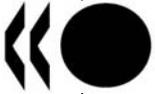


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English - Or. English

**NUCLEAR ENERGY AGENCY
RADIOACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE**

**NEA/RWM/FSC(2006)5
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Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC)

Proceedings of the Topical Sessions on Media Relations held in June 2004 and 2005

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TOPICAL SESSION

MEDIA RELATIONS

2004

FOREWORD

An effective media strategy, including timely interaction with them is an indispensable tool for organisations or institutions involved in radioactive waste management. With this in mind, the Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) set up a **Group on Communication and Outreach** with a twofold objective:

- To assist FSC members in communicating with the radioactive waste management community.
- To assist FSC members in reaching a broader public.

As part of this assignment, the Group organised a first Topical Session on “media strategy” addressing this topic, in conjunction with the 2004 FSC meeting. The main objective was to learn, first hand, about the functioning of the media organisations, their structures and needs. Speakers were chosen to represent the range of such media, as well as different countries and varying radioactive waste situations that may serve as illustrative examples, given the vast differences that may prevail between local, national, and international radioactive waste management situations and their treatment by the media. .

The Session was attended by representatives of policy makers, regulators and implementers from the FSC organisations. The presentations and discussions illustrated current media strategies, best practices, successes and failures and lessons learn.

These proceedings consist of a summary of the main points made by each speaker as well a collation of their papers.

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF PAPERS

OVERVIEW

The media play a crucial role in society as credible sources for informing the public about facts and events. A satisfactory relation with them is necessary, for on nuclear energy-related matters - as in many other scientific, technical, social areas - it is not possible not to communicate on risk.

A satisfactory relation can only be brought about if confidence and credibility are built over time, which requires mutual knowledge and respect as well as an investment of resources on a continuing basis. It must be understood, however, that there is always a risk in risk communication, and that it is important to understand how media function. In particular, any decision to publicly release material in their possession depends on the “news value” of the material and is subject deontological criteria of objectivity, truth, and accuracy. “News value” increases if the information is timely and has enough background and context for the media to process and convey to their audience.

Any trusting relationship to the media will be nurtured by providing them with relevant contacts and timely information.

SUMMARY OF PAPERS

Approach and experience of a senior media researcher: media as a risk in risk management?

Prof.H.Bonfadelli; University of Zurich; Switzerland

In modern democratic societies, the mass media constitute a specialised system that fulfils the function of observer of what is happening in society and of developing a symbolic reality that is made accessible to other subsystems of society like politics, economy or culture. The messages produced by media fulfil functions such as information and orientation, or surveillance or forewarning. In addition, they function as a platform or public forum for the arguments and standpoints of the different stakeholders. Finally, mediated communication allows the formation of opinions for citizen and politicians.

Space and time of media are very restricted and the process of news selection is based on “news values”, i.e. the rules or routines that journalists apply for deciding if an event is newsworthy. By focussing on particular events, media are able to set the agenda for the public. Additionally, media coverage frames these events by highlighting certain aspects or not. As a consequence, risk managers and scientific experts should not expect that the media will perform the task of popularising their risk conceptions to the public. Media will often fall on the side of drama and emotion. Furthermore, journalists often lack a real understanding of the issue and are not always able to put it in context.

Risk managers have to accept the fact that science, technology and risks usually have low priority for the media because media coverage is highly selective and based on media-specific news values. But risk can get media attention, namely in the case of a sudden accident, based on the news value of negativity, or when a conflict arises, which can get social significance, and political relevance.

Among lessons learnt for strategies of risk communication is the fact that *it is not possible not to communicate on risk*. In a modern democracy with pluralistic media, there is always a chance that stakeholders or interest groups will use the media platform for their own interests. *But there are risks in active risk communication as well*, because it involves communication between different actors in a public arena where nobody has total control.

Different purposes in risk communication require different strategies:

- Building trust in the communicator
- Raising awareness e. g. for a potential hazard
- Educating the public
- Reaching an agreement e.g. on a particular strategy for handling radioactive waste
- Motivating an action e.g. in the public

There are marked differences between general and special interest media, and, of course, audiovisual media. Today's world is dominated by a visual culture, hence the need for strong pictures and sound that are able to carry and display authenticity.

Risk communication must start early on, and should be tailored to the needs of the different interest groups and stakeholders. It should be transparent, informative and sensitive concerning the perspectives and values of the other actors involved in the issue.

Approach of an international radio news Journalist

Ms. M. Mielczarek ; Radio France Internationale (Science ; Health)

Science-related topics , including radioactive waste and many areas addressing nuclear energy are in strong demand from " Radio France International" (RFI) listeners, irrespective of the continent. Radio is not a written medium, but a snapshot, something diffuse and ephemeral. Experience shows that it is always useful to have recurrent broadcasts of specific science topics, to bring clearer explanations and go over points that generate questions and comments.

Any news coverage of nuclear issues is greeted with suspicion, not only by the public and the journalists, but also by radio news editors. On the other hand, news of Parliamentary developments or domestic policy decisions on waste disposal or reprocessing, etc can be a stepping stone for news teams to cover nuclear issues in a more extensive and lively way. The science journalists have a role in suggesting to editors to cover such topics.

There is too little documentation from international bodies on national or European news relating to nuclear energy. Furthermore, journalists, including science specialists, need background material (what made the news in the past and what is likely to emerge in the future) in order to draw up their own agenda, as either open debates or occasional news items.

Suggested solutions

- Draw up a calendar based on information from international agencies and institutions.
- Send information out to a file of science journalists.
- Prepare explanatory brochures on nuclear reactor designs around the world, radioactive waste management, research labs, reprocessing, nuclear energy policies of selected countries, etc.

- Take advantage of national decisions in the nuclear field, and of opportunities created by the publication of new books in this area to issue information or arrange “citizens” debates gathering representatives of industry, parliamentarians, and the general public.
- Talk about, rather than conceal, the potential risks to human health and the environment, and present them in an international context.

Approach of a large circulation print press: (energy, environment and social issues)

J.Wille, Editor Frankfurter Rundschau; Germany.

The Frankfurter Rundschau is one of the five national dailies in Germany. The editorialship is independent and the newspaper is known for its strict distinction between fact and commentary. It is primarily targeted to politicians and opinion leaders like environmental groups which have been in the forefront of energy issues in Germany, but offers also a forum for discussion among scientists and industry as well as civil society at large; From the editorial point of view, issues related to energy production are regarded as more political than economic in nature. Consequently, energy issues are rather discussed in the political section of the newspaper although topics related to energy have a strong economical dimension. For the newspaper, a political approach in energy related matters means drama, which sells well. Nuclear power and waste disposal, but also climate change and renewable energies have been regularly addressed.

In the light of the intense debates which have taken place between supporters and opponents during the eighties and nineties about nuclear energy and the management of radioactive waste, popularising the critique via the media has had a positive effect. For its part, the Frankfurter Rundschau has always tried to show both sides of the picture.

As a result of the diminishing role of nuclear energy in Germany today, the debate has calmed down, including to some extent, on the waste management issue. On the other hand, along with the decision to phase out nuclear power, the communication efforts of the industry have diminished. The waste disposal issue is, however, still relevant, and factual and independent papers, such as, the Frankfurter Rundschau, and are important channels of information. It is noted that the FR forum for discussion is dominated by opponent groups, mainly due passiveness of the industry in communicating in the field of final disposal.

The economic crisis which hits the German quality daily press has led to additional restructuring and staff compression, but new laws and other measures are being discussed to keep newspapers in the market and a sufficient variety among them.

The general standards of good newspapers will remain the same:

- Political and economic independence
- Clear distinction between news and commentary
- Correct citation of politician and experts
- Always hear the other side
- Give background to stories

- Cover “big” themes in special supplements

Approach of a local press editor

A.S. Palomares, Director, Diario Cordoba

Public opinion has misgivings about nuclear energy, and is particularly sensitive about radioactive waste management. The Cordoba newspaper has followed the implementation of the El Cabril waste management facility in the area from the start of the construction work in 1989. The newspaper frequently reports events at El Cabril, and contributes to form the opinion of the neighbouring population.

The way for better acceptance and confidence was the new information policy of ENRESA, allowing the public to visit the site. An open door day is organised each year, and constitutes a major information means for the public. However, there is still suspicion in the public toward the disposal project, with safety as one of the main issues raised.

As a major local newspaper, El Cordoba maintains high levels of quality, objectivity, independence, and truth. The Paper offers a forum in which ecologists, political groups and neighbours can publicly air their opinions. The same opportunity is offered to technical experts from ENRESA and other specialists.

Despite a remaining degree of distrust and fear among those living in the vicinity of the facility, the adoption by ENRESA of an open and reliable communications policy as part of its plan to inform the public has strengthened the company’s credibility. Communicating with the public effectively rests also on the messages that the media generates, which are more likely to be taken into account than those coming from the implementer.

TOPICAL SESSION

MEDIA RELATIONS

2005

FOREWORD

The objectives of the Communication and Outreach Group set up by the Forum on Stakeholder Confidence (FSC) are two fold:

- To assist FSC members in communicating with the radioactive waste management community.
- To assist FSC members in reaching a broader public.

Following the organisation of a first Topical Session held in 2004, and as part of its assignment, the Communication and Outreach Group is now regularly organising Topical Sessions addressing such issues, in conjunction with FSC meetings.

During this second Topical Session, held in June 2005, representatives of policy makers, regulators and implementers from the FSC organisations illustrated their current media strategies, best practices, successes and failures and lessons learn.

These proceedings consist of an overview of the main points made – including the observations by an external expert to the FSC and the observations made during the plenary discussion -, the summary of each paper, as well as a collation of the full papers.

OVERVIEW AND SUMMARY OF PAPERS

OVERVIEW OF MAIN POINTS

General

The aim of good media relations is to obtain positive media coverage through building relationships with journalists, maintaining a network of contacts and tailoring information and background material to specific and individual requirements.

In terms of communication strategy, the aim is to make radioactive waste management part of the public and political debate, and therefore present it in the media on a regular basis using a variety of means.

In an organisation's communications policy, media issues need to be prioritised. There needs to be a mix of technical and communications expertise, plus an internal culture whereby the technical experts understand the communications part of their mission and are willing to be helpful to their colleagues in the communications department. Media training for such key members of the staff is therefore an important part of the media strategy. Hiring a professional PR company can also be part of such a strategy.

The media strategy cannot be separated from an overall, stakeholder engagement strategy. A proactive and emphatic approach to key stakeholders among the public will contribute to reassure the media that controls are in place for a safe management of the issue at hand.

Observations by a media expert external to FSC

S. Di Biasio; OECD media relations division

Trust build up with journalists rests on being clear and "on the record". Spoke persons should speak to their areas of competence and not beyond their area of expertise.

Journalists receive far more information than they can use. Information provided should be one page long, enough to write a "story". When you speak to the press, you do not speak only to a journalist but to the public.

A new challenge that has appeared is how to deal with web-based information dissemination, such as blogs. The new media becomes more and more diffuse and difficult to monitor.

Other major points resulting from the plenary discussion

How should an organisation react when a major misstatement is issued by a high official, external to that organisation? A variety of responses was suggested:

- Address the mistake as quickly as possible, possibly with the national media. Media accept changes if they are about facts, not values. Send letters to e.g. politicians to point out the misstatement in a nice way.

- Depending on the source, use the next media opportunity to redress the situation. If the misstatement is total nonsense, react quickly. A piece of misinformation which has not been addressed can be quoted again and again. The potential impact should be assessed and acted upon. The type of reaction should depend on the assessment of how much damage has been done and on which basis. If a letter is used to rectify, one should take the opportunity also to take the argument forward.
- Keep local politicians in mind. Their link to the public is the local media. They would hate to be surprised by unexpected news in the press. Thus, reach them out pro-actively.
- The proper way to correct a journalist paper is to ask the journalist to e-mail you a first draft, especially if there are quotes. Propose correcting only factual mistakes and direct quotes.
- Training courses for journalists are organised by a number of organisations, which include two-day classes plus visits to NPPs or other sites. Note is taken that paying for journalists to see sites may not be acceptable in all parts of the world.
- Involve local journalists in real events, keeping in mind, however, the generation gap. Young people have a totally new way of communicating; they do not read the local press.
- In an organisation's communications policy, there needs to be a healthy mix of technical and communications expertise, plus an internal culture whereby the technical experts understand the communications part of their mission and are willing to be helpful to their colleagues in the communications department.

SUMMARY OF PAPERS

Media relations: The Approach and experiences of a policy maker

M.Aebersold. Swiss Federal Office of Energy.

The aim of good media relations is to obtain positive media coverage at regional, national, and international levels, through building relationships with journalists, maintaining a network of contacts and tailoring information and background material to individual requirements. This includes invitations of journalists for an off-the-record talk without aiming at an article in the newspaper the next day.

In terms of communication strategy, the aim is to make RWM, with its technical and socio-economic aspects, part of the public and political debate, and therefore present in the media on a regular basis, using press releases, and inviting media to events. This strategy was applied in the case of the Wellenberg project. Key messages in respect of RWM policy outlined an open, transparent and early communication as well as highest priority assigned to the safety of people and the environment. In respect of geological disposal, communication focussed on the easy retrievability of waste over a long time period and a disposal facility in Switzerland available in 2040. A facility demonstration would be available to the general public for consultation before any decision would be taken. Every one could comment. Up to now, no site had been selected.

The feasibility demonstration showed that it was imperative to inform the stakeholders before contacting the media in order for them to be prepared if they were contacted by the media.

Ten years experience shows that media work is every day's work; that relevant stakeholders should be involved; that the message should be easy to understand; that you should give all information you can...

Media relations: The approach and experience of the Swedish implementer: The SKB'S approach to public communication and media

A-M. Bölenius ,SKB; Sweden

SKB is planning to apply for a license for the encapsulation plant in 2006 and, in 2008, for the deep repository. The approach towards communications is to support the siting process so that trust and confidence of stakeholders can be maintained at both national and local levels. Being a company which is depending on opinions and attitudes of external stakeholders, its profile, image, and identity are closely linked to each other and dependent on each other. Its identity cannot be "overruled" by its profile. And its profile should stay close to the image which various stakeholders have of it. Building on the above factors, SKB's revised communications plan is to be applied in 2005-2010, when the siting process is expected to culminate in government decisions.

