

## **Safety Practice in Western and Eastern Europe**

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Nuclear Safety is a national responsibility.

As a consequence, the regulatory bodies have to devote time to international relations:

- bilateral relations,
- "official" multilateral relations through international organisations (IAEA, NEA, EU),
- "multi-bilateral" relations through associations such as INRA, WENRA.

An example with WENRA activities.

WENRA groups the Heads of regulatory bodies of Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, the UK. Officially created in February 1999, with two objectives:

- to provide the European Institutions with a technical opinion on nuclear safety in EU candidate countries,
- to harmonise the national safety approaches.

A logical working methodology would have been:

- develop a harmonised safety approach,
- then, apply it to the situation in EU candidate countries.

WENRA did the opposite:

- develop a common technical opinion on nuclear safety in the EU candidate countries, expressed in two successive versions of a report,
- ask experts from WENRA countries to suggest a methodology for harmonising the /safety approaches.

The two successive versions of the report on nuclear safety in the EU candidate countries covered:

- the 7 candidate countries with nuclear power plants (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia),
- for each country:
  - the regulatory regime and regulatory body,
  - the safety status of the nuclear power reactors.

On harmonisation:

- two groups were created: on power reactors and on waste management,
- while the group on waste management is entering in an active working phase, the group on reactors:
  - proposed a methodology,
  - performed a benchmark exercise to validate its methodology,
  - was requested by WENRA members to further refine it and to proceed with its application.

Why such a challenge on harmonisation?

- the public is pressing for more and more transparency,
- the public will not understand that what is acceptable in one country is not safe enough in another,
- in an increasingly deregulated electricity market and an ever more international context, utilities will press for harmonisation,
- the work now concentrates on safety harmonisation for existing reactors, but it is also valid for future reactors.

What are the immediate implications?

WENRA succeeded in expressing a technical opinion on nuclear safety in the candidate countries,

this means that WENRA countries indeed have common views on nuclear safety,

expressing these common views is a second challenge for WENRA .

Other implications are:

- how to involve or associate non-nuclear EU countries in WENRA's harmonisation work?
- how to involve or associate EU candidate countries in WENRA's harmonisation work?

In both cases, common meetings already took place and others are planned, but further ways of interaction may have to be found.

### **Conclusions**

- WENRA decided to accept important challenges,
- a first one was to provide a technical opinion on nuclear safety in EU candidate countries,
- it clearly showed that harmonisation of safety approaches was achievable,
- the corresponding actions have been initiated,
- harmonising safety approaches will need time: results can only be expected in the medium to long-term.