Activities of EUTERP, the European Training and Education in Radiation Protection Foundation

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Abstract. The platform for European Training and Education in Radiation Protection (EUTERP), originally an initiative of the European Commission, was transformed into a legal entity as a Foundation under Dutch law in June 2010. The main objective of the Foundation is to encourage and support harmonization of education and training requirements for Radiation Protection Experts (RPEs), Radiation Protection Officers (RPOs) and radiation workers (RW), facilitating the mobility of these professionals. The EUTERP Foundation aims to facilitate information exchange between all stakeholders in education and training in radiation protection through the website www.euterp.eu; the publication of newsletters and the organization of workshops. EUTERP is also an active partner in the European Network on Education and Training in Radiological Protection (ENETRAP III 7Framework Programme project- 7FP). It contributes to the new formulation of guidance for the implementation of education and training of the RPE and RPO, in accordance with the revised European Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom [1]. In close collaboration with the association of the Heads of European Radiological protection Competent Authorities (HERCA), EUTERP strives towards a common understanding and approach in education and training of RPEs and RPOs whilst respecting the differences that exist in the different European Member States.

KEYWORDS: EUTERP Foundation, education and training, radiation protection, ENETRAP.

1 BACKGROUND

Since June 2010, when the EUTERP Foundation as a legal entity under Dutch law succeeded the EUTERP Platform that had been a project of the European Commission, it has been operating as a focus for European education and training in radiation protection. The Foundation has been run on a not-for-profit budget supported by a growing number of Associates who are taking an increasingly active part in EUTERP projects and actions. There are currently 20 Associates including two Europe-wide organizations, from 12 countries. The Associates recently elected the Board of the EUTERP for the next three years.

2 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the EUTERP are:

- to encourage and support harmonization of education and training requirements for Radiation Protection Experts (RPEs), Radiation Protection Officers (RPOs) and radiation workers (RW), facilitating the mobility of these professionals;
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- to promote the integration of radiation protection education and training systems into general vocational training and education infrastructures; and

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- to act as a central focus for the sharing of information on training events, standards, developments, and all other related information.

3 STAKEHOLDERS

The EUTERP Foundation has contacts in every European Member State and potential states, except Estonia with whom contact has been made to include them shortly. These 34 contacts are designated as National Contact Points (NCPs) for the dissemination of information about their country's situation with respect to legislation, education and training in radiation protection.

The major EUTERP stakeholders are the Associates. These institutions or organizations have a vested interest in the EUTERP, contributing to the work programme, projects, Board elections and budget. The EUTERP now has 20 Associates, two being from European-wide organizations. Their ideas and opinions are invaluable to the functioning of the Foundation. All institutes, universities and other organizations involved in radiation protection education and training in Europe are invited to become Associates. The benefits, listed on the EUTERP website, are becoming more widely recognised and the President is always willing to give talks about the work of the EUTERP during national events. He can be contacted through the website.

4 ACTIVITIES

The EUTERP Foundation activities are based around its website, newsletters workshops and collaborative projects, as described here.

4.1 Website

The EUTERP website at www.euterp.eu is constantly being updated, having been revamped twice since 2010. Currently it features information about its background and objectives, daily news bites, Associates' pages, National pages and National Contact Points for each European country, the latter in detail where such information exists. The NCPs are contacted with a view to updating their pages.

Another tab takes you to the career centre for information on relevant legislation, qualification frameworks and some information about professional meetings. A recent title will include research and job opportunities as the EUTERP is informed about these. The following tab is the main education and training tab, which will have access to the ENETRAP database in the near future. At the moment there is information on various training courses.

The final tab enables the website to have direct links into related projects and networks. The concept of a discussion forum has also been included and it is hoped to develop this in the future, depending on demand from Associates and NCPs.

4.2 Newsletters

The EUTERP Foundation has now issued eleven newsletters that are archived on the website. The most recent one was issued in April 2016. Every Associate and NCP contact is encouraged to submit items to include in the newsletters and on the website. The readership is much wider than the EUTERP "contacts" and indeed the number of people receiving each newsletter directly is currently 236 while many items are tweeted or otherwise referenced or forwarded, and the dissemination is wider than Europe. Persons interested in receiving the newsletter directly can subscribe on the website.

4.3 Workshops

EUTERP organizes workshops and also collaborates with other organizations that have an interest in education and training in radiation protection.

4.3.1 The 6th and most recent EUTERP workshop "*Legislative change in Europe: the implications for training in radiation protection - Rising to the challenge*", was held from 30 September to 2 October 2015, in Athens. This workshop focused on the required changes in legislation in the European Union and the associated training implications, as a result of the new Basic Safety Standards (BSS) Directive (2013/59/Euratom) [1]. Member States are required to bring into force the laws, regulations and administrative provisions necessary to comply with the new BSS Directive by February 6, 2018. This will be a challenge, requiring changes to national legislation, major revision of training activities and new approaches to the qualification and recognition of Radiation Protection Experts and Medical Physics Experts (MPE). This workshop was divided into a series of sessions focussed on specific topics associated with the new BSS.