The media strategy is to be based on the overall communications approach. Messages contained in the press releases are to be communicated and discussed within SKB prior to external release.

In considering media image, "...don't try to change the way media think. Try to think like them." It is the organisation which needs to know how media logics functions and how they look at our issues. Their interest does not necessarily correlate with ours, and they might have a different hierarchy of interests at a given moment than ours.

An organisation needs to be available to the media. Media issues need to be prioritised within the organisation. Experts' language needs to be understandable and experts need motivation to communicate about their expertise. Choosing local spoke persons who are not necessarily experts can be of benefit to the public, being often easier to understand than the experts.

Employees of the company living in the neighbourhood, if they feel informed, and can speak openly about issues related to their work can play a very useful role in increasing confidence locally.

Opening up waste management facilities to visitors can also be said to be part of media work. Site visits by media members and opportunities to speak to local employees are factors of media confidence building.

The training of key members of the staff is an important part of the media strategy. Increased openness and decentralised spokesmen policy means that many people need to know more than their own area of expertise. Media training is also part of internal sharing of knowledge and discussions about key issues.

Implementing an open media policy implies encouraging staff personnel to have contacts with them. From this point of view, it is important to keep in mind the role that the person has in the company because most of the time, the media member has no expert knowledge and is looking for basic facts.

Prioritisation of media issues within the company is an important task. As part of a media strategy, there is a need to share the media image within the company. This implies, inter alia, that chief executives must be conscious of the importance of media contacts, for example when responding to possible media critics by expressing the company's position

Media relations: The approach and experience of the Hungarian implementer.

P.Ormai ; Hungarian Public Agency for RWM

Public perception of radioactive waste management is based on a mix of messages coming from key technical and political actors, which are relayed by the media. Basic public attitudes toward nuclear are determined by emotion, intelligence, and interest, with many specific components, such as irrational fears, misconceptions, bad experience, and lack of trust in the experts. But also the education system, ignorance, and lack of information.

Media strategy in relation to RWM is part of a whole stakeholder involvement strategy, resting upon three pillars: safety; participation; and local development. In the case of a repository project, the implementer will seek to develop an outreach policy which will imply building a long-term working relationship with stakeholders and municipalities.

Means and tools to implement an information strategy in relation to siting a repository will rest upon : 1) an early information programme addressing the potential stakeholders, using nationwide media ; 2) a regional information programme to promote voluntary participation using regional press; and 3) a local information programme intended to establish long-term relationship, using local media.

To implement its media work strategy , the company should hire a professional PR company; cultivate its relations with media representatives by initiating personal contacts with them, using traditional tools such as press releases, press conferences, site visits, etc, and by being proactive and swift in providing the information in a language easy to understand. In doing this, the company's behaviour should be based on readiness to provide the information, frank, objective, reliable, credible, and moderate attitudes, and show accountability in the process and decision-making.

Other means to work with the media include:

- Buying columns in technical periodicals
- Inviting media representatives to reference visits to sites abroad
- Inviting national media once or twice a year to a press conference
- Organising events-related media meetings
- Making use of local TV networks (cable TV) to appear on monthly local broadcasts
- Developing video newsletters

Statistics collected in Hungary show the importance of the role of the local media in releasing information about the L/ILW repository project. In 2005, every 3 people in 4 was informed from these sources.

Final remarks:

- The role of the media is essential in forming/strongly influencing public opinion.

- Media often enhance the hesitation of the public by publishing subjective news
- Media may affect the public way of thinking, not only by suggesting what we should think about an issue, but they also determine what issues we should think about.

Media relations: The approach and experience of a regulator

Steve Chandler; Emer O’Connel. The Environment Agency for England and Wales

The Environmental Agency is one of the largest single integrated environmental regulators in Europe. It is a public body, employing over 12000 persons. As part of its competencies it regulates all users of radioactive waste and disposals of such waste although no applications for disposal of intermediate or high level waste have ever been received in the United Kingdom.

Much of its work can be controversial and requires planned engagement with the media and other stakeholders. The Agency’s communications and media strategy hinges therefore upon a whole range of communications channels ranging from talking directly to industries and the local communities around them, to implementing broad strategies designed to influence industry representative bodies and trade organisations, policy makers in government and politicians, and, increasingly customer and shareholders.

The media is a key channel to all of these audiences but consultation and information are essential to addressing concerns and gaining the trust of the community. Timely dialogue with the lay audience, using appropriate language provides a better chance of managing fair and balanced reporting by the media.

Agency PR professionals provide the day-to-day point of contact for the media and coordinate the response to be made. However, for most technical and controversial issues, the technical staff is involved to talk directly to the media. As part of a communications tool kit, guidance is provided to ensure that staff only speak within their areas of competence and responsibility. The Agency provides media training courses for staff and managers. A selection is made among trained staff who have reached a satisfactory standard to give media interviews.

Building upon the experience gained from handling controversial issues, *inter alia*, on nuclear sites (for example the Magnox reactor authorisation review in 2000-2001), a number of learning points and best practices have been collected:

- It is vital to have a dedicated project team to manage major issues, and this team must include a media professional.
- For significant issues, it is important to have an integrated communications strategy and plan, which includes the approach to the media.
- Lines to take for key issues should be prepared as far in advance as possible. Press releases and interviews should be agreed or shared with key stakeholders on a “no surprise” basis to ensure there are no mixed messages to the media.
- The media strategy cannot be separated from an overall stakeholder engagement strategy. A proactive and emphatic approach to key stakeholders among the public will pay dividends in reassuring the media that the issue is under control.

- All relevant information should be provided to stakeholders, available in public libraries etc, so that there can be no allegation of secrecy.
- A senior manager and a technical professional involved in the issue need to be media trained, assessed, prepared and be the key spokesperson.
- The spokesperson needs to be seen as open, trustworthy and friendly, as well as having a good technical understanding of the issue. An honest and frank approach may well be more important than sticking closely to the script.
- Careful prior thought needs to be given to making risk comparisons that will resonate with the audience.

Media may be invited to briefings on key technical issues, where these are essential for understanding or communication and will keep recurring.

COMPILATION OF PAPERS

DOCUMENTS 2004

Agenda of the topical session of the 5th meeting of the FSC

9.

Media Relations

Chair: M. Aebersold

Rapporteur: T. Sappälä

9.a Senior Media Researcher

Prof. Heinz Bonfadelli (Institut für Publizistikwissenschaft und Medienforschung, University of Zürich)

What do sociological und communications studies show about management of risk communication by organizations on the one hand and media coverage of risk issues on the other hand? Have there been evolutions over time? Trend: From information-transmission model to public arena model. What are the major factors influencing media coverage? And what advice can be given to improve RW managers' effectiveness in media relations?

9.b International Radio News Journalist

Marina Mielczarek (Radio France Internationale)

Radio and television are major media reaching the broadest public. How is the editorial line defined in news or documentary production? What is needed to produce a good quality report, what is the daily timetable, what is the ethical code and how is its respect monitored? What is the image of nuclear energy, and of RWM in particular, for your broadcast? How do you see your broadcasts' role in national or international debates? What is your opinion of the communication behaviour of the various players involved in radioactive waste management? How can we, in radioactive waste management, improve our credibility and interface?

9.c National or Large-Circulation Print Press Editor (Environmental and Social Issues)

Joachim Wille (Frankfurter Rundschau)

The press is a key reference for information, and a major source used by radio broadcasting companies. Here again, how is the editorial line defined? What is needed to produce a good quality article or investigative report, what is the daily timetable, what is the ethical code and how is its respect monitored?

What is the image of nuclear energy, and of RWM in particular, for your publication? How do you see the role of your publication in the national debate? What is your opinion of the communication behaviour of the various players involved in RWM? How can RWM institutions improve credibility and interface?

9.d Local Press Editor

Alonso S. Palomares (Director, Diario Córdoba)

Local or regional newspapers are crucial players in the decision making process related to e.g., siting. They are deeply involved in reflecting and shaping local life.

Once again, how is the editorial line defined? What is needed to produce a good quality article or investigative report, what is the daily timetable, what is the ethical code and how is its respect monitored?

What is the image of nuclear energy, and of RWM in particular, for your publication? How do you see the role of your publication in the local debate? What is your opinion of the communication behaviour of the various players involved in RWM? How can we improve our credibility and interface?

9.e Facilitated discussion

Chair

9.f Stocktaking

Rapporteur

Item 9.a - Heinz Bonfadelli: Media as a Risk in Risk Management?

Welcome to everybody! Thanks for your kind invitation to talk on risk communication and the media at your workshop. I will do this not as a journalist but as a social scientist. I work at the Department of Communication at the University of Zurich and there I did empirical research on how media reported on biotechnology and how the public responded to this media coverage.

But in the following twenty minutes, I will talk to you more generally on risk communication and the media. To do this I will start with some remarks on how risk communication developed in the last twenty years. This brief look back will be done in the perspective of organizations and experts doing risk management like you. Based on this background I will present some general conclusions concerning the evolution of risk communication.

In a second step I will switch to the mass media and their role in risk communication. To do this, I first present some remarks on the general functions of media in democratic societies and turn then especially to the question: How media operate in risk communication?

And third, I will finish with some specific conclusions namely concerning the question of how to improve risk communication.

A Look Back: Development of Risk Communication

As a starting point, I think it is helpful to look back and ask how risk management and risk communication developed over the last 20 years. Experts involved in practical risk communication have learnt some practical lessons, often at a considerable personal price. On the other hand, risk communication researchers did empirical research mostly based on concrete case studies like the well known nuclear accidents at Three Mile Island and Chernobyl, the Exxon Valdez catastrophe or the Brent Spar event and a lot more.

1. Often, risk experts focus only on the task of making their job, namely to do risk analysis by getting the numbers right. This was the case even for modern biotechnology e.g. in Switzerland, where experts of the chemical industry, together with people of the government administration discussed safety requirements at the beginning only in form of a “closed shop”. But communication begins often before a word is said. And unfortunately if risk will become a public issue, the preceding silence or practice of non communication rises suspicious and undermines credibility. This holds especially true for risk communication.
2. When risk managers discover that they are no longer trusted by the public, the most common response will be to hand over the numbers. But the problem then is: How well do the numbers speak for themselves? Frequently the answer is: Not very well! One reason is that experts do not realize how poorly they are communicating. Risk managers determine their risk estimates mostly on a narrow technical definition of risk whereas suspicious citizens relate these figures to their everyday experiences, to ethical values or conceptions of a desirable life.
3. As a consequence, risk communication should try to explain “what is meant by the numbers”. One should focus on those risk estimates that really matter and risk communication should tell people things they need to know.
4. One way to improve public understanding is by risk comparisons in which an unfamiliar risk is contrasted by a more common one, e.g. cigarette smoking as a cause for cancer.

5. Another way is by concentrating not only on risks but on benefits as well. Taken together: Risk perception by the public is influenced by the way risks and benefits will be presented. In communication science we call this process message framing.
6. Until now, I talked about the content of risk communication. But content can be delivered in different ways. Here we have to recognize dimensions like the source or the communicator of a risk message: “Is he seen as competent and trustworthy?” And especially, is he responding to the public or stakeholders in a respectful way? A popular response to this challenge is by communication training. This not only means to enhance presentation and language skills of public relations people but improving e.g. the logic and structure of argumentation of press releases to make them more understandable and feasible for journalists.
7. Finally a few words to the last stage. Today, the public wants not only to get informative, understandable and trustworthy risk messages in a nice form fitting journalistic requirements. This is not enough. More and more, citizens and NGOs want to play a more active and constructive role in the process of risk communication. To be a passive receiver is not longer enough. There is a need to establish new forms of more symmetric flows of communication like round tables or mediation procedures.

To sum up: What can be learned by this short looking back on the development of practical risk communication? For me, there is an evolution or even a shift of paradigm on three dimensions: First, the definition of risk as topic dimension, second, the social dimension of the involved actors and third, the dimension of communication:

1. Risk: From a narrow technical definition of risk to a broader understanding of risk that includes e.g. emotions and everyday experiences of lay people involved, personal judgements of the meaning of risk estimates and social values as frames of reference.
2. Actors: From a sender or expert perspective that takes the intentions and actions of risk managers and experts as a starting point to an orientation that focuses more on all actors involved, namely concerned citizens and stakeholders on the one hand and media or journalists on the other hand.
3. Process: From a conception of communication as one-way and top-down process of information transfer and influencing target groups to get or improve acceptance of risk to an arena model as a two-way and horizontal process of exchanging information, enabling participation and developing a mutual understanding of social reality.

Functions & Performance of Media in Risk Society

Now, I will change my perspective and focus to the functions and performance of mass media and journalism in modern risk societies.

Generally speaking, mass media are a specialized system in modern democratic societies that fulfils the function of an observer of what's happening in society. By doing so, a symbolic reality is constructed and made accessible for the other subsystems of society like politics, economy and culture. The messages produced by mass media especially fulfil several functions like information and orientation or surveillance and forewarning. Besides this, mass media function as a platform or public forum for the arguments and standpoints of the different stakeholders. And finally, mediated communication allows the formation of opinions for citizens and politicians.

Since so many events happen every day and space and time of media are very restricted, journalists function as gatekeepers. The process of news selection is organized on the basis of so called news values.

The term “news values” stands for the rules or routines journalists apply when they have to decide if an event is newsworthy or not. Journalists will select events for media coverage especially if there is geographic or cultural proximity, if elite people are involved, if there are relevant consequences and particularly if there is negativity, harm, conflict or drama in the story.

