

Last nuclear waste train heads to Germany

November 26 2011



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Organisers said they were expecting some 20,000 people to protest in the town of Dannenberg, where the 11 containers of reprocessed German [nuclear waste](#) being carried by the train are due to be unloaded.

They will then be transported by heavy goods trucks for the final 20 kilometres (12 miles) to Gorleben, where the waste will be stored.

A number of largely peaceful protests have slightly slowed the progress of the train since it left Normandy in France on Wednesday.

Activists blocked the train tracks at the town of Neunkirchen Friday afternoon where the train stopped for five hours to change engines and television pictures showed activists removing ballast stones from under the tracks in a bid to slow the train's progress.



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There were isolated outbreaks of violence on Thursday and Friday in Metzingen, near to Gorleben, where 10 masked people attacked police with bricks and smoke bombs but managed to escape arrest, said an AFP photographer at the scene.

Police said unknown assailants had set fire to two patrol cars.

Also on Thursday, police deployed water cannon and tear gas against a few hundred protesters who tried to block the road near Gorleben, resulting in a handful of arrests and light injuries on both sides.

The number of protestors expected at Dannenberg is however fewer than half those who turned out this time last year, when Germany was at the

height of a debate over nuclear power in the country.

In November 2010 tens of thousands of activists protested another shipment, delaying the train by a whole day.



A group of leftist activists attack a police van protecting the train tracks near Metzingen, northern Germany. Thousands of German anti-nuclear protesters mobilised against a train carrying radioactive nuclear waste from France that has already sparked violent opposition.

Since then, however, in the wake of March's [nuclear disaster](#) in Fukushima, Japan, the [German government](#) has decided to abandon [atomic power](#). This appears to have dampened the protests.

This is expected to be the last such shipment from France. But from 2014, nuclear waste will be transported to Germany from a British processing plant at Sellafield.

In June, Chancellor Angela Merkel's government agreed to halt all German reactors by 2022, forcing energy suppliers to close the plants.

But Germany is still debating the problem of storing nuclear waste,

which has potentially harmful effects.

Environmentalists say that the nuclear radiation in the Gorleben zone exceeds the authorised levels.

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