

PRESS RELEASE

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About Andra

The French National Radioactive Waste Management Agency (*Agence nationale pour la gestion des déchets radioactifs - Andra*) is a public industrial and commercial establishment instituted by the *Law of 30 December 1991*. Its missions were enhanced by the *Planning Act of 28 June 2006 Concerning the Sustainable Management of Radioactive Materials and Waste*.

Andra is independent from radioactive-waste producers and placed under the supervision of the Ministries for Energy, the Environment and Research.

Andra is in charge of the sustainable management of all French radioactive waste. It provides the French government with its expertise and know-how in order to design management solutions and to operate and to monitor disposal facilities for radioactive waste by protecting human beings and the environment against their effects over the short and long terms.

## Andra asked to join in the monitoring network for the atmospheric releases of the Icelandic volcano

**Thanks to its new laser remote-detection instrument, Andra is participating in the atmospheric monitoring of the ashes of the Eyjafjöll volcano, which erupted on 14 April. Its evolving activity has led Andra to continue its co-operation with European weather agencies and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO).**

In the framework of its Perennial Environmental Observatory (*Observatoire pérenne de l'environnement - OPE*), Andra was planning to implement at the end of 2010, an atmospheric weather station at its Meuse/Haute-Marne Centre (CMHM), with a view to monitoring air quality, greenhouse gases and aerosols. The station already includes a new measuring instrument by remote laser detection, called LIDAR, (light detection and ranging), which was commissioned on 4 March 2010. The device is designed not only to perform streaming analyses of the atmosphere, but also of certain events, such as the inflow of particles, like Sahara dust or... volcanic ashes.

Last 14 April, a little more than one month after the LIDAR was commissioned at the CMHM, the Eyjafjöll volcano became active in Iceland and started to release its ashes and dust into the atmosphere (with more or less intensity in proportion with variations in eruptive activity). The international network, which is responsible for tracking down the fluctuations in the migration of volcanic releases thanks to seven LIDAR devices disseminated throughout Europe, then solicited Andra to join the monitoring programme. Hence, when ashes spread over Europe, they were monitored by the CMHM's LIDAR device, notably with a reading at an altitude of 5 km, late in the afternoon of 16 April.

After the first 15 days of alert, the volcano's activity decreased progressively, before increasing again in early May. It was therefore decided at that point to maintain Andra's co-operation with European weather agencies and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) in order to maintain observations in case of a new eruption. The data collected by the different protagonists are gathered within the LEONET Programme (<http://leo-net.eu/>).

**Fore more information:**

<http://leo-net.eu/>

[www.insu.cnrs.fr/a3480,suivi-emissions-cendres-volcan-islandais-eyjafjoll.html](http://www.insu.cnrs.fr/a3480,suivi-emissions-cendres-volcan-islandais-eyjafjoll.html)

[http://france.meteofrance.com/france/actu/actu?document\\_id=22814&portlet\\_id=54866](http://france.meteofrance.com/france/actu/actu?document_id=22814&portlet_id=54866)