No 1 december 2006

NEWSLETTER

EUROPEAN TRAINING AND EDUCATION IN RADIATION PROTECTION PLATFORM

In this issue more about the Platform, the logo, a summary of the Feasibility Study and the first workshop in May 2007

Introducing the Steering Committee

The European Commission has appointed a Steering Committee to supervise the project and to assist the coordinator in its tasks.

The Steering Committee will meet about twice a year. The kick-off meeting was held on 11-12 May 2006 in Brussels. At this meeting, the Steering Committee has been officially inaugurated. During the meeting, the Steering Committee has, together with the coordinator, elaborated a methodology plan for addressing the legal and administrative aspects and the functional aspects the Platform.

The second Steering Committee meeting has been held on 7-8 November 2006 in Brussels. The meeting addressed the progress made in setting up the Platform and discussed the contents of the website, the first Newsletter and the programme of the first workshop.

The members of the Steering Committee are:
I. McAulay, (Member), Euratom Art. 31 Expert Group
J. Naegele, (Scientific Officer; Member), EC, D.-G. TREN
M. Coeck, (Member), SCK.CEN, Belgium
G. Morkūnas, (Member), RSC, Lithuania
R. Paynter, (Member), HPA-RPD, United Kingdom
S. Mundigl, (Observer), EC, D.-G. TREN
G. van Goethem, (Observer), EC, D.-G. RTD
G. Sadagopan, (Observer), IAEA
C. Wernli, (Observer), IRPA
K. Olsen, (Observer), IFOMP
D. Owen, (Observer), IOE

The Steering Committee at their meeting in November. From left to right: Christian Wernli; Richard Paynter; Ian McAulay; Jochen Naegele; Michèle Coeck; Jan van der Steen; Geetha Sadagopan; Gendrutis Morkūnas.

Editorial

In Europe, there are no doubts that there is a need to maintain and even increase the expertise related to radiation protection. A common training and education strategy should take into consideration:

- Public expectations regarding health and safety related to nuclear matters, e.g. through training and communication at all levels.
- Better sharing of training and education resources and knowledge amongst public and private organisations.
- A European added value of building up strengths and shrinking weaknesses in training and education organisations through networking across the European Union.

A common European vision for maintaining competences in radiation protection is emerging, focussing on a common denominator for qualification of radiation protection experts and for mutual recognition and mobility of these experts across the European Union. Therefore, the European Commission, D.-G. Transport and Energy, has now launched the initiative to establish a European Radiation Protection Training and Education Platform (EUTERP Platform), to address a number of issues related to education, training, recognition and mutual acceptance of radiation protection experts.

The objectives of the Platform can be summarised as:

- to remove obstacles for the mobility of RPEs within the European Union through harmonisation of criteria and qualifications for and mutual recognition of such experts;
- to facilitate the transnational access to vocational education and training;
- to better integrate education and training into occupational radiation protection infrastructures in the Member, Candidate and Associated States of the European Union.

It is recognised that all countries have developed their own education system over a long period of time and it would be impossible to strive to uniformity in the educational approach. Instead of that, and despite the diversity of education and training systems, harmonisation should be reached by evolution of internationally agreed common minimum criteria for the qualifications of the RPE. Recognition should not only be based on the initial education and training, but also on competence. A pragmatic and stepwise approach is necessary for a harmonised and internationally agreed system of recognition of RPEs. The Platform could provide the basis for such an international agreement.

We proudly present herewith the first issue of the EUTERP Newsletter, which gives some basic information about the approach of the EUTERP project, the activities of the Platform, the possibilities of participation, as well as the conclusions of the feasibility study that has led to the establishment of the Platform. We hope that it raises your interest. More copies of the Newsletter can be downloaded from the website of the EUTERP Platform at www.euterp.eu.

J. van der Steen, EUTERP Coordinator
E-mail: vandersteen@nrg-nl.com

Introduction

Article 33 of the Euratom Treaty1 requires that Member States shall lay down appropriate provisions to ensure compliance with the Basic Safety Standards and in particular measures shall be taken with regard to teaching, education and vocational training.

The European Union's radiation protection Basic Safety Standards Directive 96/29/Euratom[2] constitutes a binding set of rules on the basis of which Member States are obliged to adopt appropriate national legislation.

Amongst others, the Basic Safety Standards Directive requires that each Member State shall make the necessary arrangements to recognise, as appropriate, the capacity of qualified experts (QEs). According to the definition given by the BSS Directive, QEs are persons having the knowledge and training needed to carry out physical, technical or radiochemical tests enabling doses to be assessed, and give advice in order to ensure effective protection of individuals and the correct operation of protective equipment. Their capacity to act as qualified experts shall be recognised by the competent authorities. QEs may be assigned the technical responsibility for the tasks of radiation protection of workers and members of the public.

