



*Towards Convergence of  
Technical Nuclear Safety Practices in Europe*

Brussels - 2 & 3 November 2009

Ladies and Gentlemen, distinguished Guests, dear Colleagues,

As Director-General of GRS I would also like to welcome you very warmly to this year's EUROSAFE Forum. It is a great pleasure for me to see that so many of you have followed our invitation to come here to Brussels today.

The general motto of our EUROSAFE Approach, "Towards Convergence of Technical Nuclear Safety Practices in Europe", is becoming more and more topical.

The previous speakers have all described very clearly the growing importance of the TSOs and the need for networking among them. I believe that it is an undisputed fact today that competent and independent TSOs are needed if a high level of nuclear safety is to be achieved and nuclear safety is to be improved continuously. It is not only

- the broad technical knowledge at the highest level
- the capability of interdisciplinary and integrated work
- the symbiosis of support in matters of day-to-day regulatory tasks on one side and of effective research on the other side

that makes the TSOs indispensable - it is now also the capability of the TSOs to organise knowledge maintenance, knowledge transfer, training and further education, and the active support in the



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development of the infrastructure in countries that operate nuclear installations.

In the context of the theme of this year's EUROSAFE conference, "Safety Implications of an Increased Demand for Nuclear Energy", the demand for support in all issues of nuclear safety can only be met by the TSOs by increasing their flexibility and capacity in an atmosphere of mutual trust. In this context we should also envisage extending our networking activities to other entities such as universities, research centres, institutions such as the TÜVs in Germany to use resources in an optimal way.

The European TSO network "ETSON" is making good progress. A good example is the European OEF system. *Operating experience feedback (OEF) is at the heart of the development of the safety of nuclear installations. Licensees and regulators are both interested to maintain adequate OEF systems. However, most of the operating experience is gained abroad. Thus, the international OEF is a necessary tool to prevent incidents and accidents by the proactive implementation of countermeasures after precursors or findings in foreign nuclear power plants.* There have been complaints for many years that the insights gained from the experience of operating nuclear installations are not put to any use where they might make a valuable contribution to enhancing nuclear safety. It seems that at



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least in Europe, we are about to make an important step forward in this respect.

*The European Commission volunteered to set up such a system for its member states. It was obvious that the European TSOs had to support the European Research Centre with their great knowledge and competences in nuclear reactor event analyses.*

*IRSN and GRS agreed to put in a joint offer. The support of other ETSON members is already planned even in this first step. The offer was returned to the Joint Research Centre about one week ago. We hope that we can sign the contract this year.*

*This tender is the first economic co-operation within the framework of ETSON. I hope that it is just the beginning of long and successful teamwork.*

Let me address another technical point: When giving so much thought to technical aspects, we must never lose sight of the ultimate objective of the protection of man and the environment from the harmful effects of ionising radiation. This means that radiation protection always has to be given priority for as long as we keep handling radioactive substances.

*Radiation protection is not only focused on the protection of workers within nuclear installations and the control of radioactive effluents to the environment. Radiation protection vitally covers other fields,*



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*such as transport safety of radioactive material, decommissioning and remediation, radioecology, prevention against any malevolent use of radioactive material, and medical and industrial applications of ionising radiation.*

*In the past, the concepts for nuclear safety and radiation protection have been partly developed in parallel. However, they are both integral parts of a holistic safety approach. Therefore, all efforts should be made to promote the convergence between radiation protection and nuclear safety concepts further.*

I can only appeal to those responsible to keep on promoting R&D also in radiation protection, to press ahead with training and further qualification in this field, and to organise the maintenance of competence as well as knowledge management.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me conclude with an outlook on the year 2010. The EUROSAFE 2010 conference will take place in Germany, this time in Cologne on 8 and 9 November. I would like to invite you already today to join us again for this event.

Thank you very much for your attention.