Malta Successfully Completes Second Full-Scope IAEA IRRS Mission

Malta has successfully completed its second full-scope Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) Mission conducted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), marking an important milestone in the country's ongoing efforts to strengthen radiation and nuclear safety.

The mission, which took place over the past two weeks, involved an extensive review of Malta's national regulatory framework for radiation safety, radioactive waste management, transport of radioactive material, emergency preparedness and response, and the interface between safety and security. The review was carried out by an international team of experts from Greece, Portugal, Mauritius, Argentina and Thailand, coordinated by the IAEA.

The IRRS is an internationally recognised peer-review mechanism that evaluates national regulatory infrastructures against IAEA Safety Standards and international good practices. Malta previously hosted an initial IRRS mission in 2015 and a follow-up mission in 2020.

The review team acknowledged the significant progress made by Malta since the previous missions and highlighted several areas of good practice. Among these were the strong collaboration between Government, the Commission for the Protection from Ionising and Non-Ionising Radiation (RPC), and its Secretariat, while maintaining the independence of regulatory decision-making. The multidisciplinary composition of the Commission and Malta's framework for recognising Radiation Protection Experts and Medical Physics Experts were also positively noted.

The mission further identified recommendations and suggestions aimed at strengthening further Malta's regulatory framework in different areas. These findings will support the continued development of a robust and sustainable regulatory system.

Chairperson of the Commission, Prof. Lourdes Farrugia, welcomed the mission's conclusions, noting that the review provided valuable confirmation of the progress achieved while offering clear guidance for future improvements.

"The IRRS mission is much more than an international obligation. It is an opportunity to learn from international experts, benchmark our practices against international standards, and continuously strengthen our regulatory framework. We are pleased that the review team recognised the progress achieved over recent years and we fully embrace the recommendations and suggestions that will help us continue improving," Prof. Farrugia stated.

The Government of Malta and the RPC expressed their appreciation to the IAEA and the review team for their professionalism, expertise, and constructive engagement throughout the mission. Appreciation was also extended to the members of the Commission, the Secretariat, and all participating stakeholders whose contributions were essential to the successful completion of the review.

Malta remains committed to maintaining the highest standards of radiation and nuclear safety, protecting people and the environment, and ensuring continuous improvement in line with international standards and best practices.

Malta Tikkonkludi b'Suċċess it-Tieni Missjoni tal-IRRS tal-IAEA

Malta kkonkludiet b'suċċess it-tieni missjoni tal-Integrated Regulatory Review Service (IRRS) immexxija mill-Aġenzija Internazzjonali tal-Enerġija Atomika (IAEA), pass importanti fl-isforzi kontinwi tal-pajjiż biex isaħħaħ is-sikurezza mir-radjazzjoni u l-uzu ta sorsi ionizanti ta radjazzjoni.

Il-missjoni, li saret matul l-aħħar ġimagħtejn, kienet tinvolvi reviżjoni estensiva tal-qafas regolatorju nazzjonali ta' Malta dwar is-sikurezza mir-radjazzjoni, il-ġestjoni tal-iskart radjuattiv, it-trasport ta' materjal radjuattiv, it-tħejjija u r-rispons għal emerġenzi. Ir-reviżjoni twettqet minn tim internazzjonali ta' sitt esperti mill-Greċja, il-Portugall, il-Mawrizju, l-Arġentina u t-Tajlandja, ikkoordinat mill-IAEA.

L-IRRS huwa mekkaniżmu rikonoxxut internazzjonalment li jevalwa l-infrastrutturi regolatorji nazzjonali skont l-Istandards tas-Sikurezza tal-IAEA u l-aħjar prattiki internazzjonali. Malta ospitat l-ewwel missjoni tal-IRRS fl-2015 u missjoni ta' segwitu fl-2020.

It-tim ta' esperti rrikonoxxa l-progress sinifikanti li għamlet Malta mill-missjonijiet preċedenti u enfasizza diversi oqsma ta' prattika tajba. Fost dawn kien hemm il-kollaborazzjoni b'saħħitha bejn il-Gvern u l-Kummissjoni għall-Protezzjoni mir-Radjazzjoni Jonizzanti u Mhux Jonizzanti (RPC), filwaqt li tinżamm l-indipendenza fit-teħid tad-deċiżjonijiet regolatorji. Ġew innutati wkoll b'mod pożittiv il-kompożizzjoni multidixxiplinari tal-Kummissjoni u l-qafas nazzjonali għar-rikonoxximent tal-Esperti fil-Protezzjoni mir-Radjazzjoni u tal-Esperti fil-Medical Physics.

Il-missjoni identifikat ukoll rakkomandazzjonijiet u suġġerimenti mmirati biex isaħħu l-qafas regolatorju ta' Malta f'oqsma different u dawn il-konklużjonijiet se jappoġġjaw l-iżvilupp kontinwu ta' sistema regolatorja robusta u sostenibbli.

Iċ-Chairperson tal-Kummissjoni, il-Prof. Lourdes Farrugia, laqgħet b'sodisfazzjon il-konklużjonijiet tal-missjoni, filwaqt li nnutat li din il-missjoni konfermat il-progress li sar matul dan l ahhar snin. Fl-istess ħin, tat direzzjoni ċara għall-passi li jmiss.

"Il-missjoni tal-IRRS hija ħafna aktar minn obbligu internazzjonali. Hija opportunità biex nitgħallmu minn esperti internazzjonali, inqabblu l-prattiki tagħna ma' standards internazzjonali u nkomplu nsaħħu l-qafas regolatorju tagħna. Ninsabu sodisfatti li t-tim ta' esperti rrikonoxxa l-progress li sar matul l-aħħar snin u nilqgħu bis-sħiħ ir-rakkomandazzjonijiet u s-suġġerimenti li se jgħinuna nkomplu ntejbu s-sistema tagħna," qalet il-Prof. Farrugia.

Il-Gvern ta' Malta u l-RPC esprimew l-apprezzament tagħhom lejn l-IAEA u lit-tim għall-professjonalità, l-esperjenza u d-diskussjonijiet kostruttivi matul il-missjoni. Ġiet espressa

wkoll gratitudni lejn il-membri tal-Kummissjoni, is-Segretarjat u l-partijiet interessati kollha li pparteċipaw fil-proċess u li l-kontribut tagħhom kien essenzjali għat-twettiq b'suċċess ta' din il-missjoni.

Malta tibqa' impenjata li żżomm l-ogħla standards ta' sikurezza mir-radjazzjoni u sikurezza nukleari, tipproteġi lin-nies u lill-ambjent, u tiżgura titjib kontinwu f'konformità mal-istandards internazzjonali u l-aħjar prattiki.

The team of international experts, together with the Permanent secretary and members of the Commission.