Establishment of Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee (EPReSC)

Summary

The purpose of this document is to inform the Board of the establishment of a new Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee (EPReSC) under the Commission on Safety Standards. EPReSC will review and approve Agency safety standards in the area of emergency preparedness and response and will be composed of senior experts in the area of nuclear and radiological emergency preparedness and response nominated by Member States. EPReSC will also contribute to the review of other Agency safety standards that include parts covering emergency preparedness and response, as well as publications in the IAEA Nuclear Security Series that interface with emergency preparedness and response.
Establishment of Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee (EPReSC)

A. Purpose

1. The purpose of this document is to inform the Board of the establishment of a new Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee (EPReSC) under the Commission on Safety Standards.

B. Background

2. As part of the comprehensive process of the development of Agency safety standards, the Deputy Director General, Head of the Department of Nuclear Safety and Security (DDG-NS), established a number of topical Safety Standards Committees (SSCs) in 1996 to ensure greater transparency, consensus, quality, coherence and consistency of Agency safety standards. These are the Nuclear Safety Standards Committee, the Radiation Safety Standards Committee, the Transport Safety Standards Committee and the Waste Safety Standards Committee in the areas of nuclear installation/radiation/transport/waste safety, respectively.\(^1\)

3. At the same time, the Director General established the Commission on Safety Standards (CSS), a standing body of senior government officials holding national responsibilities for establishing standards and other regulatory documents relevant to nuclear installation, radiation, transport and waste safety. The CSS was given a special overview role with regard to Agency safety standards to provide advice to the Director General on the overall programme on regulatory aspects of safety.

4. The SSCs, open to all Member States, comprise senior experts, nominated by Member States, in nuclear installation, radiation, transport and waste safety to provide advice on the development, review and revision of Agency safety standards relating to these areas and the programme for their application.

5. The current representation in the SSCs shows that only a very small number of Member States have nominated emergency preparedness and response (EPR) experts as representatives in the SSCs.

\(^1\) DDG-NS established the Nuclear Security Guidance Committee (NSGC) in the area of nuclear security in 2012.
In accordance with the terms of reference of the SSCs, a Member State’s nominee is typically a senior regulator with expertise in nuclear installation, radiation, waste or transport safety. The terms of reference of the SSCs do not require that nominees have any expertise or responsibilities in EPR.

6. Agency safety standards in EPR derive from Principle 9 of *Fundamental Safety Principles* (IAEA Safety Standards Series No. SF-1), which states: “Arrangements must be made for emergency preparedness and response for nuclear or radiation incidents.” In 2002, the first Safety Requirements publication in EPR was issued (IAEA Safety Standards Series No. GS-R-2) within the IAEA Safety Standards Series. Subsequently, the Agency issued two Safety Guides to provide guidance and recommendations on the application of the Safety Requirements in EPR (IAEA Safety Standards Series No. GS-G-2.1 in 2007 and No. GSG-2 in 2011). These safety standards are jointly sponsored by a number of international intergovernmental organizations. In 2013, the CSS approved the development of two additional Safety Guides in EPR. In March 2015, the Board of Governors approved the new edition of the Safety Requirements in EPR (to be published as IAEA Safety Standards Series No. GSR Part 7).

7. EPR is a cross cutting area. Therefore, requirements and recommendations in EPR are also part of the Agency’s safety standards relating to nuclear installation, radiation, transport and waste safety, as well as of publications in the IAEA Nuclear Security Series.

8. Hence, there is a need to ensure the involvement of a sufficient number of senior EPR subject matter experts in the process of establishing Agency safety standards to complement the current membership of senior experts in nuclear installation, radiation, waste and transport safety.

C. Addressing the Needs

9. In 2007 the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies recommended that the Secretariat consider, in close cooperation with the CSS, how to improve the involvement of EPR experts in the preparation and review of relevant Agency safety standards and suggested to achieve it by establishing an Emergency Preparedness and Response Standards Committee under the CSS.

10. This recommendation was presented to the 4th Meeting of the Representatives of Competent Authorities identified under the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, which agreed with the recommendation.

11. The General Conference, in several resolutions (GC(51)/RES/11, GC(52)/RES/9, GC(53)/RES/10, GC(54)/RES/7, GC(55)/RES/9), requested and urged the implementation of the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies and the recommendations arising from it.

