



Radiation Protection Commission

OHSA Building
17 Edgar Ferro Street,
Pietà, MSD 1533 Malta
Tel: 21247677, Fax: 21232909
email: ohsa.rpb@gov.mt

14 April 2020

Annual report of the Commission for the Protection from Ionising and Non-Ionising Radiation for 2019

Contents

Executive Summary.....	2
Introduction	3
Experts on the Commission	3
Human Resources of the Secretariat.....	3
Commission Premises	3
Budget.....	4
Management system	4
Preparations for IRRS follow-up Mission	4
Emergency preparedness	5
Transposition of EU Basic Safety Standards Directive	5
Radioactive Waste Management.....	5
Radioactive waste documentation	5
Waste store.....	6
ARTEMIS.....	6
8 th Review meeting on the Convention on Nuclear Safety.....	6
Conventions that Malta is not party to.....	6
Medical Physics Experts and Radiation Protection Experts.....	7
European/IAEA Inspection with regard to Nuclear Safeguards.....	7
Non-ionising Radiation.....	7

Executive Summary

2019 was the first full year of operation of the Commission for the Protection from Ionising and Non-Ionising Radiation, hereinafter referred to as the Commission. This was officially launched at the end of October 2018.

During 2019 the Commission fell under the responsibility of the Ministry for Equality and European Affairs.

The majority of the work of the Commission focused on ensuring Malta was compliant to its obligations to the European Union and the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). This centred about the recommendations and suggestions Malta received following a review by the IAEA in 2015.

The Commission recognises that the Secretariat has insufficient human resources to comply with its legal obligations under the Act and to rectify this the Commission did all in its powers to increase the staffing of the Secretariat.

In addition, the Commission is also aware of issues related to non-ionising radiation that still need to be addressed.

Introduction

Pursuant to Article 11(6) of the Nuclear Safety and Radiation Protection Act (CAP 585), hereinafter, referred to as the Act, the Commission is presenting this report for the attention of the Minister for Tourism and Consumer Protection, under which the Commission now falls.

This is the second report produced by the Commission and covers the period from 1st January 2019 to 31st December 2019.

Experts on the Commission

Over the said period, the Commission comprised of one expert with regard to each of the following: (a) health and safety issues; (b) environment issues; (c) public health issues; (d) civil protection issues; (e) transportation issues; (f) electromagnetic field issues; (g) customs issues; and a representative of the civil society. The expert on issues related to the field of communications resigned in May 2019.

Human Resources of the Secretariat.

The Secretariat of the Commission has no official employees and the work outlined in this document was performed by two employees of the Occupational Health and Safety Authority.

In January 2019, the Commission approved a three-year human resources plan for the secretariat which was submitted to the Ministry. This was also discussed with the Industrial Relations Unit and a grading structure was developed. The grading structure includes the following positions:

- Chief Executive Officer/Executive Secretary;
- Quality and Operations Manager;
- Radiation Officer;
- Clerk.

By December 2019, none of the above positions had been filled but the call for applications for three “Radiation Officers” had been approved by the Ministry.

Commission Premises

The Secretariat carefully analysed the space requirements for new premises. The calculated required office area was 290 m². This included offices, meeting rooms, and

other areas for staff and support services. These were forwarded to the Ministry and by the end of 2019 no call for premises was issued.

Budget

In April 2019, the Commission submitted the financial estimates to the Ministry and a budget of €501,584 was requested to the Ministry of Finance, for 2020. The estimates were based on the developed Human Resource Plan and new premises. The actual budget allocated was €300,000.

Management system

The Secretariat adapted a management system based on the one used by the Icelandic Radiation Safety Authority. The management system was developed using Microsoft Excel and consists of eleven elements as follows:

- Workings of the Commission
- Management of the Secretariat
- Finance
- Document Management
- Staff
- Computer System
- Education
- Authorisation and Inspections
- Dose & Environmental Monitoring
- Emergency Preparedness
- Others

Preparations for IRRS follow-up Mission

Malta, is expected to undergo an Integrated Review Regulatory Service (IRRS) by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in March 2020. This will follow-up the initial mission conducted in 2015 to fulfil our obligations by the EURATOM Treaty.

In preparation to the follow-up mission, in August 2019, representatives of the IRRS team visited Malta for a two-day meeting with the Commission and Secretariat to finalise the plans for the IRRS follow-up mission to be held in March 2020.

