

RICOMET 2016

Risk perception, communication and ethics of exposures to ionising radiation

Public Declaration after the RICOMET Conference

Mol, August 2016

In the evolution of nuclear science, technology and innovation, dialogue on social and ethical issues and stakeholder participation are paramount. The RICOMET 2016 Conference reaffirmed: the complexity of radiological protection issues, which require a transdisciplinary research approach, integrating natural sciences with social sciences and humanities (SSH); the importance of informed decisions at all levels; that accepted, sustainable decisions need to address stakeholder concerns visibly and transparently; the value and utility of bottom-up, national stakeholder panels to discuss issues and identify key elements to be addressed through research; the need to develop attractive educational programmes related to ionising radiation for different publics; and the value of a self-sustainable SSH network.

Transdisciplinary research was seen as essential from research conception to finalization. Many radiological protection fields could profit from social science and humanities input, which could help cover knowledge gaps in complex radiological issues. The practical role of ethics, education and economics in decision making also needs further elaboration.

Social sciences and humanities should play an important role in the development of the science basis underpinning radiological protection principles, regulation and practice, and can provide key elements for related strategic research agendas. An integration process, already initiated through the OPERRA and CONCERT projects, should be mirrored in the development, implementation, analysis and communication of ionizing radiation research projects in HORIZON 2020 and beyond. To strengthen the societal impact of radiological protection research at the European level, the strategic research agenda for social sciences and humanities currently under development in the CONCERT project should inform future research programmes.

The research ideas collected at the RICOMET conference from the participants should be given due consideration in the strategic research agenda for social sciences and humanities in radiological protection and, where appropriate, in the strategic research agendas of the radiation protection platforms. Commonalities among national-level issues can assist in setting research priorities for SSH research.

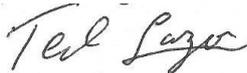
The EAGLE, PLATENSO, OPERRA and CONCERT projects have confirmed the importance of stakeholder involvement in the governance of ionising radiation risks. In order that strategic research agendas most effectively address research needs and expectations at all levels and for all actors, the RICOMET Conference highlighted that better mechanisms to understand and include stakeholder concerns at the national level need to be developed.

More opportunities for dialogue among natural scientists, researchers in social sciences and humanities, researchers in education, civil society organisations, and other stakeholders, such as provided by the RICOMET conference, should be created. In order to better focus ionising radiation research, the Conference viewed as important to strengthen interactions and experience exchange among platforms and projects.

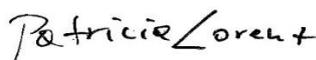
To enhance and promote SSH research in the radiological protection field, and to maintain and share the specific knowledge and expertise developed so far, a need was expressed to better consider SSH research within the Strategic Research Agendas of technical radiological protection platform; and SSH networking activities. These should be self-sustainable after the completion of the projects participating at the RICOMET conference.

For the Conference Declaration Committee:

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