

NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION FOREIGN TRIP REPORT

Subject

Staff participation in the 7th annual meeting of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA) Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) and the subsequent meeting of the FSC core group.

Dates of Travel and Countries/Organizations Visited

High-Level Waste Repository Safety staff represented the U.S. and the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC) as a delegate and member of the FSC core group at the 7th annual FSC meeting, June 7-9, 2006, at NEA headquarters in Paris, France.

Author, Title, and Agency Affiliation

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Sensitivity

Not Applicable

Background/Purpose

The FSC was chartered in 2000 by the Radioactive Waste Management Committee. It comprises members from thirteen countries with active waste management programs as well as representatives from the International Atomic Energy Agency and the European Commission. Delegates to the FSC from the U.S. Department of Energy or the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency did not attend this meeting. Besides the annual meeting, in Paris, the Forum also sponsors an annual country workshop with wider participation to examine, in detail, issues of stakeholder confidence that have arisen in a particular member country's waste program. The most recent of these country workshops was held in Spain, in November 2005 (see trip report ADAMS no. ML053480115).

Abstract

On June 7-9, 2006, I participated in the 7th annual meeting of the OECD/NEA Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC). Immediately following the FSC annual meeting, on June 9, I participated in a meeting of the FSC core group. The highlight of the annual meeting was a joint session held with FSC and the association of Swedish municipalities with nuclear facilities. The desired results were achieved. The annual meeting also featured three topical sessions, 1) "Tools and Processes to help Society Prepare and Manage Radioactive Waste Decisions" (for which I served as chair), 2) "Experience with Electronic, Web and Internet Platforms for Communicating on Radioactive Waste Management," and 3) Organizational Changes: Cultural and Structural Aspects. Planning continued for an FSC National Workshop in Tengelice, Hungary, now scheduled for November 14-17, 2006. Before adjourning, members heard

updates from fellow delegates on each member state's waste programs, with emphasis on stakeholder issues. Participation in, and planning of FSC meetings and workshops continues to strengthen NRC staff's existing networks for sharing experiences, especially with respect to the development of effective tools and processes for engaging stakeholders on issues of radioactive waste disposal.

Discussion

Between June 7 and June 9, 2006, I attended two successive OECD/NEA meetings in Paris, France. On June 7-9, 2006, I participated in the 7th annual meeting of the OECD/NEA Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC). Other member states represented at this meeting included Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Immediately following the FSC annual meeting, on June 9, I participated in a meeting of the FSC core group, of which I have been an elected member since FSC's inception in 2000.

The highlight of the FSC annual meeting was a joint session with the association of Swedish municipalities with nuclear facilities. Leading the delegation was Mr. Roland Palmqvist, Mayor of Kävlinge, Sweden, and president of the association. Other Swedish municipalities represented by this association include Nyköping, Varberg, Oskarshamn and Östhammar. The goal of the association is to identify joint views and comments to the Swedish government on nuclear related issues affecting the associated communities. The association also aims to educate its local elected representatives through international study visits to provide them with an international perspective on their work on domestic nuclear issues.

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The focus of the first of these sessions was the process use for consulting with the public about nuclear waste. It featured formal presentations about public consultations conducted in Canada and France, and one planned for Sweden. It was followed by a facilitated discussion. The first presentation described a three-year consultation with the Canadian public and with Aboriginal Peoples, undertaken by Canada's Nuclear Waste Management Organization. This very broad consultation, involving input from more than 18,000 individuals, was directed by the 2002 Nuclear Fuel Waste Act and sought input from Canadians on the following: (1) the questions that needed to be asked and answered; (2) confirmation regarding the range of technical methods to be considered for spent fuel management; (3) risks, costs and benefits from each management approach; and (4) the overall structure for implementing each approach considered. A second speaker described a similar, though less ambitious national debate in France, during 2005, involving interaction with more than 3,000 citizens, non-governmental organizations, local government officials, union representatives, and others. By and large, the French public felt that the scope of the debate defined by law was too narrow, that transportation considerations needed to be included, and that issues of comprehensive regional development around a potential disposal site, rather than "compensation" needed to be addressed. A third presentation, by the Swedish implementer, described preparations for public consultations on a forthcoming environmental impact assessment for spent fuel disposal.

