



## **Welcome address by the Directors of GRS, IRSN, AVN**

### **Lothar Hahn (Technical and Scientific Director of GRS):**

- Welcome to this year's EUROSAFE, once again in the City of Berlin
- A lot has happened in the past year, and things have moved on since I introduced ETSON and its objectives to you at the last EUROSAFE Forum and the MoU was signed in May 2006.
- In the spring and summer of 2007, the Network was established and introduced to national authorities, the relevant bodies at the EU, WENRA, the IAEA, the NEA, and others.
- Network began in early 2007 to elaborate a proposal for a European OEF system which was presented to authorities, WENRA and the EU. Please note that there will be a special workshop tomorrow on this particular topic.
- Network has also made sure that TSOs will have a stake in the emerging Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform (SNE-TP) and has already introduced itself at the "Launching Event" in September. The role of the TSOs in this Platform is:
  - to enhance the safety of existing plants
  - identify early any safety aspects for new reactor concepts
  - give an input to the harmonisation of safety requirements and practices.
- Furthermore, co-operation in the EUROSAFE working groups elaborating the Safety Assessment Guide, identifying research needs, and developing knowledge management among the EUROSAFE partners and possibly also further beyond this group in the future.
- Time is now ripe to invite new partners to the Network – possible candidates for next addition step are TSOs from Czech Republic and from Finland.



- Outlook: ETSON will elaborate a roadmap for future activities and concern itself in particular with the thematic structures of the SNE-TP and the European OEF system.
- IAEA TSO Conference follow-up expected for 2009 – ETSON is ready to support preparations.
- Continued co-operation in the EUROSAFE working groups "Safety Assessment Guide", "Research Needs", "Knowledge Management" and presentation of results at forthcoming EUROSAFE conferences.
- All ETSON activities also serve for securing nuclear safety in future years, which is the topic of this year's EUROSAFE conference. This is what all TSOs are striving for: the continuous improvement of the safety of nuclear facilities worldwide.

#### **Jean-François Lacronique (Président du Conseil de l'Administration – IRSN)**

- The safety of existing and future reactors to be preserved within the nuclear renaissance context,
- The old Europe chance and capability not to get any severe accident throughout the 40 years of energy production, and going on the same direction,
- The capacity of the TSOs to work together: enlarge the ETSON association with new members (Czech republic and Finland) but also invite all the organisations with TSO functions to participate in the preparation of the strategic research agenda to be developed within the "sustainable nuclear energy technology platform" that was launched by the end of September and is practically working since 29 of October. HSE and AVN in the Governing Board, IRSN in the executive committee, and sharing the work among all TSOs in the steering groups.
- The French cooking in political attitude : promoting the renewable energies like solar one's but relying heavily on the nuclear energy as a sustainable energy. Sustainability for the TSOs is not only closing the fuel cycle and optimising its use, it is also safety first, protection of the



populations against ionising radiations, managing all the waste with ALARA principles application, and taking care of the public.

**Jean-Jacques van Binnebeek (Director General – AVN)**

- ETSON is an opportunity to perform activities in common, learn by a better cross-fertilisation of ideas and finally to create a trusted partnership with a common culture. This is the case for instance for Junior Staff Programme, OEF and also cooperation on training programmes at the technical level as well as the HRM level, where it appears that a strong need exists everywhere to gain a good exercise of one's professional judgement.
- OEF is a crucial factor in order to avoid accidents. It is characterised by a early detection of significant events, their in-depth analysis by an integrated team of senior experts, a clear identification of causes and of lessons learnt, and the definition of a set of corrective actions.
- Finally, a very important issue: the actual implementation of those corrections, for which the support and collaboration of the RB is essential.
- For all this, the TSO are in position to produce an outstanding added value through their large and integrated expertise. They are also in a position to produce a significant help to countries that are somehow short of resources.
- All this is being developed at European level in the framework of the EUR OEF system, in close cooperation and support of the EC and of the European regulators. This structure shall be presented to WENRA this week.
- More will be said about it during the workshop of tomorrow.
- As a final comment now.

Speaking of OEF in a more general term, the time we are living of some revival of the nuclear technology implies the disposal of well trained and experienced experts. It is well known that Europe is facing a shortage of technical people, in particular of engineers. This shortage induces today strong personnel movements between nuclear licensees, TSO or regulators,



as a result of some concurential strategy between them. The net result gives sometimes rather adverse effects on the maintenance of the quality of the expertise, first at the RB or TSO, but especially at the licensees, which are the first responsible for safety.

Political ideologies on the organisation of the regulatory activities lead sometimes to changes or strategic actions that are significantly adverse to the maintenance of an independent safety expertise and even of the correct surveillance of safety. Some countries are facing that today (in particular Belgium) and such situations should be submitted to the OEF methodology of analysis to avoid repetition of blunders.

From its present difficulties and challenges at Belgian level, AVN has taken the opportunity not to limit itself to regulatory activities, but to promote nuclear safety, with due deontology, at the level of the first responsible for safety, namely the nuclear operators.