By focusing media attention to particular events and by placing emphasis to newsworthy stories, e.g. risks like BSE, biotechnology or SARS, media are able to set the agenda for the public. This means, the audience will consider these issues as socially important, namely on the basis of media coverage. But media not only set the agenda for the public by focusing attention to particular issues. Furthermore, media coverage frames these events by highlighting certain aspects or putting them to the foreground, whereas other aspects are neglected and put to the background. Journalists do this media framing of stories by asking and answering questions like: What are the causes of an event? Who is morally responsible? And what are possible solutions? Framing then means: Making salient certain aspects of social reality by promoting a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation and treatment recommendation for the event.

In the research literature, there is no consensus concerning the origin and direction of the process of media framing: Several scholars interpret frames as bias and see it as based mostly in the political attitudes of journalists whereas other scholars state that the media take much of their content from technological experts and rarely use explicit judgements. This is in line with the observation that the media tend to accept the frames provided by the dominant institutions currently active in a debate. As a consequence NGOs pronounce that media operate more as guard dogs of the dominant interests than as watch dogs of the concerns by the public.

Based on these general considerations, I will focus in a second step a bit more on the question: How risks are treated by the media?

To start with, media should not be seen as an objective mirror of reality. Journalists select events and construct a symbolic reality based on their own media-specific logic. As a consequence risk managers and scientific experts should not expect that the media will function as loudspeakers for them and perform the task of popularizing their risk conceptions to the public. But still, a lot of media content certainly is influenced by the real risks as calculated by scientists; nevertheless it is biased towards the dramatic and emotional. So media show a tendency to be alarming in their risk reports, but they also carry reassuring messages. Furthermore journalists often lack a real understanding of the issues, hardly ever put them in a context or perspective and do not explain technological terminology used.

Risk managers and experts have to accept the fact that science, technology and risks usually have low priority for the media because media coverage is highly selective and based on media-specific news values. But risk can get media attention, namely in the case of a sudden accident based on the news value of negativity. The other critical constellation is conflict: Issues will get social significance and become political relevance if there are active actors like NGOs that make them socially visible, e.g. by organizing demonstrations or by producing symbolic events. In this case, media usually will operate as a platform or public arena. Both sides involved in a conflict will get then get the chance to present their arguments.

To sum up, the content of media is far from objective when it comes to risks, but it is also far from being as biased as has often been thought. One important shortcoming of media coverage is that journalists often present facts outside their contexts, and leave the public to evaluate them.

Lessons Learnt: Strategies of Risk Communication

Now, let's turn to the last part of my presentation: What are the lessons learnt? And what generalizations can be formulated in order to improve risk communication?

A first point is: It is not possible to not communicate on risks. Not communicating always means to leave the public arena free for others actions. In a modern democracy with pluralistic mass media there always is the chance that there are stakeholders or interest groups which will use the media as a platform for their concerns. So, there is a need to communicate actively in a continuous way or at least be prepared to respond to possible unfriendly media coverage.

Second: But there are risks in active risk communication as well. Risk communication is always communication between different actors in a public arena where nobody has total control over the communication of the other actors. To optimize one's own risk communication at least is to think about how journalists and media operate.

And third: Because there are different purposes of risk communication, different strategies of risk communication may be appropriate for different goals:

The main goals of risk communication are: 1) Building trust in the communicator, 2) raising awareness e.g. for a potential hazard, 3) educating the public, 4) reaching an agreement e.g. on a particular strategy for handling radioactive waste, and 5) motivating action, e.g. encouraging people to drive safely.

Since goals and strategies of risk communication are so manifold, a thorough problem analysis and needs assessment is very important.

And last, a few remarks on things to be considered from the point of view by the media:

First, there are specifics of the event: Journalists always will ask if there is something new in an event. Successful risk communication has to tell the media a story that is newsworthy. A second point is, if there is a local angle in the story or prominent people involved. Further, one has to think about the relevance of the event? How will different segments of the population respond differently to the issue? Is there conflict involved? Or are there ethic-moral dilemmas underlying the story?

Second, there are marked differences between media. Interesting pictures and live sound is essential for audiovisual media whereas background information counts more for print media. Then, there is a difference between general and special interest media. Where general interest media rely more on personalized and emotionalized easy to understand stories, special interest media transport more audience specific information. And last, but not least: It is much easier to get access to local media than to national media.

And a last word to presentation: Today's world is dominated by a visual culture. So, there is an immense need by the media for strong key pictures, that are able to transport and display authenticity. Nobody e.g. will forget the picture of soldier England; it will stay as a symbol of the ugly American for many years. But even on a more simple level, visualization can mean using graphics and charts as an efficient way to communicate probabilistic information on amount of risk.

To come to an end: Risk communication has to start early on, should be tailored according to the needs of the different interest groups and stakeholders, and should be transparent, informative and sensitive concerning the perspectives and values of the other actors involved in the issue.

News Values:

- a rare hazard is more newsworthy than a common one
- a new hazard is more newsworthy than an old one
- a dramatic hazard is more newsworthy than a long-familiar one

Risk Management Paradigms:

Traditional “Decide, Announce, Defence” – Model
vs.
New ”Engage, Interact, Co-Operate” – Model

Good Governance:

- Openness
- Accountability
- Effectiveness
- Coherence
- Participation

Techniques for **stakeholder involvement**, dialogue, deliberation

Public Involvement:

Low:

- inform, educate, share information
- gather information, views

Medium

- discuss by two-way dialogue
- fully engage

High:

- partner in implementation of solution

Item 9.b - Marina Mielczarek: Radio France Internationale

Presentation

Radio France Internationale

RFI (Radio France Internationale) is an international radio news station broadcasting 24 hours a day in 19 languages.

Every continent across the globe tunes into RFI! But priority for news coverage is given to Africa and Asia.

As a general broadcaster, Radio France Internationale provides live news bulletins in French every half-hour to Europe and the Paris area. It does not cover the rest of France.

RFI broadcasts a total of 58 ten-minute bulletins on European and French news every day. Over ten special news reports are devoted primarily to news from the African continent.

Programmes are pre-recorded or broadcast live, and last for between 20 and 40 minutes. Radio France Internationale broadcasts 65 current affairs programmes. Its daily and weekly schedules require a staff of 110 directors and producers.

To give an example, every morning the phone-in programme *Appels sur l'actualité* takes listeners' calls on current events. Journalists working in that particular field go on air live in the studio to provide listeners with the most accurate information possible. Listeners call the programme's switchboard with their questions on the eve of the programme, on lines which are open 24 hours a day, to give journalists time to prepare their answers properly.

The Radio France Internationale editorial staff comprises 350 journalists and 300 correspondents across the globe.

Foreign services at Radio France Internationale

RFI's Paris headquarters (Maison de la Radio) also house its foreign editorial staff divided into individual teams (making a total staff of 171 journalists) which broadcast their own daily new bulletins in 19 languages, including: Albanian, Arabic, Brazilian, Cambodian, Creole, English, German, Lao, Mandarin, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romanian, Russian, Southern Slavonic languages, Spanish, Turkish and Vietnamese.

Some 234 hours of news and other programmes are produced every week for cable or satellite broadcast on FM, Short Wave and Medium Wave.

Radio France Internationale broadcasts to French-speaking countries via 112 FM relay stations operating 24 hours a day.

Agreements worldwide authorise 298 local radio stations to broadcast news and other programmes via FM, Short and Medium Wave, satellite, WorldSpace, CanalSatellite, TPS, Noos, Astra, leading international cable networks and the Internet.

Radio France Internationale websites

Radio France Internationale is available on the net: www.rfi.fr

Listeners throughout the world can tune in live or find recordings of the news they want to hear in the form of complete files containing past news bulletins and all the coverage available on the topic of their choice.

For non French-speaking listeners, foreign-language items and programmes are also available on the website.

One of Radio France Internationale's major assets is its exceptional database of music from all over the world, which has allowed www.rfimusique.com to become the leading musical website on cross-cultural and world music.

A station committed to development co-operation

Partially subsidised by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Radio France Internationale is also a broadcaster with a public-service and international co-operation remit.

The current affairs department has a catalogue of 30 weekly programmes, available on CDs or cassettes. These recordings are on offer to 723 partner radio stations in 137 countries.

Editorial Policy

News policy

Radio France Internationale primarily focuses on foreign news from either Europe, Africa or Asia.

The ten-minute news bulletins cover geo-political conflicts, diplomatic visits, international relations as well as events concerning the economy, the law, sport, health, the environment and science.

News on a rolling news station is edited and updated on a daily basis.

There are three editorial conferences a day:

- morning (9 a.m.)
- afternoon (4 p.m.)
- evening (7 p.m.).

These conferences bring together the heads of all the above departments (economics, social affairs and so on) who then rank news items by order of importance.

They work out the format (number of new items in a bulletin, items to be included in the summary, and possible follow-up on specific themes).

The heads of department then give their own teams of journalists broad instructions as to the research required on individual topics and the angle to be taken.

The News Management team at Radio France Internationale – a Director for News, a News Editor and their deputies – have the final say on any controversial news items. They are also there to suggest reporting approaches to journalists.

Agency dispatches (AFP, REUTERS, AP) are still the main source of information for a general news station like Radio France Internationale.

However, specialist journalists are all encouraged to table ideas. They can suggest possible topics in their own field to their head of department.

The head of department then passes the proposal on to the RFI News Management Team.

Science News

General coverage

Radio France Internationale takes three approaches to science news:

- Theme-based science news:

Human health – Medical research and innovation – Environment – Space – International and domestic regulation.

This approach reflects many of the topics making the headlines in the daily press (e.g. SARS, mad-cow disease, GMOs and ARIANE rocket launches).

Features:

- Tropique Santé: A daily feature on African health.
- Chronique de l'Espace: A weekly space feature.

Programmes:

- Priorité Santé: A programme on health problems in Europe and Africa.
- Le magazine de la mer: A programme on sea and shipping news from across the world.

Periodically, the daily programme Accents d'Europe focuses on a European-related medical or scientific research topic.

Personal experience:

Public interest

As a journalist, I specialize in science-related topics at Radio France Internationale. My six years' experience has confirmed how interested listeners are in science topics, irrespective of the continent. This is particularly true of Africa, where news on research into vaccines or drugs is always followed very closely. But other topics are also of interest, including nuclear waste and radioactive sites.

Problems with science news coverage

In my experience, it is always worthwhile repeating information! It is no good covering an item solely on the day when a discovery or event occurs.

I have realized how listeners can hear something and then distort it, merely because there should have been a clearer explanation – or because they sometimes hear what they want to hear!

Radio is not a written medium but a snapshot, something diffuse and ephemeral. Hence the extreme difficulty of knowing how many times to cover and return to a topic.

We in the 21st century are living in a complex society, where issues are inextricably linked and where journalists must cross-check scientific data with what has already been explained on the air but needs to be repeated, in order to give people a grasp of the magnitude of a topic that has already been covered or of forthcoming national, European or international decision.

The need to mediatize science news is more than crucial, it is a civic duty!

Radioactive and Nuclear Waste

Coverage on Radio France Internationale

Unfortunately, radio news coverage of nuclear issues largely tends to be driven by the anniversary of the Chernobyl disaster. Like any other station, Radio France Internationale has a duty to cover the subject, but personally I have always seized any opportunity available to address other aspects of nuclear energy by providing facts and explaining the issues at stake in news items.

For instance, when France's Radioactive Waste Management Agency published a book on the French public's fears about nuclear waste, I contacted the authors and invited them to speak about the subject on the air. The feedback from listeners and colleagues was very good!

Problems encountered

- Any news coverage of nuclear issues is greeted with suspicion not only by the public, journalists but also by news editors, many of whom are not specialists and lack the necessary scientific knowledge.
- For specialized journalists, it is a gruelling task that involves convincing the entire editorial staff of the need to cover a particular topic.

This is why any news of Parliamentary developments or domestic policy decisions on waste disposal or reprocessing is crucial. It can be a stepping stone, a good base from which news teams can go on to cover nuclear issues in an original and therefore lively way.

- Radio news editors show little interest in developments in the field of scientific techniques. Possible research avenues and recent discoveries are preferred and more willingly accepted when we, the science journalists, suggest that they be covered.
- There is too little documentation from international bodies on national or European news relating to nuclear energy, its use and reprocessing.
- Finally all journalists, including science specialists, need background material. They have to know what made the news in the past and what is likely to in the future.
- They then have to draw up their own news agenda, as either open debates or occasional news items.

Suggested solutions

- Draw up a calendar based on information from international agencies and institutions.
- Set up a file of science journalists.
- Send information out to specialized journalists.
- Prepare explanatory brochures on reprocessing, nuclear reactor design throughout the world, underground research laboratories, radioactive waste disposal and nuclear options in the US, France and other countries.
- Take advantage of national news opportunities. For instance, in 2006 the French Parliament is to choose a radioactive waste management option.
- Take advantage of publishing opportunities. One example would be the forthcoming book “Should we be afraid of nuclear waste?” (*Faut il avoir peur des déchets nucléaires?*) to be published in 2004 by Editions ANDRA, co-ordinated by Michèle Chouchan.
- Propose “citizens’ debates” bringing together people from the industry, parliamentarians and the general public. Another idea would be meetings along the lines of France’s *Journées scientifiques* (science days) at the National Assembly in 1999 on GMOs and the risks to health and the environment.
- Explain rather than promote.
- Talk about, rather than conceal, the potential risks to human health and the environment, and present them in an international context.

Item 9.c - Joachim Wille: The Newspaper „Frankfurter Rundschau” (FR)

The „Frankfurter Rundschau“ ist one of the five national dailies in Germany. Its circulation is 185.000. The political orientation is “social-liberal”, as the statute of our newspaper calls it. That, however, does in no sense mean, that it would simply follow the political views of the “social” or the “liberal” party in German parliament. The editorship is independent, a fact, that has been formally guaranteed also by its new owners. The FR is known for its strict distinction between fact and commentary – an attitude that seems quite unmodern in publishing today.

