Ladies and gentlemen!

I would like to thank Lofoten mot Sellafield for hosting this meeting and providing an opportunity for dialogue with representatives of Sellafield.

I am pleased that you have taken the time to come to Lofoten to listen to our concerns regarding Sellafield, and I hope you will give us some update on the latest developments and plans regarding Sellafield and Thorp. I also hope we will have a interesting debate and come to agreement regarding the meeting in Brussels later this autumn.

I represent the beautiful region of Norway called Nordland. Nordland County is the third northernmost county in Norway with a population of 240,000 inhabitants. To show you some of the spectacular nature we have in this region I will like to show you a little movie.

As you just have seen our region and our people live in close contact with and are dependent on, our natural resources. We like to say that we hosts the world's most beautiful coast! Our county is a persistent meeting between sea and land. The coast and islands have been inhabited for centuries, and remains so. Lofoten is repeatedly named one of the world's most beautiful archipelago.

Our rich resources and location has given us advantages within areas like fishing, mineral exploitation and energy production. Tourism is an important industry both in the urban and rural areas of Nordland.

As you understand, there are many reasons why we love our county. And that’s the main reason why the activity on Sellafield has been on the political agenda for several years. The operation and decommissioning of Sellafield is an issue of great political and public concern, also for the population of Nordland. As you know, Norway has no nuclear installations of its own, apart from two research reactors. But there are many nuclear installations and other sources of pollution risk in our neighbourhood.

Some of these installations are of particular concern to us, because they:
represent a huge potential for radioactive releases
because of concerns over safety
and due to their geographical position and potential to cause air- and water-born pollution in Norway and Nordland.

We consider Sellafield, and in particular the storage facilities for liquid High Level Waste, to be such a high risk site. Others include the remaining Chernobyl-type reactors and the Kola Nuclear Power Plant close to our border with Russia.

Sellafield has a clear potential to cause transboundary radioactive pollution in the event of a major accident or incident. Prevailing winds and sea-currents make Norway and also Nordland the closest neighbour downstream.
Both the history of acid rain and that of discharges from Sellafield demonstrate that Norway is at risk if a major release of radioactivity should occur.

The assessment from the Norwegian radiation Protection Authority have assessed the potential impacts on Norway in terms of radioactive pollution and the consequences this may have for the population. We are concerned of the highly hazardous High Level Waste from reprocessing at Sellafield. It goes without saying that if just a fraction of this liquid waste is released to the atmosphere, the consequences could be serious also for neighbouring countries like Norway.

So, my main concern is related to the safety culture at Sellafield. My hopes are that you do whatever you can to further improve safety and to give us the information we need to reassure the population of Nordland. We hope that you do whatever is possible to reduce the hazard related to nuclear waste stored at Sellafield, and that you do it fast!

To reassure us, and the inhabitants of Nordland we seek an international expert peer review. This will give re-assurance that there is a robust case for operating THORP safely.

The Norwegian approach to Sellafield is political dialogue. And I am grateful to have the opportunity to day to be in such a close dialogue with all of you. We hope on further transparency and access to relevant information. I need to reassure the population of Nordland that we receive the relevant information if an accident occurs.

In my opinion, the dialogue between UK an Norwegian authorities over Sellafield is constructive and useful. I hope we can continue this dialog and have a constructive meeting today and forward to the meeting in Brussels.

Thank you for your attention!