

Outcome of the European initiative for radiation protection research and future perspectives

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Abstract—In 2009, the European Commission published the report of the “High Level and Expert Group”, which had been mandated to consider the scientific challenges posed by the issues of low dose effects of ionizing radiation, and to formulate proposals for research policy evolution in this field, at European level. This report formulated a first draft of a strategic research agenda (SRA). It also suggested that the scientific communities concerned should organize a permanent dialogue on research strategies as well as priorities, and that the EURATOM research programs should encourage multidisciplinary initiatives and aim at strategic goals as defined in the SRA. This innovative approach was soon afterwards replicated in the fields of environmental issues and of emergency preparedness and post-accident management issues associated to ionizing radiation. Thus, European Platforms MELODI, ALLIANCE and NERIS were set up, and several EURATOM projects were successively funded to support this integrative process. EURADOS, a long established European scientific network on dosimetry also took on a formal status as a radiation protection research Platform. Lastly, in 2016, the main European medical professional associations announced the creation of the fifth Platform, named EURAMED. As these Platforms gathered credibility, and progressively included members from most of EU member states and beyond, EURATOM member states and the European commission pursued a policy of “integration” of radiation protection research by funding wide ranging projects covering all aspects of the field, and by introducing the rule of “co-funding” of this research by national programs, thus encouraging a programmatic convergence across Europe. The presentation will reflect on the results which have already been gained through this integration approach: comprehensive SRA’s have been developed in all areas where radiation protection research is needed, their iteration year after year consolidating the consensus in the scientific community and with its stakeholders on the way forward; the scientific communities have learnt to organize open calls within wide ranging EURATOM projects. Research thus benefits from partners beyond the initial project consortium through procedures ensuring both openness and independence of judgment and confidentiality of the selection process; Platforms are also learning to work more closely together, for example to prepare a joint “roadmap” for future research in response to major societal expectations for radiation protection. Reflecting on the challenges that still lay ahead, the presentation will finally present the initiative that the five Platforms have jointly presented to the European Commission and EURATOM member states to further enhance radiation protection research in the next plurennial program, which will follow the current Horizon 2020 research Program.