

CONTRIBUTION OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN STRENGTHENING RADIATION SAFETY IN MOLDOVA

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International cooperation contributes significantly to strengthening radiation safety infrastructure in developing countries and, in that respect Republic of Moldova is not an exemption. In the past the Moldovan radiation safety infrastructure was characterised by modest experience, vaguely defined responsibilities among the existing 5 state regulatory authorities, limited training programs within the country as well as limited and old specialized detection and monitoring equipment. The change of this situation began in 2007 with the establishment of the regulatory body - the National Agency for Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities (NARNRA). This was also followed by increased technical external assistance in order to develop an efficient radiation safety and security. From the first years the NARNRA has received technical assistance from the IAEA, US Government, and European Commission and, starting with 2010, from the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority (further referred SSM).

As the only legally binding, in-force, international instrument in the area of physical protection of nuclear material, the Amendment to the CPPNM, for the first time, obligates States Parties to protect nuclear facilities and material in peaceful domestic use, storage and transport, including for medical purposes. The use of nuclear and radioactive materials in Moldova are the base of the high-tech in the medicine and radiation safety, security and physical protection in the medical institutions are mandatory.

In 2010 within the framework of the Swedish bilateral co-operation, the SSM initiated dialogue with the Moldovan regulatory body NARNRA for providing technical assistance on radiation safety aspects for Moldovan partners.

This paper uses as a case study the evolution and obtained results in the field of radiation safety cooperation during 2010-2015 between the two states - Sweden and the Republic of Moldova. It started with projects for regulatory capacity-building of the NARNRA and other stakeholders, and has evolved into projects for developing of the human resources in established National Nuclear Security Support Centre of the Technical University. The projects implemented by Sweden in Moldova are in the line of the aims and purposes of the UNSCR 1540 and 2003 (revised in 2008) European Security Strategy.

Taking into account the fact that radiation safety and security infrastructure involves many-side activities were organized bilateral annual meetings for the purposes of setting priorities for the current year as well as for the future. For six years in a row, projects on the following aspects have been implemented: technical assistance for the state authorities with responsibilities within the regulatory framework for safety, radioactive waste management, regaining control over orphan sources, combatting of illicit trafficking, non-proliferation, other experience and information exchange on matters of common interest such as education and training of the personnel, organization of the conferences, workshops and round tables in Moldova at the national, regional and international level.

This cooperation between the two states plays a crucial role for strengthening the Moldovan radiation safety and security infrastructure and it is significant for the entire Black Sea region as well.