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**THE NUCLEAR REGULATORY AUTHORITY
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC AND START-UP OF THE
MOCHOVCE NPP**

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A clear communications policy is the key to credibility and credibility is earned, not created. It is based on perceptions which give rise to varying levels of confidence. It has been consistently found in opinion research that credibility is the single most powerful persuasive force. Public communication programmes are the principal currency for the Regulatory Authority to inform the public on issues of cost, benefit, need and risk. For each issue the information needs differ and this must be reflected in the Regulatory's Authority communication programmes.

The important aspect is testing if the nuclear energy in the Slovak Republic is due to obligatory rules acceptable and its operation is regulated by the state through the independent institution - The Nuclear Regulatory Authority of the Slovak Republic (UJD).

UJD considers the whole area of public relations an essential component of its activity. UJD intends to serve the public true, systematic, qualified, understandable and independent information regarding nuclear safety of nuclear power plants, as well as regarding methods and results of UJD work. Generally, public information is considered as significant contribution to the creation of confidence into the regulatory work.

The public relations are understood as attempts to establish, keep and improve UJD's good relations to its neighbours through purposeful informing. The UJD already in its origins laid the foundation of a policy of keeping the public broadly informed on the UJD activities and the safety of nuclear installations in the Slovak Republic by opening the UJD Information Centre. Catering to public & media relations, the Information Centre is instrumental in forming among the public a favourable picture of independent state supervision on nuclear safety.

An Information centre at the offices of UJD was built and opened in October (1995) with IAEA Director General Dr. Hans Blix as the first visitor. The entrance to the office building has been rebuilt and two rooms have been reserved for information purposes. The bigger room contains the Information centre, equipped with all electronic equipment. The room is big, enough to be used as a meeting room. The press conferences are held there too. I think that the Information centre could be a good tool to spread information to schools and interesting groups (members of Parliament, governmental and non-governmental groups and journalists). Approaching

the UJD by telephone or through mail should be convenient, and information must be available without requiring a lot of effort from public.

The basic rules for communication with media and with public are as follows:

- * To inform the public about the activities of the UJD, about its responsibilities,
about The Status of nuclear installations safety in the Slovak Republic
- * To provide prompt, clear and consistent information to the public on a nuclear event whenever and wherever they may occur
- * To facilitate an independent communication between UJD, media and the public.

UJD devotes considerable effort to be visible in the press and TV in radio programmes. Good relations has been established with a Slovakia's News Agency: the Agency asks UJD regularly for information and disseminates it to journalists. The Press Officer and other employees at the UJD have written articles published in various papers and journals, including specialised journals on nuclear safety. The advantage of articles written by staff members is that you can decide how your message is forwarded without a journalist "filter". The UJD is utilising all opportunities to contact the media. The Press Officer is aware of the importance of enhancing the UJD profile as an independent, non-promoting authority. The role of the UJD as an objective authority is always stressed in the articles.

Last and this year were important for UJD in public information the situation at the NPP Mochovce and activities of the Austrian Government, dealing with personal, medial and visiting activities. These activities were focused to put a stop the commissioning of the first unit of the NPP Mochovce. Nevertheless, Chairman of the UJD could presented facts about the commissioning of the first unit of the NPP Mochovce, which reached the critically on 9 June, 1998 for the delegates at the 42nd Session of the General Conference in Vienna. Chairman of the UJD issued the Decision granting permission for a minimum controlled power and to carry out physical start-up tests. At the same time he laid down such conditions under what the reactor can reach to the minimum controlled power.

NPP Mochovce is an example of international co-operation in achieving internationally acceptable safety standards. Companies from France, Germany, USA, Russian Federation, Czech Republic and Slovakia and last, but not least also the IAEA participated significantly on increasing the safety level of this NPP. We have been fully aware of the importance of good communication with press, TV and radio broadcasting in this pre-operation and operation period about nuclear safety, nuclear standard and other nuclear aspects commissioning of the NPP Mochovce in the UJD. The information policy of the UJD was in this period focused on the preparation

an actual press releases for general and specialised news- paper and national press agencies. Very important were the frequent presentations the requirement safety stages of the NPP Mochovce in TV and radio broadcasting by headquarters of the UJD.

UJD as the state authority provides information related to its competence, namely information on safety of operation of nuclear installations, independently from nuclear operation and it enables the public and media to examine information on nuclear installations.

More active public information activities of the UJD will significantly contribute to the public understanding on different aspects of the uses of nuclear energy and will increase the public trusts in this area. There is still a world-wide opposition against nuclear energy but not in an amount as before 5 - 10 years. A more activity public information activity of IAEA will significantly contribute to the public understanding on the advantages of the uses of nuclear energy and will increase the public trust in this area. In particular, the IAEA should more actively publicize the achievements in nuclear safety improvements in Member States. Taking into account our country's experience in developing nuclear energy programs, we support the IAEA in developing an expanded public information project. During last year Slovakia hosted an international seminar of this kind which was a great success.

All UJD communication and information activities in 1998 aim to Creation of public confidence, favourable UJD image at home as well as abroad.

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