



The Romanian nuclear regulatory body as a nuclear communicator

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1. Introduction

Daily life is a risky business. People can understand risks resulted from a voluntary choice, like traveling, working or drinking alcohol and smoking, but radiation risk perception is different. The gap between the public perception and the specialist evaluation is growing wider. A misunderstood risk that cannot be explained creates difficulties of communication between experts and public. Association with unhappy events, like Three Mile Island or Chernobyl, increases the concerns of the public, and nuclear industry are spending relevant resources to rebuilt the confidence for the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. A comprehensive nuclear law environment could be a relevant tool to promote greater confidence in the nuclear energy.

2. Legislative framework

Romania has had laws in place governing the regulation of nuclear activities since 1974, which remained in force throughout and subsequent to the national constitutional changes. Up to December 1996, the CNCAN activities were based on Law No. 61/1974 for the development of the nuclear activities in Romania and Law No. 6/1982 on the quality assurance of the nuclear facilities and nuclear power plants.

The Nuclear Safety legislation has been enacted in November 1974 (Law No. 61/1974) and it followed as closely as possible (for that time) the US Atomic Energy Act of 1954, as amended subsequently.

This law had a specific chapter dealing with nuclear liability. The main provisions were:

- The responsibility belongs to the license holders;
- The license holder must institutes an insurance or any other financial guarantee to cover his liability;
- The right of compensation is prescribed if an action is not brought within 10 years from the date on which the victim had knowledge of the damage.

In 1990, the preparations of a new law on safe conduct of nuclear activities were started. On 26 December 1996 the Law on the Safe Conduct of Nuclear Activities (Law No. 111/1996) entered into force. The Law abrogates the previous laws governing nuclear activities, i.e. Law No. 61/1974 regulating all nuclear activities in Romania together with Law No. 6/1982 dealing with quality assurance in respect with all installations as well as all other regulation contrary to the Law. Beginning with January 1998 new important amendments to the Law No. 111/1996 entered into force.

The objective of nuclear law 111/1996 republished is the safe deployment of nuclear activities to exclusive peaceful purpose so that they should meet the nuclear safety conditions set for the protection of the professionally exposed personnel, of the population, of the environment, and the propriety, with minimal risk provided by regulations and observance of the obligations proceeding from agreement and conventions to which Romania is party

The republished Law no.111/1996 take into account:

- Changes in political and economic environment, including free market economy, democracy and separation of powers;
- Regulatory experience gained in Romania through the implementation of the Laws No.61/1974 and 6/1982;
- New legal developments observed in other countries;
- Recommendations of the IAEA expert mission, including provisions dealing with radioactive wastes and facilities decommissioning;
- Strengthening the law enforcement provisions.

The Romanian nuclear regulatory body, called National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control (CNCAN) is a governmental organization responsible for the development of the regulatory framework, the control of its implementation and for the licensing of nuclear facilities.

In 1998, the Government approved the new CNCAN organizational structure and additionally duties. In this new structure are included 4 divisions: General Division of Nuclear Power Plants and Fuel Cycle, General Division of Ionizing Radiation Applications, General Division of Monitoring the Environmental Radioactivity and General Division of Development and Resources. This structure reflects the activity fields of CNCAN.

3. Regulatory body activities focused on relation with mass media

An important issue of CNCAN is to provide the correct and reasoning information to the public.

This exchange of information is done through:

- Weekly information to the Department of Public Information at Government, about the most important activities performed by nuclear regulatory body;
- Periodical press communicate to mass media;
- Special press conference are organized at the most important events (for example granting the Commercial License for Cernavoda Nuclear Power Plants Unit 1, followed by press conference)
- Special press communicate to inform correct the public related with the speculation about nuclear activities (for example, during the ware in the formal Yugoslavia several press communicate, related to the normal level of environment radioactivity were released, Y2K statement at Cernavoda NPP Unit 1);
- Discussion with ecological formations;
- At the solicitude of the mass-media, the president of CNCAN granting press interview;

The most important topics focused on nuclear activities for the interest of mass media in Romania are:

- Radioactive waste management;
- The cost and benefit of nuclear energy compared by conventional energy;
- The conditions for transportation of radioactive materials;
- The consequences of a suppositional nuclear accidents;
- The safety in operation for nuclear installations.

In 1999, CNCAN participated as observatory to different exercise to:

- Cernavod Nuclear Power Plants, Unit 1
- Institute for Nuclear Research, Pitesti
- Nuclear Research and Development Institute – Magurele
- Emergency exercise „OLTENIA 99“ was done in Craiova and Bechet aria, during the period 25-26 May 1999 and had the subject the protection measurement and intervention in case of a nuclear accident at Kozlodui NPP.

The person qualified to give the interview to mass media is the president of National Commission for Nuclear Activities Control. The weekly information about the regulatory body activities is prepared by the two press representatives one from the General Division for Nuclear Power Plants and Fuel Cycle Installations and one from the General Division of Ionizing Radiation Applications.

The CNCAN policy towards the mass media implicit for the public is focused to surveillance of nuclear installations and the environmental radioactivity for complete and prompt information regarding the nuclear activities developed in Romania. Other important task is to explain very clear the meaning of any nuclear incidents that could occur in Romania or in other countries.

An important task for regulatory bodies is also the contact point for INES events. The person responsible for INES information is Mr.Dan Serbanescu – Director of Nuclear Safety Division.

To achieve the main task for caring out the public health, starting with 1998, the environmental radiation monitoring network where incorporated into regulatory body structure. The level of radiation is monitored 24 hours per day in 45 point in Romania territory. Up to now the radiation level were inside the limits established for normal level of radiation.

4. Conclusions:

The information provided to press and public by regulatory body is clearly and well structured. The target is to clearly explain to mass media and the public should understand very well the difference between the meaning of a nuclear accident, nuclear incident or nuclear event.

CNCAN monitories and surveys the operation in safe conditions the nuclear facilities and plants, the protection against nuclear radiation of the professionally exposed personnel, of the population, of the environment and the material goods. It is also controlled and monitorised the physical protection, the records, preservation, and transportation of radioactive materials and specific fissionable materials as well as the management of radioactive waste.

An opened communication is an important task for regulatory body to gain the public thrust and acceptance.

The implication of regulatory body in emergency exercises is also an important factor for current mass-media information.