



Newsletter No. 1

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Building a platform for enhanced societal research related to nuclear energy in Central and Eastern Europe



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Why PLATENSO project?



PLATENSO is a project funded by the Seventh EURATOM Research and Training Programme on Nuclear Energy of the European Commission (FP7). It aims to: **1)** provide a proposal for a European Platform for Socio-Economic matters linked to nuclear technology; **2)** develop recommendations for Research Strategies in EU new member states (NMS).

There are several social and political challenges related to different possible nuclear energy scenarios in EU member states, which range from substantially increasing the use of nuclear energy, including new reactor concepts, to phasing nuclear reactors out. While this is well understood, there is still insufficient action towards meeting the challenges, partly due to tradition and inadequate involvement of relevant competences with appropriate programmes. The barriers that still exist can potentially be reduced through the focus of the PLATENSO project on exploring the feasibility of establishing a European platform for socio-economic matters linked to nuclear technology.

The PLATENSO project will help to open up broader approaches to research that will enable establishment of new networks, enrichment of communication, avoidance of overly narrow frameworks, and avoidance of compartmentalisation of research interests. PLATENSO also aims to improve the prerequisites for future participation in Euratom projects in the countries involved, not only for the project participants but for all research establishments. The focus is on social, societal and governance issues.



Social and Societal Research on Nuclear Issues

Prof. Dr. Marko Polič, University of Ljubljana

Effective risk communication and public participation in nuclear issues present significant challenges. The number of European projects (e.g. COWAM, COWAM II, COWAM in Practice (CIP), RISCOP II, ARGONA, OBRA, IPPA and InSOTEC) and multinational studies (e.g. CARL) shows that the search for solutions is international, though there are similar individual concrete solutions restricted to the borders of particular countries, which have even been copied from one country to another. The significant number of international, European, multinational, and national studies of public involvement in radioactive waste management (RWM), not to mention the vast number of papers and books on the subjects of risk communication and governance - many of them devoted to the risks of nuclear energy - clearly demonstrate the scope of the problem. In addition, in many countries, siting of a radioactive waste repository is still an unsolved problem. The stigma attached to nuclear energy (reinforced recently by the Fukushima disaster) and distrust of the responsible authorities render the problem even more difficult to solve. A huge number of institutions, from scientific, e.g. universities, to public relations agencies are involved in the studies of social and societal aspects of nuclear issues. The reason for this is mainly the reaction of government and contractors to public opposition to the construction of nuclear facilities. These studies are more or less concerned with the general public opinion on nuclear issues and to a lesser degree on deeper understanding of nuclear issues, or critical evaluation of current approaches to public participation in decision making on nuclear issues, and on perspectives of the use of nuclear energy. Approaches vary from survey studies to panel discussions, content analyses, SWOT analyses, etc.

To conclude, governments - with rare exceptions, e.g. Sweden - were or are interested in social/societal research on nuclear energy mainly in an instrumental way - to use the findings to communicate with the public and not to establish genuine and equal relationships in decision making about these very important issues. The requirements of the Aarhus convention are usually only fulfilled formally. This attitude is present in the majority of European and other countries, whether they admit it or not. Therefore the valid and proper social/societal research question should be how to change society in the direction of real public participation in decision making and not in creating its illusion only. The PLATENSO project intends to provide proposals on how to address social and societal research on nuclear issues in a systematic way.



Project activities in brief

Lessons learned from earlier projects (WP1)

Within WP1 we will explore how PLATENSO countries can learn from earlier experience with national programmes and EU research projects with regard to social, societal and governance issues of importance for nuclear-energy-related developments. We will explore how the project can fulfil its long-term and strategic aim of enhancing the capabilities of research institutions in Central and Eastern European countries to take part in EU research with respect to governance, social and societal aspects of nuclear energy. This will involve exploration of how research institutions are/can be involved in nuclear energy programmes, how other stakeholders can be involved and how governance research can be further improved and applied.