The second topical session, lasting half a day, included formal oral presentations from representatives of Scotland and France, as well as from three professionals in the field of electronic communications, and the generation of Web and internet platforms. The chairman of the session also summarized short written contributions submitted by all of the FSC delegates on the experiences, successful and otherwise, of FSC member organizations. A common theme emerging throughout this session was a familiar one—that use of a diversity of communication tools and approaches is critical, and that the same tools must be applied differently for different communities of stakeholders. For example, stakeholders react and interact with internet-based communications very differently as a function of age. One of the most interesting tools cited was the application of internet-based games as education tools for adolescents and young adults. The analysis of this session and the ensuing discussion among the FSC members will inform the future work program of the FSC in this area.

The last session was a continuation of earlier FSC work on organizational change. In 2004, FSC held its first topical session on the topic, “Addressing Issues Raised by Stakeholders: Impacts on Process, Content and Behavior in Waste Organizations.” FSC delegates presented eleven papers on the experiences of institutional actors in OECD countries. These papers described how stakeholder’s views have been taken into consideration and how they influenced decision-making processes. Less attention, however, was given to the cultural and structural changes within the decision-making organizations, themselves, that were necessary to bring about greater interaction with stakeholders, and to enhance stakeholder confidence. In order to understand these more subtle transformations within organizations, FSC initiated a four-step process: a survey of FSC delegates, analysis of results, a topical session with international experts in organizational changes (at this June’s meeting), and finally, publication of FSC observations and findings (later this year). The session at this meeting began with a review of FSC work to date followed by the reflections of experts involved in research on theoretical and practical aspects of organizational change. Among the more interesting points discussed by the speakers and delegates were: the need for an organization to recognize that it can no longer achieve its most important objectives without better integration with its stakeholders, the role of crisis in providing momentum for change, and need for simultaneous improvement of both external and internal communication.

Planning also continued for the upcoming FSC National Workshop in Tengelice, Hungary, now scheduled for November 14-17, 2006. Peter Ormai, FSC delegate from Hungary, provided an overview of the workshop itinerary and agenda. The Hungarian workshop will serve as a major venue for developing the Value Added Project initiative of the FSC. In addition to a site visit, and an opportunity to hear from local decision leaders and citizens, the workshop will address specific topics of FSC concern, in roundtable discussion with local citizens. These topics will include: “Implementing a Regional Development Plan in Step with Facility Development,” and “Building a Sustainable Relationship of a Community to a Project and a Facility.”

Before adjourning, at noon on June 9, members heard updates from fellow delegates on each member state’s waste programs, with emphasis on stakeholder issues. Brief status reports on several European initiatives to engage stakeholders (*i.e.* COWAM [Community Waste Management] Europe and CARL [Researching effects of stakeholder involvement in decision-making on radioactive waste management]) were also provided.

During the core group meeting, immediately following, the core group agreed that three topical sessions may be too many to allow for sufficient discussion and exchange among the FSC membership. The group recognized that all three topics were of great interest to the FSC as a whole, but that considerable frustration arose when animated and productive discussions had to be truncated in the interest of keeping to the allotted time. The group decided to schedule not more than two topical sessions at future annual meetings.

Participation in, and planning of FSC meetings and workshops continues to strengthen NRC staff's existing networks for sharing experiences, especially with respect to the development of effective tools and processes for engaging stakeholders on issues of radioactive waste disposal.

Pending Actions/Next Steps

FSC expects to publish the proceedings of the topical sessions later this year. NMSS staff will continue to represent the U.S. and the NRC as a member of the FSC core group. Preparations for the National FSC Workshop in Tengelice, Hungary, November 13-17, will continue over the next few months. Staff will participate in this workshop and in the subsequent FSC core group meeting. Staff also plans to attend the 8th annual FSC meeting, tentatively scheduled for June 6-8, 2007, at NEA Headquarters in Paris.

Points for Commission Consideration/Items of Interest

No Commission action is required.

Attachments

1. Agenda
2. List of Participants