

II ERA WORKSHOP

(Prague, Czech Republic), 15th September 2014

The second ERA workshop was held in Prague (Czech Republic) on 15th September 2014. It was the first workshop of the European Radon Association since ERA was registered under Belgian law in December 2013. 33 participants attended the workshop. The ERA President, James Mc Laughlin, opened the event introducing the guest speaker of the session, Margot Tirmarche. The presentations can be obtained in the website of ERA:

- Health effects of radon exposure, contribution of epidemiology (Margot Tirmarche, ASN, France)

Margot Tirmarche was giving a presentation on the effects of radon exposure in human beings from an epidemiology perspective. These effects are well known as well as the fact that the risk of lung cancer declines once the exposure ends over the next 15 years. She remarked the percentage of 10 % of increasing on lung cancer per 100 Bq m⁻³. She includes on her presentation the possible evidence that radon and gamma radiation could have an impact of leukaemia cancer. Below we can summarize the main points of the discussion which follows Margot's talk:

- Relation between leukaemia and radon exposure
- The problem of conversion factors and the connection with risk communication to the public
- The possible relation of radon with other types of cancer is not very clear since the number of evidences is low
- The so-called radon spas could have beneficial effects but for very short radon exposures.

- Public risk communication (James Mc Laughlin, UCD, Ireland and ERA President)

The ERA President gave a talk on how to deal with the communication of radon risk to the general public. He pointed out a list of examples of effective radon messages as well as which communication channels are better to use. As an example of communication, he showed the outcomes from RADPAR project workpackage on communication.

- Radon in buildings from a Swedish point of view (Johan Wintheim, Independia Group, Sweden)

Johan Wintheim gave a presentation based on prevention of radon in buildings following a Swedish approach. In Sweden the radon limit levels are 200 and 400 Bq m⁻³ for houses and workplaces respectively. The main sources of radon indoors are the soil, the building materials (blue concrete in some cases) and water. There is a

requirement for the issuing of energy performance certificates in Sweden to include radon levels in the building. He ended up with the different situation of radon when talking about villas or apartments.

- Radon regulations in Europe : examples of good practices (Boris Dehandschutter, FANC, Belgium)

Boris Dehandschutter gave a presentation within the framework of the ERA working group on radon regulations. The speaker summarized examples of good practices on the next subjects: radon mapping, database, prevention and training and education. He used particular examples from some European countries to illustrate those examples of good practices. The presentation ended with one of the aims of ERA working group on radon regulation: to collect and publish this information, for the benefit of the European radon stakeholders

- PROPOSAL FOR EU RESEARCH PROJECT "Harmonization criteria to apply the new Basic Safety Standards (BSS)" (Jose – Luis Gutierrez Villanueva, LaRUC (University of Cantabria), Spain)

Jose – Luis Gutierrez Villanueva presented the proposal for a new project aiming to study the harmonization criteria for the application of the recently issued European Basic Safety Standards (BSS). He presented some examples of how much harmonization is needed. Taking into account the list of items of Annex XVIII of the BSS, the project could be organized in different work-packages according to that list. The main coordination might be ERA and there is possibility for organizing two meetings in the next three years to prepare the final proposal due to funding obtained from Spanish government.

Over the next 35 minutes a discussion followed the presentations of the workshop and dealt with the following topics or aspects of the workshop :

- Question about overlaying population maps and radon potential maps
- The importance to make an appropriate use of radon maps
- Problems with short-term and long-term measurements. The EU point of view is that short-term techniques are useful for screening while long-term measurements are essential tools to make decisions
- Apartments are considered in Sweden to have a radon problem due to the building materials
- There has been a change on building regulations in Sweden and now there is inspection in every house.
- A participant from ISPRA offered his help to find out the most appropriate call for the proposal from Spain about the harmonization project of the new BSS.

- On the question of effective the risk communication, James Mc Laughlin remarked on the importance of involving the media as potential allies in this process and not perceiving them as enemies