View of Issues Related to Energy

The FR-statute, which was written in 1948, does not say anything about energy issues. Nevertheless, there is a general agreement among the editors in the political and business sections of our newspaper, that energy-topics have a high priority; for example climate change, the sustainable structure of the energy system, the number of jobs created in it, the pros, but also the cons of renewable energies, nuclear power and its waste disposal, third world questions concerning energy. Our newspaper in the 70ies and 80ies, then very much a paper read by “the left” an especially students, was more open for “alternative views”, following the Club-of-Rome-discussion and the rise of the anti-nuclear-movement in Germany.

Nuclear Energy and RWM

Concerning nuclear energy the FR argues, that the gradual phasing out over two decades, as planned in Germany, is sensible, if safety standards can be kept high and an energy policy is made, that still lowers CO₂-Emissions. To make that possible, the renewables have to be pushed much further and energy efficiency in the whole system must increase substantially. Here much more has to be done, otherwise in Germany the debate about prolonging the running times of the existing reactors and building new reactors will come up heavily in the future.

The FR is convinced that radioactive waste produced in German reactors must be disposed off in Germany, too. In the 80ies our newspaper strongly argued against building a reprocessing plant in Wackersdorf (Bavaria) and also against the contracts with La Hague and Sellafield, that followed the end of the Wackersdorf-Project. Given the phasing out of nuclear energy until 2020, the amount of waste is limited, in any case smaller as projected in earlier times. That in theory makes it easier to find a site for ultimate waste disposal. The German situation, nevertheless, is very complicated. Energy Utilities have already invested 1.3 Billion Euros in the site called Gorleben, which in the 70ies obviously was selected more for political than geological reasons, Gorleben being situated in a lowly populated area close to the border between the two Germanys. The government in Berlin of social democrats and greens, which came into power 1998, therefore was right to start a new search for a site. The actual procedure is much more open than the one chosen in the 70ies, it involves the public and the stakeholders very strongly, and this in our view is the only way to gain a general agreement. If that is possible at all. And, by the way, Gorleben has not been ruled out in the procedure.

FR and Public Debate

As the circulation of our newspaper is much smaller than the in many cases trend-setting tabloids (like “Bild-Zeitung”, four Million copies) its importance lies more in the influence it has on politicians and other opinion leaders. The concept is, to be a forum not only for views held by political parties and business, but also for civil society. In the case of energy questions in Germany environmental groups (like Greenpeace, BUND, Nabu) and local initiatives play a vital role, and their ideas and comments will be found more easily in the FR than in other comparable papers. Also our newspaper tries to mirror scientific debate

concerning energy issues (climate change, nuclear safety, depletion of oil-resources etc.) not only in the science section, but also very prominently in the political and business sections, as in our eyes they are very relevant for political and economic decisions.

FR and Quality

Good quality in investigation and reporting can only be guaranteed by newspapers, that have enough manpower in comparison to the number of pages they produce every day. That is quite obvious, but as the economic crisis hits especially the German quality dailies very hard, also the FR has to struggle to keep the standards. Manpower has dropped in all national dailies substantially since 2001. Nevertheless the FR in 2003 introduced a new “reporting pool”, consisting of seven reporters, that get all the time they need for “their story”. Even though some additional restructuring has to take place, a guaranty for the reporting pool has recently been given – a good sign.

RWM and Communication

In the 70ies, 80ies and 90ies in Germany the conflict about nuclear power and radioactive waste was a very fierce one (Wyhl, Brokdorf, Gorleben). The German government and the utilities having reached a “consensus” in 2000, the debate since then has been much more calm. The government's strategy to phase out nuclear energy, to let the utilities build temporary storage facilities for nuclear waste and to start a new search for a final storage site weakened the protest. The “Arbeitskreis Endlager”, which has to organize the search, in my view did a good job, as it made the steps very transparent. Journalists for example were invited to seminars. The communication efforts of industry on the other hand are less intensive than in recent decades.

Item 9.d - Alonso S. Palomares: Local Press Editor

Thank for you for your invitation and for giving me this opportunity to speak to you as the editor of a newspaper published in Cordova, the capital of the province where the El Cabril low and medium-level waste storage facility is located. In view of this, my aim is to answer questions and, in many instances, allay the fears and concerns of those living in the vicinity of this facility. The question we must ask ourselves, given that it is our duty to inform the public, is therefore “how should we manage this type of information?”

The information disseminated by mass communications is the first stage in the process of forming public opinion and that is why we need to foster a critical awareness of any possible threat to our environment, which because it is the space in which we live must be preserved at all costs.

Most industrial activities inevitably generate waste which arises in more or less all stages of a given production process.

The environmental impact of any of potential contamination by such waste is a serious problem, and we must therefore endeavour to neutralise the adverse impacts of waste and thereby avoid damaging the environment.

Generating electricity in nuclear power plants produces radioactive waste. Public opinion is particularly sensitive to such waste, which, to some extent, it fears. It is for this reason that the public has misgivings about nuclear energy and, by the same token, the storage of nuclear waste.

The newspaper of which I am editor frequently reports events at El Cabril and clearly the news which we report, and which we sometimes present in a critical light, helps to shape the opinion of those who live in the vicinity of the El Cabril facility and more generally the province of Cordova as a whole. The Cordoba newspaper first appeared 63 years ago.

The Cordoba is a major local newspaper whose circulation is twice that of its competitors. It has a tabloid format and is read by one hundred and nine thousand readers a day.

We seek to maintain the standards of a quality newspaper and in presenting information to our readers we have unfailing respect for the criteria of objectivity and truth. We try to be as rigorous as possible with regard to the accuracy of our information.

Our code of ethics combines freedom with truth. We will not under any circumstances tolerate any expression of xenophobic, racist, male-dominant or anti-semitic sentiments.

The Cordoba newspaper has always maintained a critical approach, but without lapsing into bombast. It has provided a forum in which ecologists, political groups and neighbours can publicly air their opinions, and has offered the same opportunity to technical experts from ENRESA and other specialists in this field.

In fact the entire history of El Cabril has been highly charged and marked by the unremitting battle waged by the managers of ENRESA to persuade the inhabitants of Cordova that the wastes that are stored there are not dangerous; it is a constant challenge.

Our newspaper first started to report on the El Cabril facility on 16 July 1985, the year in which ENRESA, the National Radioactive Waste Company, was first incorporated.

The creation of ENRESA prompted the managers of the El Cabril facility to adopt a new policy towards public communications. Prior to that time, the history of El Cabril had been shrouded in mystery and fear.

The year in which this new policy towards communications I have just mentioned was first put in place coincided with a visit to the facility made by the new Chairman of ENRESA, Juan Manuel Kindelan. On the day of his visit he allowed reporters full access to the entire facility and allowed them to take photographs. El Cabril started to become visible. During his visit, the Chairman announced that the amount of waste stored at the facility was going to triple over the next six years. At that point battle was joined to win over public opinion and design work started on the construction of the new El Cabril radioactive waste storage centre, a name that was more in keeping with the new situation and that gradually replaced the “nuclear graveyard” tag it had attracted until then.

The period 1987-1989 saw the strongest opposition to the El Cabril facility. Towards the end of 1987, the mayor of Hornachuelos organised a demonstration that attracted massive support. Seventeen ecological, pacifist and trade union organisations demonstrated outside the gates of El Cabril; however, the company’s policy, with social support from local communities and a major public awareness campaign, eventually restored the situation to normal.

The current period is one of relative calm in our relations with El Cabril. We, the media, feel that the technical data we are given are correct and the number of adverse press reports on El Cabril has fallen substantially.

We can truthfully say that an activity of the type in which ENRESA is engaged generates a certain degree of distrust and fear among those living in the vicinity of the facility. In addition, there have been many individual case histories which have helped to maintain this fear.

Despite these negative aspects, the adoption by ENREAS of an open and reliable communications policy as part of its plan to inform the public has strengthened the company’s credibility.

An open-doors policy of visits, open days, conferences, photo opportunities, etc., for the media helps to improve understanding and provides constant confirmation to the public that the risk is fully under control.

We reflect the reality of the news by taking account of the fact that the factor of most concern to us is safety. We now have trust in the safety standards and practices of the ENRESA’s engineers and managers.

Report : Michael Aebersold (Federal Office of Energy, Switzerland)

Prof. Heinz Bonfadelli (Journalism and Media Research Institute, University of Zurich) in his presentation looked back at 25 years of risk management and risk communication. It is not sufficient just to get the numbers right, he said, risk is not a pure scientific matter. It is as equally important to communicate with the public and explain, as it is to get the numbers right. Citizens want to play a more interactive and constructive role in the process of risk communication. Prof. Bonfadelli noted there had been a shift in risk management towards the definition of risk in its topic dimension, in its social dimension and in the dimension of communication.

The media fulfil several functions in a democratic society: they provide information, shape public opinion and serve as a public forum. Journalists function as gatekeepers by selecting the news according to their “values”. Events are newsworthy only if they get social significance and/or become a political issue. By highlighting certain aspects, journalists set the agenda for public discussion. However, media tend to take much of their information from government agencies and technological experts and frequently report on risks and hazards out of context. Journalists rarely explain technical definitions.

Marina Mielczarek in her presentation explained how information is treated in Radio France International. The main subjects that they cover are geopolitical conflicts, diplomatic visits, international relations, the economy, law, sport, health, environment and science. The main sources of information are the wire services. Moreover, journalists can propose other subjects but need to convince the editors that they are newsworthy. The more political a scientific subject becomes, the more newsworthy it is to the media.

Writing on science & scientific matters has gained in importance in recent years. However, science and scientific problems are not always easy to understand. Therefore the information needs to be repeated and scientific problems should be presented in a media-friendly way. It should be noted for example that on nuclear and radioactive waste management issues, the media tends to link these issues almost instantly to Chernobyl and react, as does part of the general public, with suspicion.

Important findings

It is not possible not to communicate on risk. But there is always a risk in risk communication. Technical and scientific information should be made easily understandable for journalists and the public. An important aspect to be considered in media work is the news-value. As many subsidised publishers became private companies, the competition is intense and the news needs to be saleable. Information presented in an attractive way with catchy phrases has a better chance of being picked up by the media. Journalists can be contacted and informed of a new media release on a particular subject. They should also be made aware that background papers and additional information are readily available.

DOCUMENTS 2005

Agenda of the topical session of the 6th meeting of the FSC

- 10. Media Relations**
Chair: T. Seppälä
- 10.a Introduction**
T. Seppälä
- 10.b Approach and experience of a policy maker**
M. Aebersold
- 10.c Approach and experience of a regulator**
S. Chandler
- 10.d Approach and experience of an implementer**
P. Ormai
- 10.e Approach and experience of an implementer**
A.-M. Bölenius
- 10.f Observations by media expert external to FSC**
S. Di Biasio
- 10.g Plenary discussion**
T. Seppälä
- 11. Way forward on media work**
FSC Chair

Item 10.b – Micheal Aebersold: Approach and experiences of the policy maker

Overview

- Swiss Federal Office of Energy
- Media relations and communication strategy
- Case studies:
 - Wellenberg
 - Feasibility demonstration
- 10 years experience

Swiss Federal Office of Energy

The duties of the Swiss Federal Office of Energy encompass energy matters on the domestic and international levels: preparation of legislation and implementation of energy policy, particularly in the fields of efficient energy use, renewable energy, energy technologies and nuclear installations. It also deals with gas pipelines, electricity, energy statistics and perspectives. The office is responsible for the Energy 2000 action programme as well as for international agreements and co-operation

The Swiss Federal Office of Energy (SFOE) has a staff of 165 people, including those employed by the Federal Nuclear Safety Inspectorate (HSK).

The Nuclear Energy Section

This section has duties of a technical and regulatory nature with respect to the use of nuclear power.

It is responsible for the guiding principles that govern the disposal of radioactive waste, collaborates in the application of nuclear energy authorization procedures, and provides the secretariats for several federal and regional working Groups. Another important task is the implementation of the legal requirements for ensuring the financing of nuclear waste disposal and decommissioning of nuclear installations.

It oversees nuclear fuel control procedures at the national level as well as the necessary bookkeeping, and has other duties that relate to Switzerland's bilateral and multilateral obligations in relation to the nuclear fuel cycle and export controls for nuclear materials.

The Section is likewise responsible for formulating security requirements for the protection of nuclear installations and nuclear fuel from unauthorised interference (sabotage), as well as for establishing the criteria for assessing conformity with these requirements.

Who do we work with?

In the following I will concentrate on the media work done in the field of radioactive waste management. We work together with all relevant stakeholders. These are:

Federal authorities, cantons and communities, neighbouring states, implementers and energy producers, groups and organizations, the Communication Section within the SFOE and the media.

Collaboration with the cantons and communities depends on the issues at stake. For example in the project Oplaniusclay in northern Switzerland we closely work not only with the relevant cantons but also with the officials of the German Landkreise and Baden-Württemberg.

Media relations

The aim of good media relation is to obtain positive media coverage through building relationships with journalists, maintaining a network of contacts and tailoring information and background material to individual requirements. Several times journalists have been invited for an off-the record talk without aiming for an article in the newspaper the next day.

Media relation is a cross sectorial activity and its definition, key activities and performance are included in our objectives. Therefore the lead for all communication activities is with our Communication Section.

Internally, we have a close working relation with the Directorate and the Communication Section.

Communication strategy

We aim at making radioactive waste management with its technical and socio-economic aspects part of the public and political debate.

Radioactive waste management should be in the media on a regularly basis. For this reason we issue press releases whenever we have news to report. We also organize events to attract the media, such as our “Acceptance by participation?” event which will take place this month. We expect about 150 people to attend and have invited the media to report on it.

We want to obtain serious and objective media coverage in the international, national and regional media by implementing a proactive and transparent communications strategy. We do not want to make headlines, nor cause scandals. These can be avoided by timely and targeted communication. As an example we have about 150 addresses of Swiss and German Medias which are or could be interested in the feasibility demonstrations. They get regularly information from us.

In order to have a coherent media strategy we worked out the first concept in 2001. This was done in view of the Wellenberg project. This concept was the basis for our media communication and included the media policy of the canton of Nidwalden.

