The international voice of the radiation protection profession in the enhancement of radiation protection culture and practice worldwide.

IAEA RASSC Meeting – Update on IRPA Activities

Vienna, 21-23 November 2016

The International Radiation Protection Association, IRPA, is an international organization that enlists individuals as members who are also members of an affiliated national or regional Associate Society. Its primary purpose is to provide a medium whereby those engaged in radiation protection activities in all countries may communicate more readily with each other and through this process advance radiation protection in many parts of the world. Beside many national seminars and workshops the regional and international congresses are main platforms for communication.

IRPA14 International Congress, Cape Town, 9-13 May 2016

This major international congress provided the platform for discussion of all the IRPA programmes, including the sharing of our international partner organizations’ own programmes with the worldwide practitioners. The prestigious Sievert Award lecture at the congress was presented by Dr John Boice from the US.

Executive Council

During the Congress in Cape Town the new Executive Council of IRPA was elected as follows:

President - Roger Coates (UK)  
Elected Members: Ana Maria Bomben (Argentina)  
Vice-President - Eduardo Gallego (Spain)  
Alfred Hefner (Austria)  
Vice President for Congress Affairs - Jong Kyung Kim (Korea)  
Sigurður Magnússon (Iceland)  
Executive Officer - Bernard Le Guen (France)  
Marie-Claire Cantone (Italy)  
Treasurer - Richard Toohey (US)  
Klaus Henrichs (Germany)  
Publications Director - Christopher Clement (Canada)  
Hiroko Yoshida (Japan)

IRPA’s programme of activities focuses on four principal topics:

- Our role as the international voice of the RP profession through engagement with other international organisations and professional bodies on the development of the system of protection, giving emphasis to impacts on practical implementation.
- To support the needs of the Associate Societies by developing, enhancing and sharing good practice and high standards of professionalism.
- To support the education and training of RP professionals
- To enhance IRPA Governance and the interface with the Associate Societies

As the ‘International Voice of the Radiation Protection Profession’ IRPA has an active program of relevance to the IAEA and other international organisations. Key aspects of the current programme are addressed below.
Ethics: IRPA has supported the work of ICRP TG94 on reviewing the ethical basis of the system of protection. In the light of the ICRP report IRPA will consider whether it will be helpful and appropriate to give additional consideration to the role of ethics in the application of the system by the practitioners.

Consultation on the Understanding and Communication of the System of Protection: It is important to ensure that the system of protection is fit for purpose, credible and able to be presented to, and understood by, all those impacted by radiation. To this end IRPA is engaged on a consultation seeking input from the worldwide IRPA Associate Societies in order to determine the views of the practitioners on what steps should be taken in this respect. Preliminary responses are currently undergoing a second consultation phase. Key issues arising include:

- How to present the uncertainty in low dose risk, and what is the best framework for making decisions at very low doses around natural background levels
- The context of natural background
- Limitation and ALARA, with emphasis on ‘what is reasonable’: these issues have been of particular interest, and IRPA is holding a workshop on ‘reasonableness’ in February 2017. Hence IRPA will have a very strong interest in any proposed ICRP work on tolerability and reasonableness.
- Public understanding of radiation and risk generally: IRPA will also further develop its ongoing work to assist the Associate Societies and the individual professionals to be better prepared for public interactions on radiation and risk.

On completion of the consultation in the first half of 2017 we will share the output from this exercise with our international colleagues.

Radiation Protection Culture: Following the publication of IRPA’s Guiding Principles on RP Culture our Associate Societies are encouraged to develop and promote national implementation of this important consideration. Noting a particular challenge in the medical community, IRPA is working jointly with IOMP and WHO to develop additional guidance for the medical sector. Guidance for other sectors is under consideration.

Certification of Radiation Protection Experts: IRPA has just published guidance on good practice for the certification of RPEs. We will continue to encourage our associate societies to engage with the relevant regulatory bodies to promote the recognition of professional expertise.

Eye Lens Dose Limit: We will shortly publish a second report on how the profession has responded to the revised limit, which will outline the key issues and make recommendations. In addition we will publish IRPA guidance on eye dose monitoring and the use of eye protection.

Security of Radioactive Sources: We are developing a programme to improve awareness of the importance of ensuring the security of all radioactive sources.

IRPA Congresses: As part of our emphasis on the education and training of RP professionals we will continue to work to improve our flagship International and Regional Congresses. These congresses also allow our partner international organisations to share and discuss their programmes and priorities with the RP practitioners. The congresses during this present IRPA term are as follows:
Regional Congresses 2018:  
Latin America, Havana, Cuba, 23-27 April  
Asia/Oceania, Melbourne, Australia, 20-24 May  
Europe, The Hague, Netherlands, 4-8 June  
Africa, Tunis, Tunisia, 6-9 September


For further news please visit the website of IRPA: www.irpa.net