The ETSON Summer School, devised by the Junior Staff Programme Members, took place on 25 to 29 August 2008 at the GRS premises in Garching near Munich. This pilot Summer School was the first of its kind and was dedicated to the subject “Nuclear Reactor Safety Assessment”. The agenda lifted off with a presentation of IRSN, GRS and Bel V and the ETSON, EUROSAFE and JSP approaches. The more technical presentations given the next four days dealt with the safety of nuclear reactors, nuclear accidents and their analysis, safety assessment and multilateral tools.

Following a very high demand, 45 participants from 10 organisations (IRSN, GRS, Bel V, AVN, BfS, INSTN, FANC, NNL, Riskaudit, VROM/KFD) finally joined the Summer School and turned it into a very international event with many opportunities to socialise.

The lecturers, coming from IRSN, GRS, Bel V and NNL, brought the participants insights in the similarities, as well as differences, in European reactor concepts and their safety assessments. In comparison to other Summer Schools, the programme not only consisted of lectures but also of interactive group work elements. In the first group work, questions related to the content of the first three days of lectures were distributed to the respective groups; answers were then given in form of short presentations. In another group work, the analyses on the basis of an incident example were carried out within the groups and presented. This approach gave the participants the opportunity to apply the imparted knowledge to practical engineering work.

Besides the lectures and the group work, an optional technical visit of the new research reactor, FRM-II (Heinz Maier-Leibnitz research neutron source) or a presentation of the GRS Simulation Centre was offered. The preparation of the Summer School started at EUROSAFE 2007, when members of the JSP elaborated a subject matter and a draft programme. In a second meeting at AVN in Brussels in January 2008, the programme, the date and venue of the Summer School was finally fixed. The analysis of questionnaires which were completed by the participants at the end of the summer school showed a very positive feedback, both on scientific and social aspects. This led ETSON to the decision to organise another Summer School in 2009.