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## **Improving communication between nuclear communities**

With the coincidence of the Chernobyl accident followed by the end of the Soviet Empire, anti-nuclear activities directed from the Western countries were accelerated. This is especially true for the most recent years. A well co-ordinated action by anti-nuke groups in these countries abused the fact that some of the Soviet-designed NPPs don't match up to the safety requirements and the fact that the former regimes often withheld from the public substantial information on safety at their NPPs.

In Hungary, recently at many roadside petrol stations one got free leaflets entitled "Nuclear Power - Why East Europe must reject it". This brochure [Ecoropa Information Sheet # 20] issued in English, Czech, Hungarian, Russian and Polish, raised 15 questions, giving "answers" on why to reject nuclear power.

But the facts in Hungary speak for acceptance! Hungary's Paks NPP, meeting almost half of the electricity demand of this energy-poor country, is ranked by many international expert missions and advisory groups as being amongst the safest NPPs.

What then can be the concrete tactics used by Hungarian opponents of nuclear energy?

The opponents adopt a two-pronged approach: namely to block the return transport of spent N-fuels to Russia and/or to block the construction of an interim repository in Hungary. Both "solutions" would ultimately result in closure of Paks NPP.

In 1994 the Russian Prime Minister signed an agreement, confirming that - as previously - spent N-fuels will be sent back to Russia. On the morning following the agreement, anti-nuclear groups in Moscow, likely directed from abroad, protested successfully against the decision to "import foreign radwaste".

Back in Hungary, in the town Paks, an anti-sarcophagus group was founded - its title alluding to the entombment of the wrecked Chernobyl reactor. Initially this group posed a very difficult situation for the management of Paks NPP.

But the anti-sarcophagus group action was successfully countered by the help of an agreement between Paks Nuclear Power Station and several mayors of neighbouring villages. The mayors formed an Association for Social Control and Information, called in Hungarian TEIT. Steady flow of information on the plant reaches these villages. A round-the-clock background radiation monitoring station was also set up for the public in the near downwind town of Kalocsa, showing the situation every 10 minutes.

Another anti-nuclear approach is to build up a "Pavlovian type of conditioned reflex" in the population to make them afraid of nuclear energy. For example, Hungary is far from the sea, has no real nuclear problems, but you will find in Hungarian papers news on a sunken Soviet submarine. While not overlooking and underestimating the danger of such sunken submarine(s), it is worth mentioning that, such reports in our press in 1994 were three times greater than in 1992!

It is important to recognize that in the former Soviet-influenced areas there are no basically professional nuclear communicators as compared to the Western countries.

Therefore, I suggest, that a communication system be created by the nuclear community, probably named WANIS, World Association of Nuclear Information Specialists. A two-way international electronic mail system - built up similar to those run by the anti-nuclear forces - should help nuclear communicators of Central and Eastern Europe to exchange arguments and tactics against everyday "arguments" raised by anti-nuclear militants. In other words, a common armoury of arguments, I call "Interlingua Nucleare", should be created within the nuclear community to improve the countering of misleading, hostile statements and actions.

In Hungary, the Hungarian Nuclear Society has launched a corrective programme. If very severely distorted opinions on nuclear electricity production or on nuclear techniques or on radiation appear in the media, the concerned Learned Societies (e.g. Energy, Nuclear Medicine, Food Science, Radiation Protection, Radioecological, etc.) raise their voice and ask for correction. Hopefully this will lead to a more balanced response by the opinion leaders and by the public.

Finally, it is worth mentioning that the tactics of the anti-nukes are similar to those against animal experimentation and against genetic engineering. Often the same persons are involved in the various anti groups, as can be easily shown in Hungary.

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The opinions expressed in this paper reflect the author's personal views.