Empowerment of national research capacities (WP2)

The aim of WP2 is to build a network of research institutions with emphasis on social, societal and governance issues related to nuclear energy that can be sustainable in the future. Participants in WP2, called National Contacts, have mapped relevant research institutions. The next step is a motivational letter to inform research institutions about the PLATENSO project, to elicit the research institution's interest in the project and its will to join the network.

Development of research strategies (WP3)

Under the title 'The Science, Politics and Ethics of Nuclear Technology Assessment', WP3 examines criteria and methods for responsible policy-supportive research and public participation in decision making, both seen as essential elements of societal trust building in the context of energy governance. The research is supported by critical analysis of the social, political or economic conditions in the way these would hinder or facilitate the research and public participation. The work is organised in the form of four workshops to take place in Poland, Romania, Bulgaria and Slovakia. A first workshop was successfully organised in Warsaw on 11 June 2014. Researchers are currently dealing with the synthesis of that workshop as input for WP4, and with the preparation of the workshops in the other countries.

Forming a research strategy (WP4)

This WP is aimed at the development of recommendations for a research strategy for social, societal and governance issues concerning nuclear energy in PLATENSO countries (NMS), which include Euratom FP research and ERA as natural components. Building on lessons learned and described in WP1, the mapping of research institutions performed in WP2, and results from investigation of nuclear risk governance from WP3, together with an exploration of possible nuclear energy scenarios in Europe and the research needs they bring with them, a strategy will be developed for research in governance, social and societal issues in which participation in EU programmes is an integral part. The strategy for an individual country will include analysis of the national situation in nuclear energy from a societal point of view, the main objectives and goals, and measures for realisation including funds and human resources, time dependencies and necessary support. It will be important to incorporate representatives of national authorities (regulatory bodies, agencies for R&D and government ministries).



The Science, Politics and Ethics of Nuclear Technology Assessment (WP5)

The aim of WP 5 is to test the national strategies proposed in WP 4 and indicate how they can be implemented in central and eastern Europe countries. The strategies will be tested in a broad political, social and economic context. Testing will identify how the strategies correspond with social and governmental problems of nuclear energy development in the EU.

Firstly an analysis will be prepared of the compatibility of the prepared research strategies with the existing energy policies in participating countries and in the EU. Secondly, consultations will be held with stakeholders about how the strategy fits with general tendencies and challenges of the energy sector in specific conditions of each country.

In the final stage, workshops will be organised with stakeholders mainly dealing with possible scenarios of nuclear energy development in Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

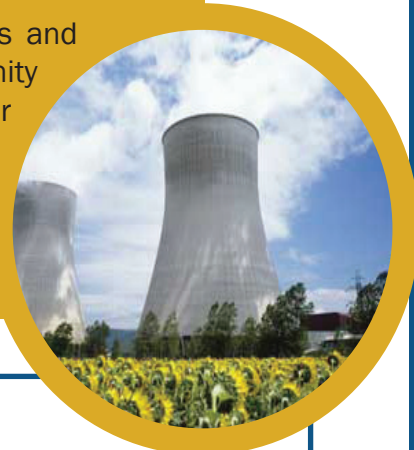


Establishing a social platform for energy related issues (wp6)

The primary focus is to propose a social platform bringing the social issues related to nuclear energy up-front. Meetings have been held in Stockholm with Swedish stakeholders and in Brussels with European researchers and stakeholders. A draft Vision Statement proposes three pillars for the anticipated platform:

- promoting social studies of interest to both academia and decision makers (e.g. governments, private and public organisations)
- providing an effective link between natural and social sciences and improving the visibility of the social and societal research community
- boosting ETI (education, training and information) initiatives for improving public understanding of energy matters

This part of PLATENSO is not restricted to nuclear energy but encompasses the entire energy field and includes the entire European Union.