12. The IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety calls on the Secretariat, Member States and relevant international organizations to “review and strengthen the international emergency preparedness and

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2 Approved by the Board of Governors in May 2004 (document GOV/20004/40 (Corrected)) and endorsed by the General Conference in September 2004 (resolution GC(48)/RES/10).

3 Approved by the Board of Governors in September 2011 and endorsed by the General Conference on 22 September 2011 (document GOV/2011/59-GC(55)/14).
response framework, taking into account recommendations given in the final report of the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies*. 

13. As a first step in the process of implementing the recommendations of the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies, the resolutions of the General Conference and the action arising from the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety, the Emergency Preparedness and Response Expert Group (EPREG) was established in 2013 as a standing advisory body to DDG-NS, comprising senior experts with high professional competence and demonstrated leadership in the field of EPR.

14. The functions of EPREG are to (a) advise on the implementation of recommendations arising from the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies; (b) identify and recommend new actions needed to ensure continuous and coordinated EPR enhancements; (c) evaluate and prioritize international emergency management initiatives in EPR; (d) ensure the development of EPR implementation strategies for proposed initiatives, including institutional arrangements to ensure sustainability of the international EPR framework; (e) promote Member States’ adherence to Agency safety standards and technical recommendations in EPR; and (f) promote harmonized national and international EPR programmes.

15. Since its establishment, EPREG has provided advice on various aspects of EPR, including assessment and prognosis in an emergency, self-assessment in EPR, the cross-cutting nature of EPR, priority areas for capacity building, etc. Despite the establishment of EPREG, the need to ensure the involvement of senior EPR experts in the process of establishing Agency safety standards has remained, as this is excluded from the terms of reference of EPREG. Thus, EPREG, at its meeting in December 2014, recommended to the DDG-NS the establishment of EPRESC. Following the establishment of EPRESC, the functions of EPREG would be integrated into EPRESC, as appropriate, and EPREG would be abolished. Termination of EPREG would allow Member States to reallocate resources from participation in EPREG to participation in EPRESC. In addition, the possibility of participation in the meetings through video links would increase the cost efficiency of the activities.

16. To continue the implementation of the recommendations of the International Action Plan for Strengthening the International Preparedness and Response System for Nuclear and Radiological Emergencies, the resolutions of the General Conference and the action arising from the IAEA Action Plan on Nuclear Safety regarding the establishment of EPRESC, DDG-NS presented information on the establishment of EPRESC to the members of the CSS at its 37th meeting held from 20 to 22 April 2015.

D. Involvement of EPR Experts

17. EPRESC will be established as a standing body of senior experts in the area of nuclear or radiological EPR. All Member States will be invited to nominate, as a member of EPRESC, a senior expert involved in EPR at the national level, for example a representative of the organization designated as a Competent Authority under the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency, or a representative of the organization coordinating EPR at the national level.
18. Relevant international organizations, such as the Inter-Agency Committee on Radiological and Nuclear Emergencies, will be invited to attend meetings of EPreSC as observers.

19. Following other SSCs, EPreSC is expected to have the following functions:

- Advise on the EPR programme for the development of EPR related safety standards issued in the IAEA Safety Standards Series and to advise on priorities;

- Recommend activities and areas for improvement of the overall programme and, in particular, to advise on the programme for the application of the safety standards;

- Review reports on feedback from the Secretariat and members of SSCs on the application and use of EPR related safety standards and to advise on enhancing their usefulness to achieve a high level of safety including EPR, as well as on the timely review of, and the need for, revision of published EPR related safety standards;

- Review EPR related draft safety standards, considering the value of each draft standard and the needs of users of the standards;

- Approve the text of relevant draft safety standards prior to their submission to Member States for comments and prior to their submission to the CSS for endorsement;

- Advise on EPR related safety standards, relevant regulatory issues and activities for supporting the use and application of the safety standards and, upon request, on related issues; and

- Review upon request draft documents of various Agency publications (e.g. IAEA Nuclear Security Series and IAEA Nuclear Energy Series publications) where there is an interface with EPR related safety standards.

20. The ultimate goal to be achieved by the establishment of EPreSC is a strengthened role and integration of EPR subject matter experts in the overall process of establishing Agency safety standards. With their involvement, an increase in quality, transparency and consistency of EPR aspects within Agency safety standards, and an improved coordination of EPR among various publications, will be achieved.