In the Communication concerning the implementation of Council Directive 96/29/Euratom[3], the Commission made a first step towards harmonisation of criteria for Radiation Protection Experts (RPEs)[4] as used in the Member States. Annex I of the Communication recommends a basic syllabus for training of these experts and provided some accompanying guidance text. A survey carried out in 2002[5] shows, however, a considerable variation in the approaches of European countries to the radiation protection education and vocational training arrangements for radiation protection. Furthermore, there exists diversity in the qualifications and diplomas necessary for the recognition of RPEs. This diversity creates an obstruction to the mobility of these experts in the enlarged European Union.

Pursuant to Article 3(c) of the EC Treaty the abolition of obstacles to freedom of movement between Member States of persons and services constitutes one of the objectives of the European Union. This means in particular the possibility of pursuing a profession in a Member State other than the one where these persons have acquired their professional qualifications. For those professions for which the European Union has not laid down the necessary minimum levels of qualification, Member States reserve the option of fixing such levels with a view to guaranteeing the quality of services provided in their country. Taking into account the results of the 2002 survey, the Commission concluded that an efficient and highly effective instrument for the achievement of these major objectives is the inauguration of a European Platform on Training and Education in Radiation Protection.

In this context, the Commission ordered in 2004 a feasibility study for the initiation of such a Platform[6]. This study resulted in a description of a methodology for the establishment and operation of the Platform and identified key issues for an envisaged work program. The study recommended that the Platform should be seen as a permanent office, which operates and maintains an infrastructure established for the exchange of information, for drafting guidelines and recommendations, for issuing a regular newsletter and for organising meetings or workshops. The Platform should facilitate the harmonisation of education and training for RPEs, thereby removing the obstacles for the mobility of these experts within the European Union.

Both the survey and the feasibility study showed a great interest of Member and Candidate States to participate in such a Platform, aiming to facilitate mutual recognition of diplomas and qualifications in the radiation protection field. Therefore, the Commission has now launched the above-mentioned project to establish the EUTERP Platform. It shall be created as a network and cover the 25 European Union Member States as well as the Candidate States Bulgaria, Croatia, Romania and Turkey. In view of the interpenetrating labour markets it shall integrate also the Associated States Norway and Switzerland.

The EUTERP Platform shall be an instrument for the participating countries to align their national requirements in order to avoid discrimination of RPEs from other countries. It shall clarify the role of RPEs in different work sectors, taking into account the definition of the QE in Directive 96/29/Euratom and the guidance given in Annex I of the Commission's Communication and shall ensure a permanent dialogue between all involved parties. Conclusions may be formulated by the Platform participants including recommendations for initiatives to be taken by the Commission.

Summary of the Feasibility Study

The feasibility study to establish the EUTERP Platform is a follow-up of a survey in 2002 on the situation of radiation protection experts in the Member and Applicant States of the European Union. The survey showed a great interest among the countries to establish a platform to allow for a better harmonisation of education and training requirements in the different areas of radiation protection. The Commission has taken notice of this union-wide interest and investigated the possibilities for setting up such a network.

The feasibility study resulted in recommendations, based on the summary and conclusions obtained by the exchange of information and experience in a workshop held at CIEMAT, Madrid, Spain, on 20-21 May 2004, that has been attended by most of the Member and Candidate States of the European Union. The workshop dealt with programmatic issues that should be taken up in the work plan of the Platform, as well as structural issues, to ensure an effective and efficient conduct of the work. It identified how the Platform

[1] Treaty establishing the European Atomic Energy Community (signed in Rome on 25 March 1957).
[2] Council Directive of 13 May 1996 laying down basic safety standards for the health protection of the general public and workers against the dangers of ionising radiation. Council Directive 96/29/Euratom. Official Journal L-159 of 29 June 1996.
[3] Communication from the Commission concerning the implementation of Council Directive 96/29/Euratom. Official Journal L-133 of 30 April 1998.
[4] The term RPE is used for those experts that comply with the national requirements for radiation protection experts in a certain country. The term QE is used for those experts that comply with the definition in the BSS. RPEs may or may not comply with the definition of the QE, depending on the national systems of education and training and the national regulations.
[5] The Status of the Radiation Protection Expert in the EU Member States and Applicant Countries: Study on Education and Training in Radiation Protection. Radiation Protection Series of the European Commission, Issue No 133, 2003.
[6] J. van der Steen; F.S. Draaisma; M. Marco Arboli. Initiation of the European Platform on Training and Education in Radiation Protection (EUTERP Platform). NRG Report 21421/04.60160, 11 October 2004.

