Authorities, and a general plan approved by the Safety Technology Authority.
- The Mining Act is from 1965 but it has been developed during the years. A new law is under preparation.
- The demands by the new Constitution and the new Administrative law call for amendments in the Mining Act. For instance public hearings and the rights of land owners have to be taken into account better than today. The Ministry applied some of these new demands in its statement rounds for the uranium exploration claims in 2006.

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- Because Finnish companies do not make nuclear fuel, and uranium ore or concentrate would have to be processed abroad for fuel for nuclear power stations. Enrichment, conversion and fuel production could happen in many European countries.
- The MTI or the Radiation and Nuclear Safety Authority STUK grants an expert licence permitting exports of enriched uranium. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) supervises the use of uranium and its multi-stage conversion into a fuel.
- The radiation law applies in all industrial activities in Finland.
- The all affected authorities formed an ad-hoc group in 2006 to study the demands of legislation and authority activities for uranium exploration and possible mining.

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## Northern Karelia Decision

- On 10 October 2006, the Ministry of Trade and Industry made a decision on a claim application for uranium prospecting, filed by Cogema, now calling itself Areva NC, applying to the regions in the Eno and Kontiolahti municipalities in Northern Karelia.
- The decision is available in full on the Ministry's website at ([www.ktm.fi/paatos8073](http://www.ktm.fi/paatos8073)). There you can find also reservation and claim applications and other relevant material.
- Accordingly, Cogema will be authorised to explore for uranium and other ores using measures causing minimum harm to the environment. The permission does not cover test mining or test enrichment (concentration). Here an EIA is also needed.



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## Northern Karelia Decision

- The decision rejects the claim areas in the municipality of Eno, appearing in the application, to the extent that they located in the master plan area with legal effect. In other respects, the claim application has been approved with a number of conditions and restrictions attached.
- The decision takes account of the interrelationship of the Mining Act with other legislation, especially environmental legislation and regulations governing radiation safety.

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## Northern Karelia Decision and the future

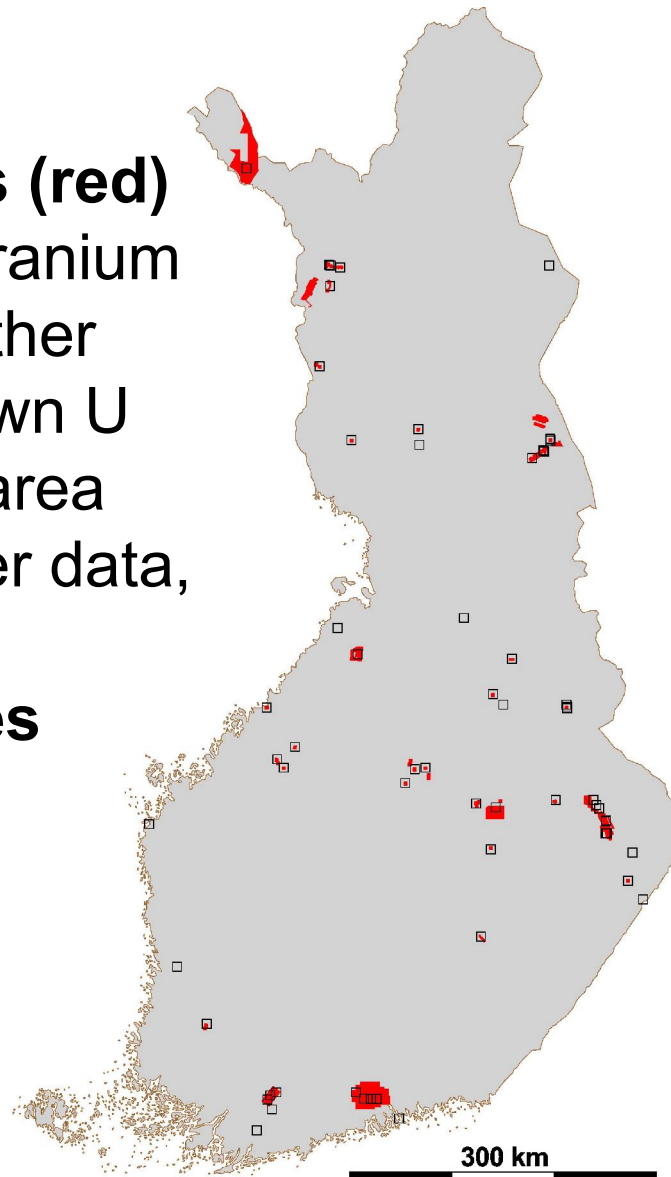
- While processing the claim application, the Ministry of Trade and Industry has also taken account of what has been presented in statements and opinions by the municipalities of Eno and Kontiolahti and other relevant stakeholders.
- The Ministry of Trade and Industry will continue to process other claim applications. Several new applications have been registered in the Ministry this autumn.
- Ministry rejected the applications (one reservation and three claims) of Agricola Resources Plc on 16 October (municipalities of Eno, Kontiolahti, Salla).
- The possibilities to have new decisions this year are small.

## Claim reservations (red)

- those applied for uranium
- those applied for other metals but with known U occurrences in the area
- MTI Mining Register data, May 2006

## U & Th occurrences (squares)

- GTK database



## Claim reservations (red)

## Claims

- applied
- approved
- rejected

