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Overview of Recent Activities on Safety Culture and Human and Organisational Factors Carried Out at the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission

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Synopsis

The Institute for Energy and Transport (IET) of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission (EC) is since more than ten years active in the field of Safety Culture (SC) and Human and Organisational Factors (HOF).

Several activities related to SC and HOF have been and are carried out in the frame of the EU Nuclear Safety Clearinghouse for Operating Experience Feedback (Clearinghouse). The Clearinghouse was established in 2008 to enhance nuclear safety through the lessons learned from NPP events, and to provide help in Operational Experience Feedback (OEF) process primarily to nuclear safety Regulatory Authorities and to their Technical Support Organizations within the EU. Additionally to these activities, during the Fukushima accident, Clearinghouse has been regularly providing reports on the status and progress of the accident to the EU Regulatory Authorities. Moreover, experts, selected from the JRC staffing, were directly engaged in the EU-wide risk and safety assessments of nuclear power plants known as “the Stress Tests”.

After Chernobyl accident many projects were funded by the European Union to increase the Safety of the Ukrainian and Russian Nuclear Power Plants through the TACIS programme. Currently there are several ongoing project directed to enhance the cultural, procedural and technical capability and effectiveness in operating Ukrainian NPPs. Two of them are directly aiming at improving SC and HOF: 1) “Improvement of Safety Culture Management at NNEGC Energoatom and its NPPs” and 2) “The Enhancement of Nuclear Safety by extending the understanding the influence of human factors”. These projects are managed by the EC Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), with the technical and scientific support of the Joint Research Centre.

Due to the similarity with the safety approaches in other major hazard industries, Clearinghouse is involved in different activities where the other industries have developed their own Operational Experience Feedback programs. Their repositories of experience, mainly in the form of reports, are a very valuable source for numerous studies ranging from the ones aiming to extract the best Lessons Learned from individual events to the more comprehensive ones where common areas for improvement are identified on the basis of the assessment of similar events in specific industry branches.

In addition, studies where different industries provide inputs from their databases are performed too. The JRC also contributed to one of the latest concluded international projects carried out by the European Safety, Reliability and Data Association (ESReDA) Project Group for Dynamic Learning from Accident Investigation (PG DLAI). The main objectives of the project were to work out recommendations on how to capture, document, disseminate and implement insights, recommendations and experiences obtained from the investigations of high-risk events.

Finally it is worth to mention some other JRC projects focused on nuclear safety: Nuclear Reactor Accident Analysis and Modelling (NURAM); Knowledge Management, Training and Education in Reactor design and Operation (CAPTURE); and Support to DG ENER Nuclear Reactor Safety Policy and International Standards (NUSP).

Through all of these projects Safety Culture specific characteristics and attributes are always highlighted to remind all stakeholders of its importance for the safe operation of NPPs.

Country or International Agency

European Commission - Joint Research Centre

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Yes

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