The Commission devoted a lot of effort in 2019 to address as many as possible of the 42 recommendations and 7 suggestions that were made during the initial IRRS Mission in 2015.

Emergency preparedness

From the very start, the Commission recognised the need of an effective national radiological emergency plan for Malta. As a matter of fact, during 2019 the Commission consulted with all stakeholders to revise the risk assessment and the radiological emergency plan for Malta.

A memorandum of understanding with Civil Protection Department was signed in December and the Commission also reach out to the Accident and Emergency Department at Mater Dei Hospital to assist them in their preparation of procedures to deal with radiologically affected patients.

The radiological emergency plan was sent to the Minister in December 2019 for approval, as required by the Act.

Transposition of EU Basic Safety Standards Directive

The European Commission issued a reasoned opinion at the end of November 2019 with regard to the Maltese transposition of directive 2013/59/EURATOM.

In December 2019, the Commission started work on drafting a reply to the European Commission and drafting amendments to the Maltese regulation which transposed this Directive.

Radioactive Waste Management

Radioactive waste documentation

In June 2019, the *Management of radioactive waste regulations (SL585.03)* and the revised *National Framework for Radioactive Waste Management* were published, following consultation with the relevant stakeholders. This transposes Malta's obligations under the *Council Directive 2011/70/Euratom of 19 July 2011 establishing a Community framework for the responsible and safe management of spent fuel and radioactive waste*.

In connection with article 14 of the Directive, the Commission sent a report to the EU Commission on the Maltese implementation of the Directive.

The published regulations and National framework thoroughly address the infringement proceedings of the European Commission, the Radiation Protection Board had received.

Waste store

A key initial component of the management of radioactive waste was the setting up of a national radioactive storage facility. The Commission secured funding from the IAEA for the provision of a 20-foot ISO container and waste handling equipment.

Following a call for expression of interest, the management of the radioactive waste storage facility was awarded to a private company by the Ministry for Equality and European Affairs, which was responsible for the Commission in 2019.

The private company was subsequently awarded a licence to operate the facility by the Commission.

ARTEMIS

Malta is required by the European Commission to have an international peer review, organized by the IAEA, on radioactive waste management (ARTEMIS). In April 2019, a representative from the IAEA visited Malta to explain the remit of ARTEMIS.

In response to the request from Malta, in June 2019 the IAEA agreed to hold an ARTEMIS Mission to Malta in mid to late 2022. The Mission to Malta is likely to consist of 5 persons for 5 days.

8th Review meeting on the Convention on Nuclear Safety.

Malta is a contracting party to the Convention on Nuclear Safety (CNS) and is therefore required to attend review meetings and report on the national status. In preparation to such review meetings, a number of questions need to be answered in advance.

The 8th Review is scheduled to take place in Vienna in March 2020.

In August 2019, the Commission uploaded the national report to the CNS website. The report prompted 13 questions/comments from 5 contracting parties to the CNS. These questions need to be answered by Malta, by February 2020.

Conventions that Malta is not party to

The Commission initiated discussions on whether Malta should accede to Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident and the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. However, no conclusion has been reached and the Commission is seeking legal advice on the matter.

Medical Physics Experts and Radiation Protection Experts

The Commission reviewed the pending applications for Medical Physics Experts and Radiation Protection Experts and issued approval certificates.

The Medical Physics Experts applications were processed against the general criteria outlined in the Act and a detailed procedure for the application and approval for these Experts is planned to be consulted and implemented in 2020.

In June 2019, a revised procedure for approval of Radiation Protection Experts was approved by the Commission.

European/IAEA Inspection with regard to Nuclear Safeguards

A Joint EU/IAEA safeguards inspection was performed on April, 24th April. No issues were reported at the end of the inspection.

Non-ionising Radiation

The Commission recognises the need to repeal Directive 2013/35/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 26 June 2013 on the minimum health and safety requirements regarding the exposure of workers to the risks arising from physical agents (electromagnetic fields). However, the resources at hand are very limited and thus the obligations cannot be met. During 2019, the Commission discussed requests for guidance on issues relating to occupational exposure to EMF and aesthetic use lasers *ad-hoc*.

The Commission agreed that more attention needs to be paid to the issues related to non-ionising radiation and these will be given priority once the human resources plan is implemented and new staff is recruited.



Dr Lourdes Farrugia
Chairperson
14th April, 2020



Mr Paul Brejza
Executive Secretary
14th April, 2020