

IAEA Team Concludes Peer Review of Greece's Regulatory Framework for Radiation Safety

31 May 2012 | *Athens, Greece* -- An international team of senior nuclear safety and radiation protection experts yesterday concluded an 11-day mission to review the regulatory framework for nuclear and radiation safety in Greece.

The Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) mission, which was conducted at the request of the Government of the Hellenic Republic, noted good practices in the country's nuclear regulatory system and also identified issues for improvement for the Greek Atomic Energy Commission (GAEC) and the Greek competent authorities. These are aimed at strengthening the effectiveness of the country's regulatory framework and functions in line with IAEA Safety Standards.

"The IRRS team enjoyed excellent cooperation from the GAEC throughout its mission," said Tom Ryan, mission leader and Director of Regulations and Information Management at the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland. "The GAEC staff were very open and candid in their discussions and provided the fullest practicable assistance."

The main observations of the IRRS Review team included:

- While the Greek Government's commitment to safety is being demonstrated through its actions, the development of a comprehensive national policy and strategy expressed in a consolidated statement would provide a valuable framework and guidance for future actions in terms of safety; and
- GAEC has effective independence. The Greek government has ensured that GAEC is effectively independent in its safety-related decision-making and that it has functional separation from entities having responsibility or interests that could unduly influence its decision making.

Strengths and good practices identified by the IRRS team included:

- Greece actively participates in the global safety regime including all relevant safety conventions;
- The nation's radiation monitoring system for the detection of illicit trafficking contributes significantly to identifying potential radiation emergencies due to events within or outside the country; and
- GEAC exhibits a strong commitment to education and training in radiation protection.

The IRRS Review team identified issues warranting attention or in need of improvement, including:

- The Radiation Protection Regulations require updating to bring them in line with the current IAEA Safety Requirements. Consideration should be given to the adoption of a more flexible hierarchy of safety regulations;

- The nation's legal framework is dated, lacks the flexibility of a risk-based regulatory framework which provides for a graded approach to safety and has gaps particularly in respect of waste and decommissioning;
- A consolidated management system requires senior management commitment to allocate sufficient resources with the appropriate authority, and to actively involve all staff; and
- The prime responsibility for safety, the responsibilities of employers and workers with respect to occupational exposure, and responsibilities with respect to emergency preparedness and response need to be explicitly assigned in the legal and regulatory framework for safety.

In a preliminary report, the IAEA has conveyed the team's main conclusions to GAEC, and a final report will be submitted to the commission in about three months.

Background

The IRRS team carried out a review of Greece's nuclear legal and regulatory framework for safety.

The IRRS review addressed the facilities and activities regulated by GAEC which involve radiation sources in addition to the waste management facilities. The research reactor GRR-1 in the National Centre for Scientific Research "Demokritos" was out of the scope of this IRRS review but will be included in the follow-up mission.

The mission took place from 20 to 30 May 2012 at the GAEC headquarters in Agia Paraskevi. A Press Conference was conducted at the end of the mission on 30 May. The IRRS team consisted of nine senior regulatory experts from nine IAEA Member States and five IAEA staff members.

About IRRS Missions

IRRS missions are designed to strengthen and enhance the effectiveness of the national nuclear regulatory infrastructure of States, while recognizing the ultimate responsibility of each State to ensure safety in this area.

This is done through consideration of both regulatory, technical and policy issues, with comparisons against IAEA safety standards and, where appropriate, good practices elsewhere.

More information about IRRS missions is available on the IAEA [Website](#).