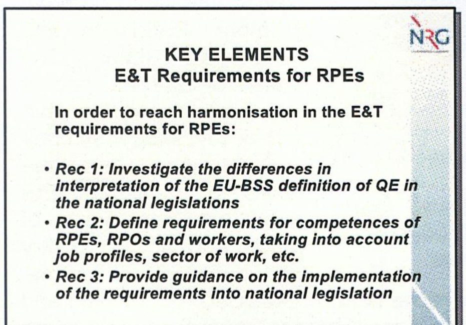
could be initiated and developed in order to achieve the expected results.

Programmatic aspects

Nineteen recommendations have been identified dealing with the work programme of the Platform. These were divided in 6 different topics, namely:

- Education and training requirements for Radiation Protection Experts
- Effectiveness, efficiency and quality management of the Platform
- Training needs
- Training courses
- Mutual recognition, and
- Education and training infrastructure.

The recommendations dealing with the education and training requirements for radiation protection experts were considered to be key elements, which should be addressed with the highest priority by the Platform. The Platform should not restrict itself to requirements for Radiation Protection Experts, but should also address the differences between experts, officers and workers. Furthermore, it was considered necessary to develop guidance on the implementation of the requirements into national regulations. This may lead to recommendations from the Platform about actions from the side of the European Commission, preferably by guiding instruments or eventually by legislative actions.



The key elements of the programmatic issues, as defined at the workshop of the feasibility study, Madrid, May 2004

Regarding the effectiveness, efficiency and quality management of the Platform, it was considered necessary to develop performance indicators, in order to measure the progress of work, to investigate the impact of the Platform and the success of implementation of recommendations. A system of feedback of information about the success and failure of training events should be adopted, in order to make it possible to learn from the past and improve future events. Formal quality management or quality assurance methods should be applied to ensure a high quality of performance of the Platform. By inviting other networks to participate in the Platform and by ensuring that project results are made available to the Platform, an efficient use of the results of other projects and other international networks can be made. This could eventually lead to the identification and formulation of new research in this field.

In order to combat the decline in radiation protection expertise within the European Union, it is important to investigate the training needs and training capabilities for each sector of work in the various countries. For an effective use of resources, it is necessary to identify how much training activities should be organised in the future, how this should be done and where these activities should take place. It was recognised that in some European projects, carried out or planned in the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission, such investigations will take place for certain sectors of work. The results should be used by the Platform as input for identifying additional work.

It was recommended to peer review national and international training courses and materials for compliance with the basic syllabus and for reasons of success or failure. For harmonising training materials, it was recommended to make use of a proven approach to establish standardised material, such as done by the IAEA. For planning purposes, it would be helpful to establish a database of training materials and training events.

With respect to mutual recognition, it was concluded that it is necessary to investigate the systems of recognition of Radiation Protection Experts in the various countries, and specifically to analyse the reasons for recognising, or not recognising, foreign Experts. Guidance should be developed about who is responsible for mutual recognition, i.e. regulatory authorities, professional organisations, or other bodies. The Platform could play a role in the development of this guidance, or may recommend the European Commission to do so.

It was concluded that guidance and support is necessary on how to establish a common infrastructure for education and training in radiation protection throughout the European Union. The Platform could recommend the European Commission on the actions to be taken to implement this common infrastructure. A number of international institutions and organisations have already been active in this field, such as the IAEA, IRPA and the European Federation of Organisations of Medical Physicists (EFOMP). For a consistent approach, and in order to avoid duplication of work, it is necessary to co-operate with these organisations to promote a consistent approach.

Structural aspects

The national participants of the Platform should cover the following categories:

- National competent radiation protection authorities;
- National bodies responsible for professional education and vocational training;
- Providers of training and education in the radiation protection area;
- Professional organisations representing the receivers of training and education.

When all the categories are represented in the Platform per country, this would lead to a few hundred participants. The advantage would be that all parties willing to participate are represented in the Platform. Participation can only be organised on a voluntary basis. Parties that are no longer interested may withdraw from the Platform.

