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Title of the paper:			
Experience in Strengthening Cooperation Between Radiation Safety Regulators in Europe			

HERCA

HERCA is a voluntary association in which the Heads of Radiation Protection Authorities in Europe work together in order to develop common regulatory approaches in terms of practical implementation.

HERCA addresses topics generally covered by provisions of the EURATOM Treaty and its work program is based on significant regulatory issues of common interest.

HERCA was established in 2007 and brings together 51 radiation protection Authorities from 31 European countries.

Terms of Reference and complementary policies

The initial Terms of reference approved in 2007 were based on the voluntary contribution of its members in all HERCA activities. Mechanisms were limited and simple allowing for a greater flexibility in HERCA activities, avoiding procedural constraints and maximizing exchanges. Importance was given to the decision-making capacity of the Board and to the high-level competences of experts participating in HERCA activities.

As a more mature association, HERCA updated its terms of reference in 2014 and developed complementary policies considering its experience and stressing the effective cooperation established.

Working efficiently on a limited number of topics

HERCA work is carried out in Working Groups (WG), Task Forces (TF) or Networks (NT) composed of experts, nominated by HERCA members. WG/TF Chairs and vice-Chairs are tasked with organizing the work of the WG/TF and reporting to the Board.

HERCA policies provide the WG/TF/NT with flexibility for organizing their work. This approach enabled several successful outcomes such as common positions, statements and approaches on emergency preparedness, the control of occupational, public and medical exposures as well as the justification of certain practices.

The current HERCA work program focuses on Medical and Veterinary Applications, Emergency Preparedness and Response, Non-Medical Sources and Practices, Radon and Euratom BSS Transposition as well as Education and Training.

Interaction with relevant stakeholders

HERCA is actively interacting with relevant stakeholders in order to address topics of common interest and to issue comprehensive and realistic position papers or guidance. For example, the working group on medical applications interacts in a frequent manner with medical societies, equipment manufacturers and relevant international organizations regarding justification and optimization in the medical field.

The Board of HERCA

The Board of HERCA meets twice a year in order to discuss regulatory issues of common interest, the work carried out and approve outcomes and future activities. Board members are the Heads of their organizations or senior managers, able to make decisions on behalf of their organization.

The Board meetings provide the WG/TF with an adequate pace for approving the outcomes of their work and further steps to be taken.

HERCA Policy for external communication

For maintaining the voluntary involvement, the trust and the framework for an effective cooperation between the regulatory authorities, HERCA has established a comprehensive policy of communication.

HERCA draft documents and activities are considered confidential until their approval by the Board. Once approved, they can be released on HERCA public website ([ww.herca.org](http://www.herca.org)) and sent to the relevant stakeholders. All HERCA communications on the public website are subject to prior approval by the HERCA Chair, preceded if necessary by consultation of the relevant WG/TF.

Furthermore, any HERCA representative (except the Chair of HERCA) who participates in an activity undertaken at stakeholder's initiative will primarily have an informative role: he/she cannot engage HERCA unless explicitly mandated by the HERCA Chair or Board.

A technical secretariat: a focal point tasked with coordinating all HERCA entities and activities

The HERCA Technical Secretariat ensures the overall coordination and facilitation of all HERCA activities including administrative aspects. In particular, it ensures the organization and follow-up of the Board meetings and follows-up the HERCA WGs/TFs/NTs activities. It also coordinates and ensures the follow-up of HERCA relations with stakeholders and is involved in the majority of HERCA events.

The technical secretariat also manages the public and restricted websites. In 2015, the restricted website has been significantly improved and became an effective share point for all HERCA entities, thus improving the experience and information sharing between all HERCA members.

The technical secretariat is hosted by the French nuclear safety Authority (ASN) providing generous financial support to HERCA. Various activities, websites and events are funded by other HERCA members.

A valuable network of experts

Any HERCA member can consult any HERCA entity on specific questions not already addressed in WG/TF/NT and can present the consultation results to the Board. For example, in the framework of the transposition of the EU BSS directive, Spain consulted HERCA members on dispositions related to building materials. This consultation revealed a common interest for HERCA members for this issue and an internal workshop will be organized on this issue in May 2016.

Conclusion

HERCA has contributed to improve radiation protection in Europe and is now a mature association. Thanks to an effective network of experts, HERCA is flexible and competent enough to address, in an efficient manner, any specific issue of common interest for its members.

HERCA has set up active relations with major stakeholders in radiation protection at European and international levels. This framework of cooperation allows for more dialogue and better understanding of regulatory issues.

HERCA has significantly increased the multilateral cooperation between radiation protection regulators in Europe and has obtained results exceeding what any single regulatory authority could achieve.