Dissemination (wp7)

The objective of WP7 is two-fold. Firstly, it is to ensure the overall visibility of the project within the nuclear community, reaching out to the identified target groups and stakeholders in the nuclear field (including decision makers, the scientific community, industry players, NGOs and other key stakeholders) in order to increase their knowledge about the project, as well as to encourage them to make use of the project findings and results in their daily work. Secondly, this work package is intended to help the project partners fulfil their tasks related to communication, output dissemination and stakeholder involvement.



News, reports and publications

- **Planning for nuclear in Poland.** A government programme launched in January 2014 envisages that 6000 MWe of nuclear power will be connected to Poland's grid by 2035, consisting of two multi-unit plants, the first of which would come online by 2025. By Dariusz Witold Kulczynski <http://www.neimagazine.com/features/featureplanning-for-nuclear-in-poland-4261487/>
- **Investment programme for Slovenian repository.** The Slovenian government has approved an investment programme for a national repository for low and intermediate level radioactive waste. <http://www.world-nuclear-news.org/WR-Investment-program-for-Slovenian-repository-1007144.html>
- **White Paper 'Implementing Geological Disposal'.** The UK Department of Energy & Climate Change sets out a renewed process for siting a geological disposal facility for the long-term management of higher activity radioactive waste. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementing-geological-disposal>
- **New publication 'Radioactive Waste Management Stakeholders Map in the European Union'.** JRC Science and Policy Reports. Meritxell Martell & Gianluca Ferraro. May 2014. Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/sites/default/files/90331_final.pdf?search

Upcoming events

- **Atoms for the Future 2014.** Design Licensing and Construction of Nuclear Power Plants, 13-16 October, France, in partnership with the World Nuclear Exhibition at Le Bourget, Paris. <http://www.sfen.fr/Atoms-for-the-Future/>
- **'Energy – Transparency Centre of Knowledge' (E-TRACK).** This is a joint initiative agreed between the Directorate General for Energy (DG ENER) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission for the promotion and enhancement of public participation in the implementation of energy policies. It results from the recognition of the need to offer a reliable source of public information on matters relating to energy policy implementation. Public participation in radioactive waste management constitutes the first project of E-TRACK. <https://ec.europa.eu/jrc/en/event/other-event/e-track-open-seminar>
- **E-TRACK first open seminar** 'The role of public participation in RWM and other sectors. Lessons learnt from research and practice' Amsterdam 23 October 2014.
- **IGD-TP Exchange Forum 5,** October 28-30th, 2014 in Kalmar, Sweden. The 5th Exchange Forum aims to help prepare for future projects, calls for proposals etc. and also to initiate or strengthen contacts between research organisations, waste producers and waste management organisations. More specifically, this 5th Exchange Forum will explore the main achievements of the platform since its inception, and discuss if the priorities presented in the SRA have been adequately covered by the joint activities and associated projects. The participants are also invited to express new ideas that could complement SRA priorities and that could lead to new research, development and demonstration topics over the next five years. <http://www.igdt.eu/index.php/secretariat/sec-igd-2/news/95-igd-tp-exchange-forum-5-announcement>
- **Conference SENIX,** 25-27 May 2015 The Role of Social Sciences in a Low-Carbon Energy Mix. The EC has concluded that the link between scientists/engineers and policymakers needs to become stronger. The conference, will help bridging the gap between present day conditions and full recognition of the necessity to bring in the social issues up-front. Major areas of social, societal and governance issues will be addressed. Preliminary topics of the conference include social and political challenges, decision-making processes (governance), local and regional socio-economic impacts and concerns and ethics. <http://platensoproject.eu/>



News of other projects



Enhancing educAtion, traininG and communication processes for informed behaviours and decision-making reLatEd to ionising radiation risks

The EAGLE project aims specifically at coordinating the information and communication strategies related to ionising radiation for the general public. The aim is to achieve a better understanding of the effects of ionising radiation, including consideration of the lessons learnt from the 2011 accident in Fukushima (Japan). The main goal is to enhance public understanding of ionising radiation and to facilitate a coordinated communication approach and foster a move towards the ideal of citizen-centred communication, including a participative component. More on <http://eagle.sckcen.be/>