In 2005, together with the Communication Section, we worked out a new communication concept. This concept contains the outline of our communication policy and lists the key messages.

Radioactive Waste Management:

- Our communication is open and transparent, we inform as soon as possible.

- The safety of people and the environment are our highest priority.
- Geological Disposal
- Our disposal concept combines the easy retrievability of waste over a long time period with deep geological disposal.
- In Switzerland a disposal facility should be operational in 2040.
- Feasibility demonstration
- The SFOE will make the feasibility demonstration available to the general public for consultation before any decision is taken.
- Everyone interested can participate and comment.

Site selection procedure

- The law of the spatial development will be the framework for a site selection procedure.
- Up to now no site has been selected.

The 2005 concept also contains a list of the last year's activity as well as the planning of our Media work in the years 2005/2006. As you can imagine, it is a living document.

Case study Wellenberg

In my presentation I will go back to the year 1994. I will look at the Wellenberg case study purely from a media point of view and only consider the policy makers on the national and cantonal level. The Media work of the safety authorities (HSK), the implementer (Nagra), the political parties, organizations, ect. are not considered.

From 1994 to 2000 information provided to the media was done through the issue of media releases by the UVEK and/or the SFOE:

- 25.02.94 Federal working group supports site selection
- 15.08.94 General license procedure: Start
- 17.11.94 General license procedure: End
- 25.06.94 The canton of Nidwalden (NW) voted against the concession for the proposed repository.
- 11.07.96 Technical Review by safety authorities
- 16.10.96 Meeting between Federal Councilor Leuenberger and the government of Nidwalden
- 06.03.97 Set up first technical working group
- 17.09.98 Results of technical and economical working groups are presented
- 24.03.00 Meeting between Federal Councilor Leuenberger and the government of Nidwalden

From 2000 to 2002 the Canton of Nidwalden took the lead in media communication.

- 08.06.00 NW government agrees to pursue with Wellenberg under certain conditions
- 23.06.00 NW sets up a Cantonal Expert Group (KFW)
- 19.12.00 Go ahead for construction of an underground gallery, decision for an added value study
- 07.02.01 Nagra applies for the authorization for the gallery
- 27.06.01 Set up of economical Working Group (added value study)
- 25.09.01 Government grants authorization
- 23.01.02 KFW report on site evaluation
- 10.07.02* Safety aspects of the Wellenberg project

On 22 September 2002 the canton of Nidwalden rejected the concession for underground investigations. This meant the end of the project and led to discussions, not only among the involved stakeholders, but also on the political level. Two inquiries were submitted to Parliament demanding information on the next steps after the Wellenberg site's rejection.

The answer of the Federal Government was made public by a media release in February 2003. It was quite new to communicate in such an active way. Nowadays we prepare Media releases for important matters or we make the answers public on Internet.

Conclusions Wellenberg

At first, media communication was reactive and reported on what was going on. There was no communication concept or strategy.

After the Wellenberg project was rejected for the first time, the canton of Nidwalden assumed the lead in media communication. Before this, UVEK and the SFOE had to unblock the difficult political situation. This can be seen from the various press releases which documented the process.

In 2001 the first communication concept for radioactive waste management was drafted. This was the beginning of a deliberate communications policy.

For the Wellenberg project, the SFOE and the canton used classical communication instruments; that are press releases and press conferences. In addition, the Cantonal Expert Group launched an internet site.

When looking back at the media releases of the time, one sees that the priority was the technology. Only later were the socio-economic and political considerations considered as media worthy and incorporated in the media communication.

Case study feasibility demonstration

Our communication and media work in the context of the feasibility demonstration has become a main issue of every day's work.

Information of Swiss and German authorities

We started very early informing the Swiss and German representatives involved in the project opalinusclay Zürcher Weinland by organizing exchange of information forums, even before the documentation was handed in by Nagra. The first meeting was not made public. From the second meeting on, the SFOE issued press releases and organized press conferences.

- 02.10.01 Exchange of information between the Swiss and German authorities
- 20.12.02 Feasibility demonstration submitted
- 06.06.03 3rd meeting with Swiss and German representatives
- 27.04.04 OECD/NEA Review (Followed by a press conference)

Media releases

- 17.03.03 Swiss reaction to a statement of the German Ministry (BMU)
- 13.01.04 Set up of the Information & Communication Group and the Technical Forum
- 06.04.04 Socio-economic impact study of waste management facilities
- 16.04.04 Set up of the Political Committee
- 10.09.04* Launch of Internet site: www.entsorgungsnachweis.ch
- 28.09.04 Federal Council asks for alternative sites
- 28.04.05 First safety reports published

Information events for the public

- 25.10.03 Public information event in Trüllikon

As the communication strategy became professional, the SFOE began to apply state of the art instruments of communication. In 2002, it published a special edition of its magazine “energie extra” dealing with radioactive waste management. The main contents of this special edition were general information on waste management, the waste management concept, articles on the role and the responsibilities of the main stakeholders (safety inspectorate, implementers, and policy makers). It also covered the financing of waste management and included statements by cantonal and national politicians (Circulation in German and French, 80'000 copies).

For our first information event in Trüllikon in October 2003, we produced an information brochure in German and French. It contained information on Swiss waste management policy, the programme and the role of the main stakeholders. The brochure focused on the project opalinusclay Zürcher Weinland and the feasibility demonstration.

In 2004 the SFOE created a specialized internet site www.entsorgungsnachweis.ch.

Conclusions Feasibility demonstration

Today we include media communication in our work. Whenever possible we discuss our media activities with the relevant stakeholder in advance. Often we get important feedback.

We learned that it was imperative to inform the stakeholders before we contacted the media in order for them to be prepared if they were by the media and should comment on a specific subject.

Nevertheless a communication concept and strategy is an internal paper. The different Stakeholders have different agendas, even if they work and talk together on a regularly basis.

Communication goes two ways. We learnt that it is easier to request information than to deliver it (I want everything; I don't give anything). Do not forget that you cannot or do not always want to give the information you have available.

The waste management experts and the Communication Section have developed a proactive and transparent media communication strategy.

Since 2002, we have incorporated state of the art communication tools such as new brochures, programme of events and an internet site.

10 years experience

- Media work is every day's business
- Involve the relevant stakeholders
- Make the message easy to understand (This is easy to say)
- Give all the information you can
- No one is an expert in everything
- Be nice to journalists (even if they might not be nice to you)
- Try your best....

Item 10.c - Steve Chandler; Emer O'Connell: The approach & experience of a regulator - The Environment Agency for England and Wales

Introduction

The Environment Agency is one of, if not the, largest single, integrated environmental regulators in Europe. We are responsible for a wide range of environmental management and regulation in England and Wales. It is a public body which is largely funded by the Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), as well as by charges on those it regulates. DEFRA sets the national environmental policies, which the Agency then implements.

The Agency employs over 12,000 people working in diverse areas such as flood defence, pollution control, town planning, farming and waste. Our activities range from influencing government policy and regulating major national industry, right through to day-to-day monitoring and clean up operations at local level.

Operationally the Agency is divided into 26 Areas. These Area offices deliver all of our services at local level, including engaging with local stakeholders in consulting on and explaining our work. The Areas are gathered into 8 regions who co-ordinate implementation at a more strategic level, including dealing with local media. We also have a Head Office which develops policy and carries out corporate functions, including liaison with the national media.

Responsibilities and Functions

The Agency's work falls into two main sectors, water management and pollution regulation. The former includes management of flood defences, flood warning, navigation authority on certain waterways (e.g.: the Thames), control of fisheries and licensing water abstraction. For pollution control, we regulate thousands of different industrial plant and waste management facilities, from chemical works to landfill sites. We also regulate all disposals of radioactive waste. The Agency regulates against well over 200,000 individual permits, only 35 of which are radioactive waste authorisations for nuclear sites.

Much of this work can be controversial and requires planned engagement with the media and other stakeholders. One example is flood defences, where Government policy and funding set the level of flood defence provided, but the Agency has operational responsibility and has to explain its actions to communities who may suffer flooding. Another example is the licensing the use of waste organic liquids as fuel in cement kilns. This is highly emotive in the UK where very vigorous protest groups have grown up around cement works. The arguments over the environmental and health impact of emissions have similar difficulties to dealing with the very small risks from radioactive waste disposal.

Nuclear Regulation and Radioactive Waste Disposal

The Agency regulates all users of radioactive materials and disposals of radioactive waste. The 35 licensed nuclear installations form a subset of these and are, of course, generally the most controversial. The most high profile sites tend to be the fuel cycle plants such as Sellafield and defence related plants such as the Atomic Weapons Establishment and nuclear submarine refitting at Devonport Dockyard in Plymouth. It is important to note that the level of concern is not necessarily related to the actual radiological impact. For both the latter two sites, the doses from discharges are less than 10 micro-Sieverts per year, which can be contrasted with a typical nuclear power station dose of around 100 μ Sv/yr.

No applications for disposal of intermediate or high level waste have ever been received in the UK. The Government's Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CORWM) is currently consulting upon

various proposals for disposal solutions. Earlier proposals for site investigations by NIREX in the 1990s were extremely controversial locally and nationally. There is only one authorised disposal site for low level waste at Drigg, near Sellafield. That is relatively non-controversial, although the local authorities are now starting to express concern over the increased use of the site for large volumes of decommissioning waste.

Communications & Media Strategy

Our work brings us daily into contact with thousands of people in all walks of life. Effective communication is key to our success. We have a responsibility to tell people about the environment they live in - no matter how good or bad the situation might be - and to help them understand the regulatory decisions we take.

We use the full range of communications channels open to us to achieve change, from talking direct to industries and the local communities around them, to implementing broad strategies designed to influence industry representative bodies and trade organisations, policy makers in government and politicians and, increasingly, customers and shareholders.

The media is a key channel to all of these audiences. In the Environment Agency, it is our policy always to inform and respond to the media and we always aim to be accessible. In dealing with regulation however, whether it is in the nuclear sector or any other area of industry, targeting the media can only ever be one strand in an approach that must also involve effective local community engagement on the ground. Consultation and information are key to addressing concerns and gaining the trust of the community.

And timely dialogue, using language that is appropriate to the lay audience (something most scientists and technical experts need to remember to work hard at) is crucial. If we understand each-other's positions, even where they differ, then we have a much better chance of managing fair and balanced reporting by the media.

This is certainly true of the nuclear sector, where fear and anxiety about the potential risks often make for a difficult relationship with regulators. Lack of trust leads to problems in understanding and accepting solutions, despite decisions being based on sound scientific evidence.

Nuclear sites are not by any means the only contentious issues the Environment Agency encounters. In fact, in our experience, there are many other unpopular activities that excite as much if not more protest on environmental and health grounds. Cement kilns, municipal waste incinerators and waste landfill sites have all created significant communication challenges for the Agency in recent years, as does the fear of flooding.

There is a benefit, however, in that we are able to bring the experience and learning from communicating in all these different areas to bear in dealing with nuclear sites and radioactive waste issues.

We have also been able to start to build tools to help our staff, who are embarking on regulatory exercises, to apply best practice in communication and consultation. A 'toolkit', entitled 'Building Trust in Local Communities' is being gradually rolled out to staff across the country. It gives examples of approaches that have proved successful and includes helpful advice and checklists to guide users through the process. Again, media communication is an important part of this overall approach.

Agency PR professionals provide the day to day points of contact for the media and co-ordinate the response we make. However, for most technical and controversial issues we empower the technical staff involved to talk directly to the media. We find that this is the most effective way to explain our work and

gives it a more “human face.” Clearly it is important that staff only speak within their areas of competence and responsibility and are aware of the wider implications an issue may have within the Agency. Guidance on this is included within the toolkit mentioned above and is also promoted by the “integrated project team” approach mentioned in the case studies.

It is also vital that staff who face the media are properly trained and have reached a satisfactory standard. The Agency provides media training courses for staff and managers, and those who attend these courses are graded on their final performance and potential for further improvement. It is then the responsibility of senior managers to ensure that only those staff who have reached a satisfactory standard are used to give media interviews.

Case Studies

I have chosen four typical cases from our work on authorising radioactive waste disposals from nuclear sites. These will contain similar issues, concerns and approaches to those likely to be experienced and needed in dealing with proposals for a radioactive waste repository. I will go into most detail on the first case, and just bring out additional points from the others.

Magnox reactor authorisation review - In 2000-01, the Agency had the significant task of reviewing the regulatory authorisations for these nuclear power stations and associated facilities, at seven different locations across the country.

The Agency was aiming for a comprehensive and consistent process to be carried out by the regulatory teams operating in different parts of the country that would provide a genuine opportunity for public participation and achieve a high degree of acceptance of the Agency's eventual decision on regulatory conditions and controls.

Key successes were the decision to bring together a central team at an early stage to plan and manage the process. Involving communications and media experts was critical, as the media could be used as a channel for information to the target audience but also recognising that media relations experience could help in anticipating issues before they arose and help to avoid inaccurate or negative reporting.

The Agency also defined a set of principles to guide our staff in their implementation of the communication and consultation process, which included:

- introduce and promote the concept of full participation, by welcoming and valuing the views and concerns of stakeholders;
- act at all times with honesty and integrity;
- behave in a way that demonstrates that the organisation and its representatives are trustworthy, open, and professional;
- be independent, and seen to be independent;
- inform and communicate in a timely manner;
- provide full relevant information to legitimately interested parties, subject to any over-riding considerations of cost and the business confidentiality of others;
- be transparent and accountable in procedures, systems and decision-making.

We devised a comprehensive promotional programme, including:

- direct notification of stakeholders - e.g. letters, copies of documentation etc.;
- explanatory documents - e.g. summary report;
- leaflets /brochures - e.g. Agency 'come and talk to us' leaflet;
- web site - e.g. Agency web site announcements;
- advertising – e.g. posters advertising local meetings;
- local newspapers – e.g. press releases, announcements, interviews and articles;
- national newspapers – e.g. statutory announcements;
- television and radio – e.g. local radio spots; and
- presentations – e.g. to local liaison committees.