Since one of the main objectives of the Platform is to reach international agreement on criteria for mutual recognition of Radiation Protection Experts, Radiation Protection Officers and Radiation Workers, it is necessary to have national viewpoints on these issues. To make the Platform efficient and effective, it would therefore be desirable if the Platform participants of each country have internal national discussions, preferably before the workshops where the issues are being discussed. As a consequence, to accommodate the input of all categories at a national level, it was concluded that it would be necessary to establish in each country structural contacts between all Platform participants within a country. Such national contacts groups could serve as outposts for the Platform. They could select national contact points for the Platform

to prepare standpoints on different issues at stake in the Platform, and to carry out coordinating tasks on a national level as input for the Platform. It was argued that the establishment of such national outposts would strengthen the national involvement in and commitment to the work of the EUTERP Platform. It was concluded that this is a prerequisite for reaching a sustainable and self-supporting Platform after a certain period of time.

Conclusions of the feasibility study

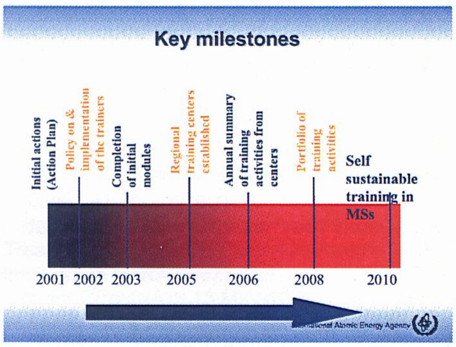
There was a general consensus about the framework of the Platform, which should be run by a co-ordinator with the help of a Steering Committee. Given the large number of potential participants, the structure of the Platform should ensure an efficient and effective management. It should make it possible to co-operate with other projects and networks and it should be self-sustainable after an initial period of time.

It was concluded that the objectives of the feasibility study have been fully met. The fast responses on the invitations to nominate participants for the workshop, specifically from the new Member States and Candidate States, reflected the great importance that was given by the participants to the subject. It showed the willingness to participate, also when the Platform has been established and is operational. This will also promote the national involvement and commitment to the subject, which is important for reaching a self-sustainable Platform after some years.

Strategy to achieve the objectives of the Platform

At the moment, there are a number of ongoing and planned national and international activities related to education and training and to recognition of Radiation Protection Experts. First of all, under the topic Education and Training of the 6th Framework Programme of the European Commission, several projects have been selected that address radiation protection in various sectors of work.

Secondly, the IAEA has developed a strategy plan to establish sustainable radiation protection education and training infrastructures in its member states. A Steering Committee on Education and Training in Radiation Protection and Waste Safety has been established in 2002 and advises the IAEA on the progress of its strategy plan.



Strategic plan of IAEA for sustainable E&T infrastructures in Member States

Thirdly, IRPA has declared that Education and Training is a key factor in establishing effective national radiation protection programmes.

All these initiatives deal with education and training, each with its own specific objectives. All of them have in common that they aim to combat the decline in Radiation Protection Experts and to make effective use of training resources. By their international structure, they are facilitating the international harmonisation of the education and training programmes as well as the criteria for recognition. The strategy for the Platform should therefore be to obtain the position of centre half with respect to all education, training and recognition activities in the European Union. It should establish close links with all these projects and organisations. The results of the various projects can on the one hand be disseminated by the Platform in an effective way throughout the European Union and they can also be used as input for further work of the Platform. Furthermore, the Platform could act as an advisory body for the European Commission on education and training issues. The Platform should promote the use of standardised training material in the various countries, identify the training needs and facilitate in the support and assistance of establishing a high standard of radiation protection in all European countries. By doing so, the participants should be convinced of the importance of participating in the Platform, thus assuring a self-sustainable co-ordination body in the longer term.

The Euterp Logo

Euterpe and Urania. Detail from Pompeo Battoni (1708-1787), Apollo and the Two Muses.

The logo shows the map of Europe, and the 12 stars of the European Union. This symbolizes the aim of the Platform: a network that is initiated by the European Commission to foster the exchange of information on training and education in radiation protection in all European Member, Candidate and Associated States. The statue of Euterpe, one of the nine muses of the Greek mythology, symbolizes harmony. Called the "Giver of Pleasure", Euterpe was the muse of music and of lyric poetry and depicted holding the aulos, a double-flute. Her name is from Greek eu (good, well) and τέρπ-εω (to please). Music will really please when all musicians are playing in good harmony. Let us make the EUTERP Platform leading to harmony in the qualifications and criteria for radiation protection experts throughout Europe.

Colophon

Coordination
Jan van der Steen

Layout
Cora Blankendaal

Webmaster
Roland Jansma

E-mail: info@euterp.eu
Internet: www.euterp.eu