Assessment of Regional CAPabilities for new reactors Development through an Integrated Approach

The ARCADIA project provides a twofold support to the further development of nuclear research programmes in the NMS, targeting two major areas included in the Strategic Research and Innovation

Agenda of SNETP: ESNII, through the support of the ALFRED project towards its realisation in Romania, and NUGENIA, approaching remaining safety aspects of Gen III/III+ that could be built in Lithuania, Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovenia.

On one hand, it focuses on the identification of the primary needs for the ALFRED project and Gen III/III+ reactors; on the other hand, it investigates the existing national and regional supporting structures for defining a map of competences potentially qualified to satisfy the previously identified needs. More on <http://www.projectarcadia.eu/>



Implementing sustainable E&T programmes in the field of radioactive wastes disposal

In line with the Lisbon strategy and 2020 perspective, the "Petrus" initiative coordinates since 2005 the efforts of universities, WMOs, training organisations and research institutes to develop a cooperative approach to education and training (E&T) about geological disposal with the purpose of expanding this cooperation under PETRUS3, which aims

to continue European cooperation in the area, including practical implementation of the PETRUS training programme following ECVET principles; development of multidisciplinary training and research framework for PhD students; and development of strategies and frameworks for maintaining the PETRUS initiative. In the long term, PETRUS3 aims to continue PETRUS II and ECNET international cooperation by strengthening the links already established with China and the IAEA.



Project for sharing & growing nuclear safety culture competence

NUSHARE is a FP7 project implementing a European Education, Training and Information initiative proposed by the Commissioner for Research and Innovation and the Commissioner for Energy after the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami on 11 March 2011 (Fukushima). Its main objective is to develop and implement education, training and information programmes strengthening competences required for achieving excellence in nuclear safety culture.

Particular attention is being paid to lessons learned from stress tests conducted on all EU nuclear power plants in response to the Fukushima accident, and to sharing good practice at the European level. More on <http://www.nushare.eu/>



Project partners

The project consortium consists of nineteen organisations from twelve different countries, see them listed below:

Karita Research AB (KARITA), Sweden



The Belgian Nuclear Research Centre (SCK•CEN), Belgium



The Center for the Study of Democracy (CSD), Bulgaria



Galson Sciences Limited (GSL), United Kingdom



Institute of Sociology Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic (ISAS CR), Czech Republic



ÚJV Řež, a.s. Nuclear Research Institute (NRI), Czech Republic

Energiaklub Climate Policy Institute Applied Communication (EKL), Hungary



ENERGIAKLUB
CLIMATE POLICY INSTITUTE
APPLIED COMMUNICATIONS

Regional Environmental Center for Central and Eastern Europe (REC), Hungary/Slovenia



REGIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER
Slovenia

Lithuanian Energy Institute (LEI), Lithuania



Collegium Civitas (CV), Poland

Collegium Civitas
SOCIAL AND POLITICAL STUDIES

Nicolaus Copernicus University (NCU), Poland



Institute of Nuclear Chemistry and Technology (INCT), Poland



University of Ljubljana (UL), Slovenia

University of Ljubljana

Matej Bel University (MBU), Slovakia



Slovak Academy of Sciences – Institute for Research in Social Communication (UVSK SAV), Slovakia

ERUDITIO
MORES
FUTURUM

Environmental Social Science Research Group (ESSRG), Hungary



environment.
research.
science.
society.

Merience Strategic Thinking (MERIENCE), Spain

merience
strategic thinking

University of Bucharest (UB), Romania



Institute for Nuclear Research Romania (INR), Romania



Contact: Kjell Andersson, Karita Research, Project Coordinator; kjell.andersson@karita.se
Project webpage: platensoproject.eu



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