Without going into the detail, I think it is fair to say that the exercise was completed with general success. Certainly, there were no crises in communications terms, but we did learn the importance of a number of issues, which are equally relevant whether one is addressing the media or any other audience. These included:

- The benefits of early specialist communications input to the project team
- The importance of making documentation and information accessible to the audience, and by that I mean the language used not just the physical availability of information
- The need to present explanatory information in different ways for different audiences. One size doesn't fit all - different levels of detail are required for different interests, and different groups have different concerns
- the importance of a timely and well integrated programme encompassing direct face-to-face communications opportunities eg public 'surgeries', media strategy, promotional material and publicity.
- Much of this learning was captured in a very useful and thorough review and evaluation of the process and is contained in an Environment Agency report - '*The use and role of information in major public consultations*' which can be found through the publications catalogue on the Environment Agency's website www.environment-agency.gov.uk

Devonport Dockyard, Plymouth –

We were able to build on this learning when, more recently, we embarked on an exercise to revise the radioactive waste disposal authorisation for this site, which refits the Royal Navy's nuclear submarines. This was controversial because the new Vanguard class submarines required the liquid discharge limit for tritium to be increased by a factor of 5, (although the radiological impact was still only a few micro-Sieverts per year).

A project team was set up to run the process and, in line with previous experience, communications experts were included in the team from the earliest stages of planning.

Media were briefed and issued with news releases and explanatory information at all stages of the process. The lead manager and our nuclear regulator were both experienced, trained and credible media performers. Regular press releases were issued, authorised by the lead manager; the nuclear regulator was the key spokesperson and public face.

Communications with the media were enhanced in this particular exercise by the skill of the Agency's local nuclear regulator, who proved able to engage well on the right level with both media and local community. The benefit of skilled and trained spokespeople should never be underestimated

It was often necessary to agree, or at least consult, with some key stakeholders on press releases to avoid experts being seen to disagree – eg: the site operator and the local health authority. A key issue was simplification of technical issues, especially radiation dose. We compared the dose from the Dockyard over a year with a few minutes of natural background in Cornwall.

We worked very hard at key local relationships, including a school neighbouring the dockyard facility and a very active local anti-nuclear pressure group. This meant that, while opinion was not always in our favour, we were generally able to secure fair and balanced reporting of our views and actions in the wider context of views.

Technetium 99 discharges from Sellafield:

When a new actinide treatment process was commissioned for medium-active concentrate, discharges of Tc-99 rose sharply. This was because the concentrate had been stored for many years and the new plant did not remove the Tc-99. This created a high level of national and international concern, particularly from Ireland and Norway. Developing a Tc-99 removal process was technically challenging and concerns needed to be managed effectively while this was done.

The key step in achieving this was the creation of an integrated communications plan which was agreed by all parties, including BNFL (site operator), the Irish and Norwegian governments and regulators. Clear 'lines to take' on key issues were agreed well in advance. The media were informed of when they would receive briefings on progress. There was a carefully phased approach to information release, which was generally as follows: governments, followed by regulators, followed by media. Trained technical staff were available to give interviews. Background briefings had already been given to the media on key technical concepts, such as half-life.

Bradwell oil burner –

This power station on the east coast, which is currently defuelling, required the use of a 'garage-type' space heating burner to dispose of waste gas-circulator oil which was lightly contaminated. This was by far the most controversial part of the revised site authorisation issued in 2002, even though the radiation dose from this disposal route was less than a micro-Sievert per year and only one hundredth of the overall dose from the power station. Several hundred people attended a public meeting held during the authorisation process, so this is another good example of public concern not being related to relative risks. The media took an interest but did not give the issue a very high profile.

One lesson to be drawn from this is that a media strategy cannot be separated from a general stakeholder strategy. In this case we had gone to great lengths to reassure the protest group, with our site regulator making personal visits to explain the issues and establishing a reasonably warm relationship. We also had our leading incinerator expert visit the plant and agreed additional environmental monitoring,

purely for reassurance. So whenever the media did take an interest, we were able to tell them we were being very pro-active in meeting local concerns. Another factor we emphasised was that we had made all of the information, such as the application, monitoring data, radiological assessment etc were already available to the public. We felt this helped to reduce media interest, as there was no possible secrecy angle. The site regulator also gave all the media interviews, and in a similar way to the Devonport case, came over as sincere and trustworthy. This personal chemistry is a very important element of success.

Learning Points from Case Studies

The following are the main learning points and elements of best practice we draw from our experiences of controversial issues on nuclear sites:

- It is vital to have a dedicated project team to manage major issues, and this team must include a media professional.
- Again, for significant issues, it is important to have an integrated communications strategy and plan, which includes the approach to the media.
- Lines to take for key issues should be prepared as far in advance as possible. Press releases and interviews should be agreed or shared with key stakeholders on a ‘no surprises’ basis to ensure there are no mixed messages to the media.
- The media strategy cannot be separated from an overall stakeholder engagement strategy. A pro-active and empathetic approach to key stakeholders among the public will pay dividends in reassuring the media that the issue is under control.
- All relevant information should be provided to stakeholders, available in public libraries etc, so that there can be no allegations of secrecy.
- A senior manager and a technical professional involved in the issue need to be media trained, assessed, prepared and be the key spokespersons.
- The spokespersons need to be seen as open, trustworthy and friendly, as well as having a good technical understanding of the issues. An honest and frank approach may well be more important than sticking closely to the script.
- Careful prior thought needs to be given to making risk comparisons that will resonate with the audience.
- Media may be invited to briefings on key technical issues, where these are essential for understanding/communication and will keep recurring.

Conclusions

The Environment Agency has a clear media strategy and much experience of implementing it across a diverse range of controversial issues. There is no straightforward way to ensure success, where the issues are very controversial and emotive, or where mistakes have already been made. But, if success is regarded as balanced and fair reporting by the media, then this is unlikely to be achieved without taking account of the learning points set out in the previous section. Above all it is vital that a media strategy is integrated within the overall management structure for a project, and is not seen as an optional extra.

Item 10.d – Peter Ormai: Media Relations as seen by the Hungarian Implementer

MEDIA RELATIONS

AS SEEN BY THE HUNGARIAN IMPLEMENTER

P. ORMAI

Public Agency for Radioactive Waste Management

TOPICS

- **Setting the stage**
- **Media strategy**
- **Impact of the media work**
- **Practical examples**
- **Lessons learned**

Before 1989

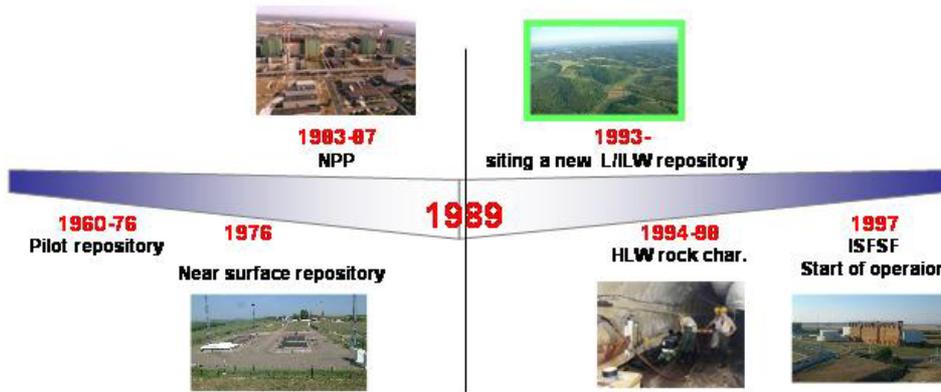
- Centralized economy
- The local authorities functioned as the subordinates of the central authorities
- One party system
- Member of the Warsaw Treaty (1955-1996)
- Member of the SU-led CMEA

After 1989

- Market economy
- Multi-party system (Parliament)
- Full-fledged democracy (1990)
- Member of NATO (1999)
- Member of the EU (2004)



- New atmosphere
- New style in communication



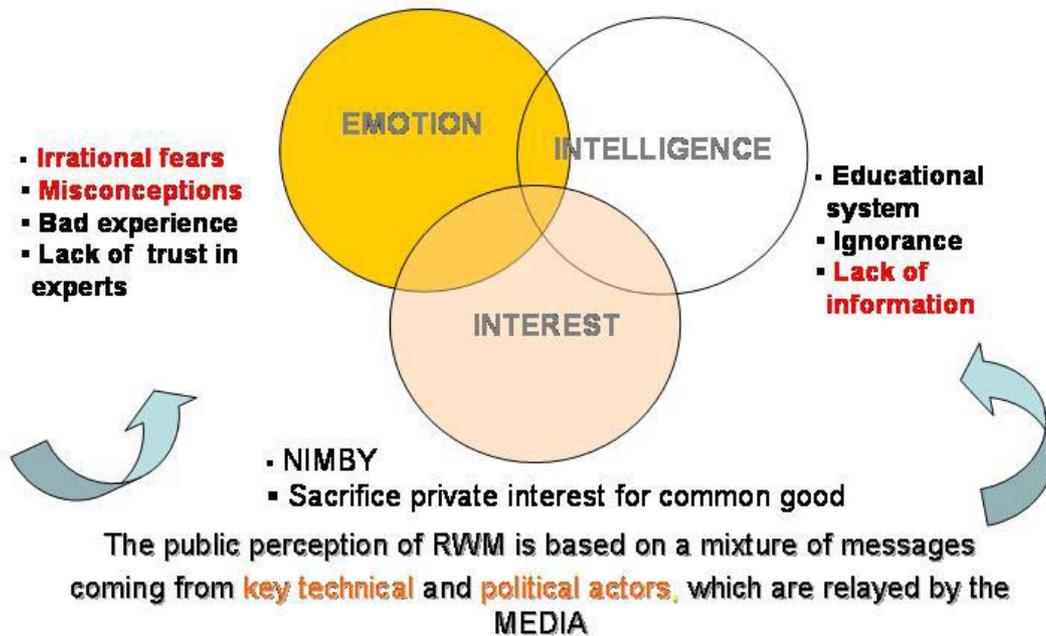
- Life time extension
- safety of the NPP
- international reviews (safety culture)
- privatization



- need for a new repository
- near surface or geologic repository
- site suitability
- timing
- cost

- Possible return of SF to Russia
- Is domestic solution needed?

BASIC ATTITUDE TOWARDS NUCLEAR



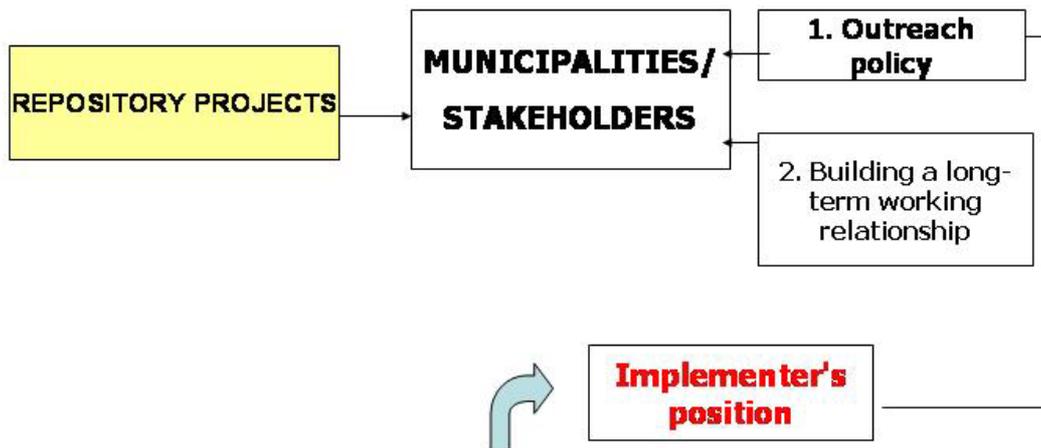
MASS MEDIA

- Nationwide media (daily press, weekly, tabloid)
- Technical press
- Local media
- News agencies
- TV
- Radio

MEDIA STRATEGY IS PART OF THE ENTIRE STEKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

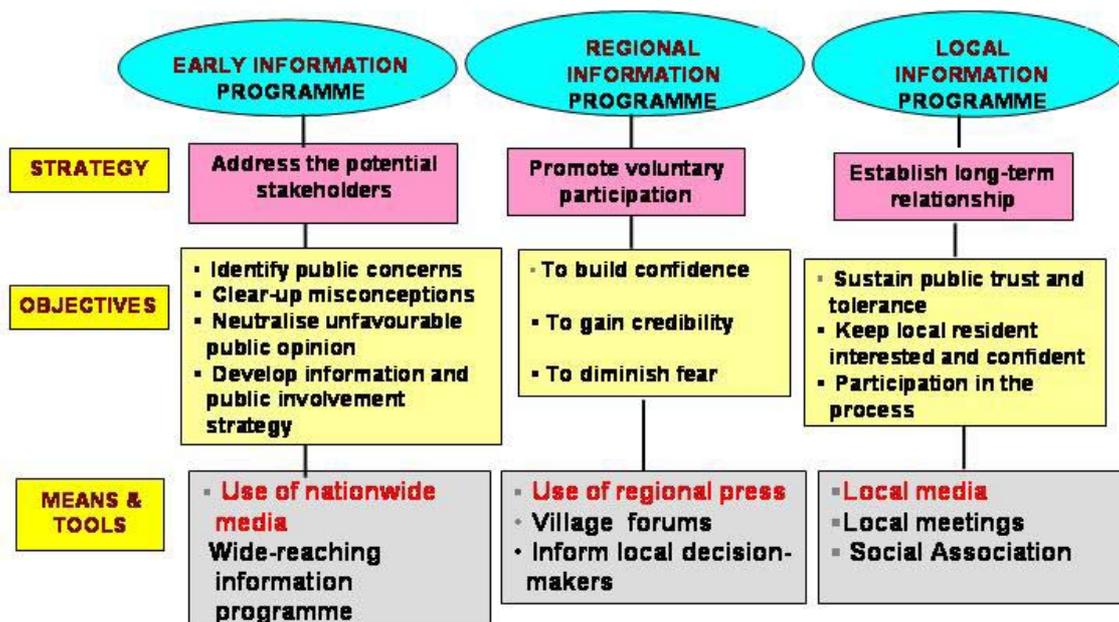
The main pillars of Trust:

SAFETY PARTICIPATION LOCAL DEVELOPMENT



The repository should be designed and implemented in ways that reflect the values and interests of local communities.

STRATEGY IN SITING REPOSITORY



THE GOALS OF COMMUNICATIONS

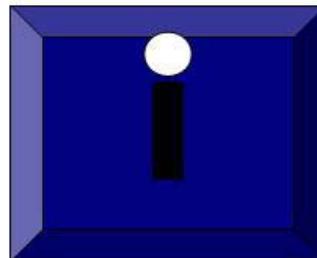
- Stakeholders must see clearly what are the aims of the research, what the government want to build, what is the role of implementer.
- The amount of knowledge must grow continuously, its quality must be better.
- Everybody must be informed.
- The extend of tolerance, acceptance or spiritual assistance must be grown.

BASES OF GOOD MEDIA RELATIONS

INFORMATION

INFORMATION

INFORMATION



All relevant information should make available for the media

MEDIA WORK STRATEGY

- hire a professional PR company (Noguchi Porter Novelli)
- media 'grooming'
- to be proactive
- personal contacts
- use various methods to reach media (press releases, press conferences, site visits, etc.)
- use language easy to understand
- swift in providing information

BEHAVIOUR

- **READY TO PROVIDE INFORMATION**
- **FRANK**
- **OBJECTIVE**
- **RELIABLE**
- **CREDIBLE**
- **MODERATE**
- **ACCOUNTABLE (in process, decision making)**

SPECIAL MEANS

- Buying columns in technical periodicals
(best way to introduce our waste projects)
- Representatives of the media are invited to
reference visits to abroad.

KEY MESSAGES (1)

- need for disposal: **national interest** – serving society
- **environmental and ethical reasons** for disposal
- **safety** of disposal - low level of risk
- reasonableness and fairness of a **step-wise** development process
- Importance of an **independent regulator**
- **local benefits** to host communities
- **cost is modest** addition to the price of nuclear electricity
- **money is systematically collected** and available (Fund)

KEY MESSAGES (2)

L/ILW

- not very technically demanding
- wastes are only as dangerous as typical industrial wastes
- problem is relatively simple (apart from those of politics and public attitudes)

HLW

- volumes are small
- geological disposal is an internationally accepted route
- disposal is in principle reversible
- time is not pressing but preparations should start

MEETING THE MEDIA

- Inform the nationwide media 1-2 a year
- Events-related media get-together



Press conferences



Site visit by the media



PRESS RELEASES

- Title: interesting enough and (but!) corresponds to the facts.
- Introduction: arouse interest for further reading
- Text: concise, important, avoidance of technical jargon and abbreviations
- Get the messages through

Risks:

- editor abridgement
- misleading illustration or photo
- caption does not match with the picture

Preventive measure: giving photos, graphs, etc. in advance

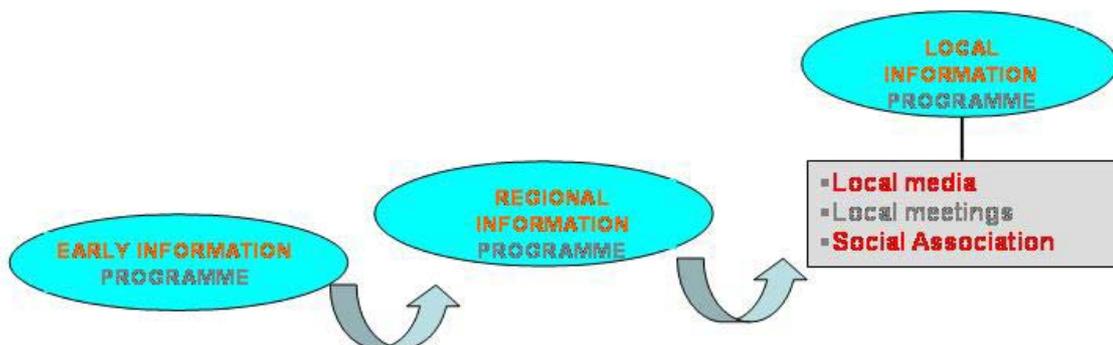
REVIEW THE MEDIA WORK

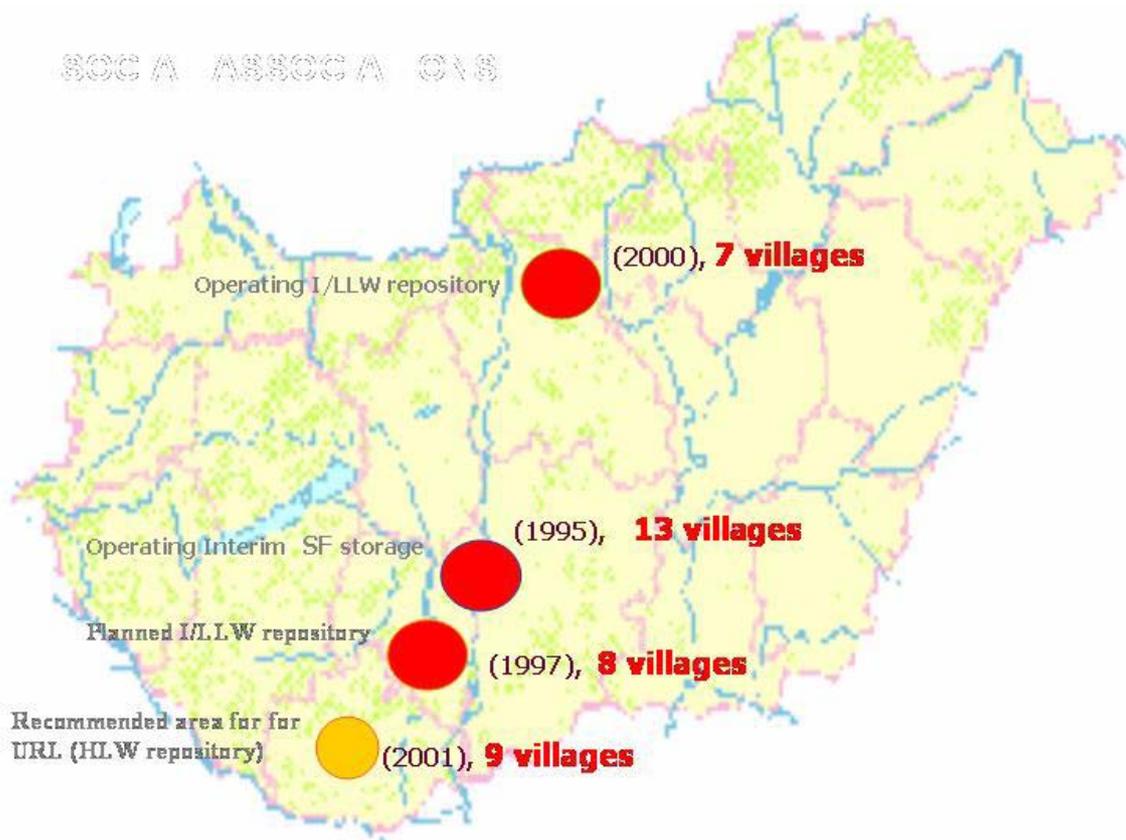
A good link has been built up with technical journalists working in the national media.



PURAM news got regular and exact publicity in the nationwide press.

Experts of PURAM are regarded as trustworthy and authentic sources of information.





- Information Associations continuously inform the population about the research, plans, possibilities.
- The main task of these associations is to inform the stakeholders, opinion leaders, companies working in the region, etc.
- Target audience: local people, opinion leaders, local politicians
- Extensive use of local media.

WAYS TO REACH PEOPLE

Local media

Regional Chronicle
(8 years)



PURAM leaflets

LOCAL TV NETWORK

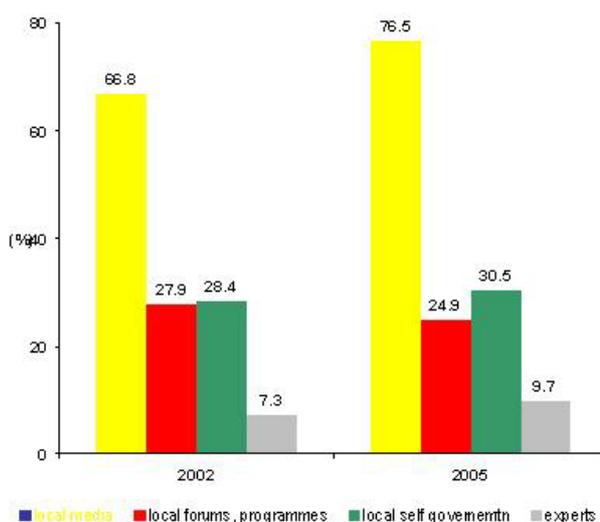
- Informing the local media or establishing local media. (monthlies, programs for local cable TV)
- These are locally established with the help of local governments.

Video Newsletter
(8 years)



HOW THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MEDIA WORK IS MEASURED?

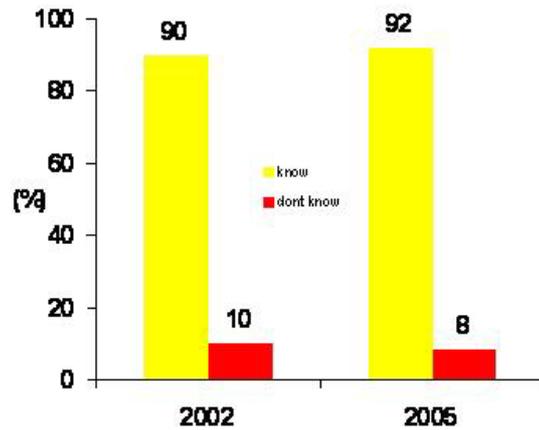
From which medium do you get your information about the L/ILW repository project?



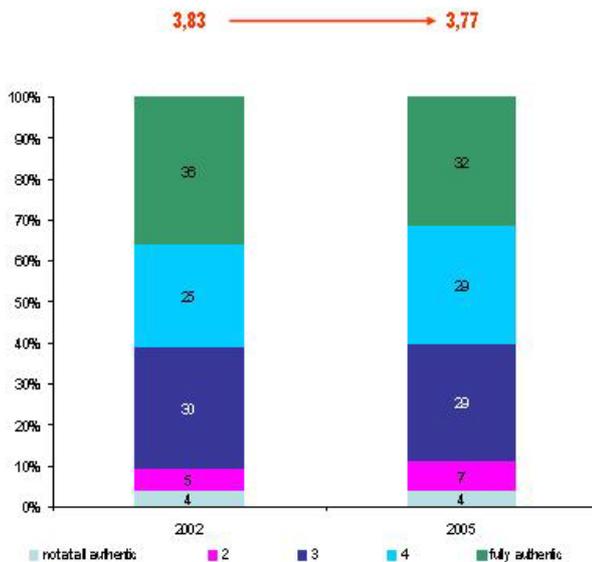
- The role of the local media is very strong
- In 2005 every 3 people in 4 was informed from these sources

What Do You Know About the Local Paper: Regional Chronicle?

- Nearly everybody knows it!
- 65% of the population used to read nearly every number of the local paper



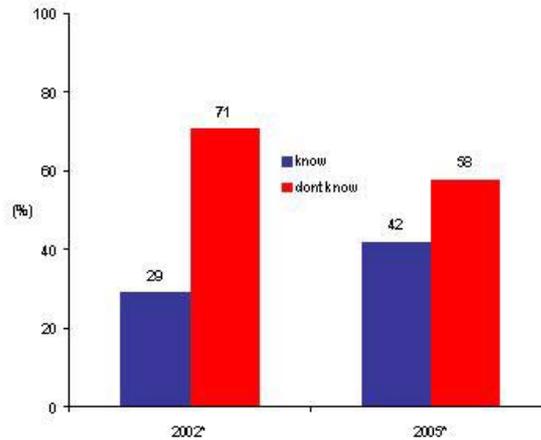
Authenticity of the Regional Chronicle



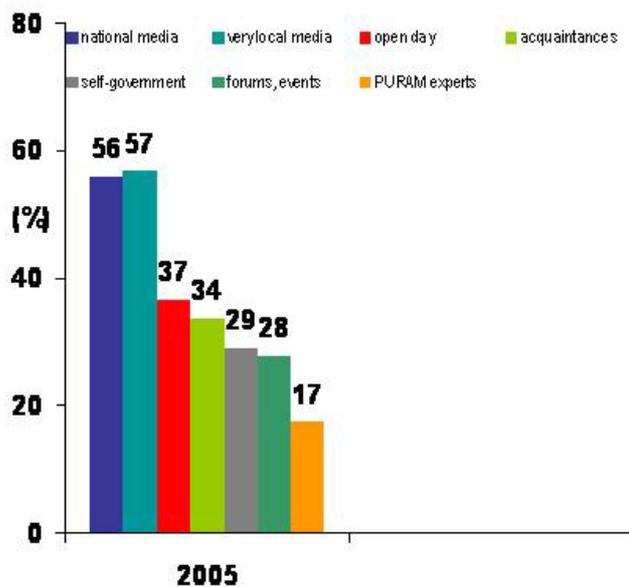
- Majority regard Regional Chronicle to be authentic
- Stable results

Local Newsreel

- Significant rise in notoriety
- Majority watch the video newsletter occasionally
- Those who know about the newsletter 16% is regular viewer



INFORMATION SOURCES OF THE HLW SITING



- Important the role of national and local media
- Every third person is getting information by non-formal ways
- The effects of the Video News and the Internet are small.

LATEST TOPICS IN THE NATIONWIDE MEDIA

INAUGURATION OF THE ACCESS TUNNELS FOR I/LLW REPOSITORY



The Greens against the SF export.
„All countries should take care of their own spent fuel”

Zöldek a paksi hulladékexport ellen

A magyar miniszterelnök moszkvai látogatásának előestéjén orosz zöldek ismét felvetették, hogy Magyarország mondjon le a paksi atomerőműben elhasznált fűtőelemek visszaküldéséről, és érvénytelenítse az ennek szabályait tartalmazó megállapodást. Az Ekozacsita környezetvédő szervezet Gyurcsány Ferencnek címzett petíciót adott át Kontra Ferenc moszkvai nagykövetnek.

Az Ekozacsita tavaly októberben, Gyurcsány Ferenc beiktatása után már küldött egy hasonló levelet a magyar kormányfőnek. Akkor is emlékeztettek arra a kétoldali jegyzőkönyvre, amelyet tavaly április végén írtak alá a kiegészített paksi nukleáris fűtőelemek oroszországi újrafeldolgozásáról. A megállapodás lehetőséget ad arra, hogy az újrahasznosítás során keletkező nukleáris hulladék végleg Oroszországban maradjon, ha erről egy későbbi szerződés rendelkezik majd. Moszkvának egyetlen más állammal sincs ilyen megállapodása – mutattott rá az Ekozacsita, kétségbe vonva, hogy a jegyzőkönyv megfelel az EU sugárzó hulladékokra vonatkozó irányelveinek.

A lap felszólította a magyar miniszterelnököt, hogy vizsgálja meg a sugárzó hulladék exportjának kockázatát, amely a szomszédos országok számára is jelentős kockázatot jelent. A paksi kiegészített fűtőelemeknek a Csel-

jabinszkhoz közeli Majak üzembe történő szállítása régóta szálka a magyar környezetvédők szemében is, mivel szerintük nemhogy megoldandó, hanem csak súlyosbítja a problémát. Mint Perger András, az Energia Klub szakértője kifejtette, a legnagyobb gond, hogy a fűtőelemek feldolgozása során az eredeti mennyiségnél nagyságrendekkel több (igaz, alacsonyabb sugárzású, de hasznosíthatatlan) hulladék keletkezik. Sugárzóvá válik minden tárgy és eszköz, amivel az erőművi fűtőanyag a feldolgozás során érintkezik. A zöldek szerint Majakban az oroszországi eredetű hulladékokat kellene feldolgozni, a másutt – így Magyarországon – elhasznált fűtőelemek mellől pedig az érintett országoknak kellene gondoskodniuk.

H. M.



A külföldi nukleáris hulladék szállítása ellen tüntető zöldek Moszkvában



To „inform” Corridor Communities:
 Communities through which SF
 transport occurred or may occur.



DETERRENT EXHIBITION



Alleged reason: contaminated environment



2 Mayak inhabitants 'invited' to Hungary for a mock campaign.

Scandal at the Parliament
Greenpeace action

Cutting their hairs forming a trefoil symbol



LOW KEY MEDIA COVERAGE

CONCLUSIONS

- The role of the media is essential in forming /strongly influencing the public opinion.
- At present the media not hostile on nuclear / waste issues, but few pressmen are always ready to interview those vocal politicians who try to discredit the programmes.
- Media often enhance the hesitation of the public by publishing subjective views.
- The media may affect the public way of thinking (mentality) not only by suggesting what we should think about an issue but they determine what issues we should think of.

**Reality: Media = business (as well)
'Only the bad news are good news'**

- **Danger:** instead of providing two-ways information, media require
 - a decision-making role or
 - at least exert pressure on the decision makers.



- Superficial and biased views – exaggerated by some pressmen – may appear as substantiated, decisive arguments and may become public.

Item 10.e – Anni Bolenius: SKBs Approach to Public Communication and Media

SKB has recently revised its communication plan. This paper is aimed to give a general view about the approach that the company has chosen towards the field of public communication.

The role of communications is to support the siting process so that trust and confidence of stakeholders can be maintained. SKB is planning to apply for a license for the encapsulation plant in 2006, and in 2008, for the deep repository. Trust at both national and local level will be crucial throughout the application process.

Overall approach towards public communication

A company or an organisation which is depending on opinions and attitudes of external stakeholders is never stronger than the weakest link in the chain which consists of its profile (what it wants to be), its identity (what it really is) and its image (what stakeholders think that it is/the image of the company in the eyes of various stakeholders).

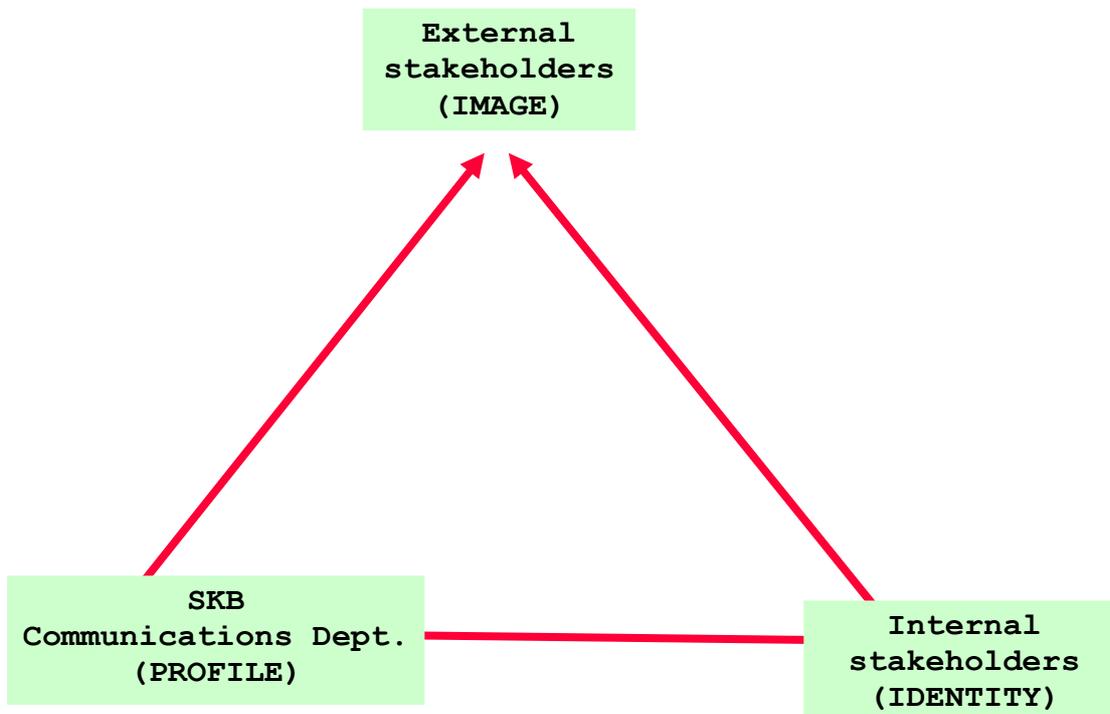


Figure 1. A company's profile, image and identity are closely linked to each other and are dependent on each other. A company which needs trust and support from external stakeholders is never stronger than the weakest of these links.

This means that:

- **our identity can not be "overruled" by our profile** (we can not claim that we are something that we are not and still be credible)

- **our profile should not go too far from the image of us which various stakeholders have** (our profile should not live in its own world but should take into consideration what stakeholders think about us when we communicate)
- in the long run, the image of our company will not be stronger than we actually are (sooner or later, we will get the image that we deserve)

For example, if a strategy for handling an important issue is well communicated towards external stakeholder and gains acceptance, but not communicated and discussed within the company, the issue may become a problem in the future. Or, if the messages that SKB uses when communicating with external stakeholders are not conceived as trustworthy, this will sooner or later cause problems for the project.

The other way round, if these messages deviate greatly from the attitudes within SKB in key issues, external stakeholders and particularly the media will see this. A holistic approach towards communications which takes all these aspects into account is therefore needed.

How does SKB work from this overall approach?

Applying the model above, SKB has recently conducted a project resulting in a revised communications plan. This plan is to be applied and used 2005-2010, i.e. until the siting process is expected to culminate in decisions by the government and from the municipality which is chosen for the deep repository.

Using the model, the project analysed each “corner” of the triangle when it comes to the current situation. Amongst the questions that were asked were:

- - What is our image today? What attitudes and which levels of knowledge are being held by various stakeholders, for example national politicians and the young generation? What is our current media image?
- - What is the profile which we are using today? Which issues do we push the hardest (web site, key messages to media and visitors at our facilities?)
- - What is our “identity” today? What attitudes are there towards the company and the project today amongst our employees? What do people inside the company think about access to information on key issues and what is the level of commitment towards company values at SKB?

Having conducted this analysis of the current situation, specific goals for each of these domains (profile/identity/image) can be defined. Some of the specific goals that SKB identified were:

- increased level of knowledge amongst national politicians
- increased knowledge and acceptance of SKB’s method amongst national media
- increased knowledge and acceptance of the young generation (the analysis showed that very few young people know about our program)
- more efficient knowledge-sharing and stronger internal values within SKB
- good dialogue with the new environmental organisations which have received funding from the Nuclear Waste Fund (policy of non- conflict)

After setting these goals, of which only a few are mentioned above, we went forward trying to define how these goals could be reached. If possible, measurable goals were encouraged.

The plan will now be used when the company departments start their annual activity planning for 2005-2006. Activities/projects will be set correlating to the goals and strategies in the plan. .

Media strategy

The model used for overall communication approach can also be applied towards media work. If the messages in our press releases are not communicated and discussed within SKB prior to external release, we might find out that media prefers to ask to company employees about these issues. Of course, not everybody can know the company policy towards all issues but in key issues such as choice of method, environmental issues and ethical questions, it is preferable that the key messages do correlate as much as possible to the attitudes of the employees.

Should there be strong negative attitudes towards the management of key issues within the company, these have to be considered and prioritised because otherwise, this will surely become an issue in the media later on.

Media image:

Don't try to change the way media thinks. Try to think like them.

There are presumably not many few waste management organisations which would claim that they are satisfied with their media image. Many would probably claim that their media image is at least partially “unjust”. Looking at media coverage of many organisations, one would easily agree. On the other hand, this is the challenge. As long as we live in democracies with free press, it will always be the organisations that will need to change, not the media.

It is the organisation that needs to know how media logics functions and how media looks at our issue. You need to accept that their interests do not correlate with yours, and that they are the voice of the public.

RWM may be a truly interesting and worth-while societal issue to learn more about, but many other subjects of high dignity can claim to be equally important and urgent: global environmental problems such as pollution and saving of rain forests; the invasion of Iraq; new constitution of Europe, how to reform our welfare systems just to mention some of them.

An organisation needs to be available towards media; media issues need to be prioritised within the company; experts need to be comprehensible and also interested in telling the public about their expertise.

Open facilities, many spokesmen within SKB

Internal information and open media policy are key components in SKB's media approach. Major projects like RWM benefit from being as open as possible towards media, but this is not always easy. Choosing local spokesmen who are not necessarily experts benefits the public since these persons are often easier to understand than the experts. Centralising all media contacts to a couple of persons in the top management can create an image of an organisation which needs to “control” the employees.

The municipalities in which we work have many employees who also live in the neighbourhood. These persons are key persons within SKB because if they feel informed and can speak openly about issues

related to their work, and also have the right to have media contacts, we believe that confidence in us will grow locally.

For the same reasons, opening up waste management facilities to visitors can be said to be a part of media work. The media knows that you can always claim good security at your facilities in your press releases, but if you let them come close to the waste, see it with their own eyes and even talk to the persons working with daily operation of the facility (others than the managers), it would be very difficult for a company to hide something and it will become easier to get trust.

Incident management routine

Things sometimes happen at a operational facility which are not radiation problems but rather the question of how the incident might be reflected upon in the media.

Sometimes companies may find themselves managing the “image” of an incident in media rather than the incident in itself. This is sometimes due to lack of understanding of how stakeholders might perceive the incident.

There is also pure media logics to take into account: if it comes from you, you are open about it and can not be blamed for trying to hide it. It is always better that the company in charge can tell what happened and what did not before someone else does.

Even if an incident is small and not radiological, SKB applies a policy of openness which means that we often contact the media to tell them what happened. Then they can make up their own mind whether or not they want to cover the issue.

Both local media and people living nearby need to know that if things happen in our facilities, they would be the first ones to know.

We believe that an incident and its implications should not be judged only according to our way of seeing it. We must ask ourselves: Would people want to know? Would media want to know? and make actions from these answers rather than our own judgment and way of seeing at what happened.

SKB encourages its staff to come forward with any incident, no matter how small, regardless of the position in the company. We believe this also strengthens the internal key value of openness.

Media training of key personnel

Training key members of the staff is an important part of the media strategy. Increased openness and decentralised spokesmen policy means that many people need to know more than their own area of expertise. Media trainings should not be considered only as practise for real- life situations but also as a part of internal sharing of knowledge and discussions about key issues.

Different roles of different employees

Open media policy means that we encourage people to have contacts with the media. When having these contacts, it is helpful to keep in mind the role that the person has who is being interviewed.

Reminding the media of the role that you are having is to recommend, as there is less risk for misunderstandings. If they are not happy with the general answers from an information officer, he or she can always help in finding the expert within the company. We need to keep in mind that most of the time

when speaking to media, we are addressing to citizens without expert knowledge. They are often more interested in basic facts rather than the technical details.

Priorisation of media issues within the company

Being aware of your media image means that you have to follow what is being written about the company on an everyday basis. An important part of a media strategy is to share the media image within the company. If the employees are interested in what is written, it will benefit stakeholder issues in general within the company.

Using Internet for dynamic, quick comments about issues is also worth the time that is needed.

Priorisation of media issues within the company also means that chief executives must see that the work they put down in media contacts is worth while. Answering critics in the media may be sometimes frustrating if you don't agree; but if you are not putting forward your standpoint, people who read it the first time will be left without your side of the story.

Media reaches many people and every misunderstanding leads to a multiplication of the messages if not corrected. If a company chooses not to care about figures and facts which are wrong, they should not be surprised after a couple of years that their media image might be harder to change than they thought.