Session 1 looked those sections of the new BSS of specific relevance to training including the provision of information and training of workers potentially exposed to orphan sources, emergency workers, outside workers, the training of operators of non-medical imaging equipment, information to workers and members of the public potentially exposed to radon, and the training requirements for the new roles of Radiation Protection Expert (RPE) and Radiation Protection Officer (RPO). Session 2 looked at communicating risks, and a series of very good presentations prompted an excellent discussion on the difficulties associated with expressing the concept of risk to non- scientific persons and members of the public. The session concluded that it is essential for trainers to be objective and unbiased in the presentation of facts, to follow a balanced approach and to structure their approach to the nature of the audience. Target audiences and the training objective can be subdivided into:

- Professionals who need radiation protection information to carry out their work: e.g. solicitors, engineers – *information provision*.
- Exposed persons and workers – *trying to achieve changes in behaviour*.
- Members of the public - *provision of information to enable informed judgements*.

The training must be carefully designed to meet the needs of each of these audiences noting that an appropriate course for one group may not be suitable for another.
Session 3 covered occupational exposure and inevitably prompted much discussion on the roles and associated training requirements for RPEs and RPOs. Most Member States already have persons carrying out these roles, although they are not named as such. There is clearly a strong desire to minimise legislative change and countries are likely to incorporate existing roles defined within their legislation to carry out the RPE and RPO functions. The outcomes of the ENETRAP III project were discussed in Session 4 and presentations were given on the new specialised training modules for RPEs in the medical, nuclear reactors, geological disposal and NORM (naturally occurring radioactive material) sectors. The guidance currently being developed on the roles of the RPE and RPO was presented and it was agreed that this should provide helpful but not mandatory guidance on best-practice methods for implementing the RPE and RPO requirements. Further sessions covered occupational exposure in the medical sector, an area where there is clearly well-established training programmes in place for a wide range of staff, and emergency response arrangements. Three working groups looked at the topics of stakeholder involvement in training development, train the trainers, and risk communication. The groups identified a number of critical issues associated with the topics and these issues were discussed in detail in the plenary session. The very constructive discussions that were held over the three days provided much food for thought and should provide useful input into the efforts of Member States to address the training requirements associated with the new BSS. Further information on the workshop, including copies of the presentations and the book of abstracts, may be found on the EUTERP website: http://www.euterp.eu/EUTERP2015/.

4.3.2 Next to the organization of its own EUTERP Workshops, the Foundation is also very much involved in the organization committee of the international ETRAP conference (Education and Training in Radiation Protection), which is the leading European conference on education and training in radiation protection matters, held about every four years and organized by the European Nuclear Society in collaboration with International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) and International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). The next conference is planned for spring 2017 in Spain.

4.3.3 The EUTERP will also chair the education and training session of the upcoming *Radiation Protection Week* (RPW) being organized in Oxford, from 19 to 23 September 2016. The Radiation Protection Week is a 'must' for all scientists and decision makers participating in high-level radiation research globally. For the first time, RPW2016 will bring together complementary strands of radiation protection research, education and training with the established European platforms MELODI (Multi-disciplinary Low Dose Initiative), EURADOS (European Radiation Dosimetry Group), NERIS (European Platform on Preparedness for Nuclear and Radiological Emergency Response and Recovery) and ALLIANCE (European Radioecology Alliance) as co-organizers, along with other relevant areas. The RPW2016 will extend the highly successful MELODI workshops (http://www.melodi-online.eu/index.html) in the light of greater integration of European research on radiation protection demonstrated by the European Joint Programme for the integration of radiation protection research (CONCERT) (http://www.melodi- online.eu/CONCERT.html).

4.3.4 Recently, EUTERP has also been invited to contribute to the education and training session of the next regional European IRPA conference, to be held in The Hague, Netherlands in 2018.

4.4 Projects

The most important project in which the EUTERP is currently involved is ENETRAP III under the framework programme, FP7, of the European Commission. This is a four-year project and one of the critical deliverables is the incorporation of the ENETRAP III course database, together with links to others, in the EUTERP website. The project is currently on track, another deliverable being the production of guidance for the implementation of education and training of the RPE and RPO, in accordance with the revised Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom [1].

5 CONCLUSIONS

The EUTERP Foundation provides a central focus and forum for all radiation protection education and training activities in Europe. It liaises with other European organizations and participates in projects and events with the aim of developing and enhancing training activities, and promoting a common understanding of training needs and requirements of all persons involved in activities using ionizing radiation. The EUTERP Associates contribute to the policy development and implementation of education and training activities in radiation protection.

6 REFERENCE

[1] European Council Directive 2013/59/Euratom, laying down basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation.