

## WELCOME BY ESARDA

Ladies and Gentlemen,

it is my great pleasure and honour to welcome you on behalf of the European Safeguards Research and Development Association (ESARDA).

Jim Tushingam, the current president of ESARDA, regrets that he is not able to be with us this week due to other commitments and sends his regards and best wishes for a successful meeting.

ESARDA, created in 1969, is a network of organisations including national regulatory authorities, nuclear facilities operators, research centres and universities, aiming to bring together the international nuclear safeguards community. Its main goals are research collaboration, exchange of information and joint implementation of R&D programmes.

ESARDA also strives to fulfil an educational role and to reach the general public. In a nutshell, the following activities take place: 1) Annual Meetings and Symposia, providing an opportunity for collaboration and information exchange. 2) Dedicated working group (WG) activities, with nine WGs being the "backbone" of ESARDA. 3) The one-week ESARDA Course, which complements nuclear engineering studies by including nuclear safeguards in the academic curriculum. 4) Technical publications, in particular the ESARDA Bulletin including peer-reviewed articles.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please allow me to briefly report on some developments ESARDA has made since the last joint INMM/ESARDA WS held in Aix-en-Provence, France, in 2011, and to also reflect on some challenges ESARDA has faced since then.

Since 2011, new partners have joined ESARDA. As a result, ESARDA is currently formed by 32 Parties from the European Union, 5 non-EU Associated Members and 10 Individual Members.

Since 2011, ESARDA has put more emphasis on specific topics including arms control and disarmament verification, novel technologies and export control, next to the traditional safeguards-related topics of ESARDA, which are containment and surveillance, destructive assay, non-destructive assay, verification technologies and methodologies, training and knowledge management. In 2013, ESARDA hold a joint meeting on the IAEA State Level Concept. Very recently, ESARDA has launched the ESARDA Young Generation WG, aimed at increasing the number of students and young professionals who are active in the nuclear safeguards field.

Since 2011, or more specifically since the Fukushima accident, the nuclear situation in Europe has also changed, as several European nations decided to reduce their reliance on nuclear plants or abandon construction plans for new ones, and, in short, Europe is divided on nuclear power today.

If we look even more broadly, the challenges for the European Union, both inside and outside, have significantly changed and increased since 2011, including: International terrorism as a global threat that also affects Europe; the Ukraine crisis; and EU reforms. Meanwhile, those who thought that the financial situation of Greece was the greatest challenge ever for the European Union have been recently proven wrong, unfortunately, in light of the current migration and refugees crisis inside and outside Europe.

In times like this, it is extremely important that organisations like ESARDA continue to demonstrate successful European cooperation.

The European Union relies on strong partners from outside Europe and this also applies to ESARDA. In this regard, I am very pleased to see that the number of the ESARDA associated members from non-EU States is increasing. Traditionally, ESARDA includes associated members from European Countries that are not part of the EU, in particular Norway and Switzerland. US labs have been involved in ESARDA as observers since the early 80's, but it wasn't until 2012 that ORNL joined ESARDA as the first associated member from the US. PNNL followed in 2014 and SNL in 2015. I would like to take the opportunity to invite other research labs, national authorities, facility operators and universities from outside the EU to consider applying for the ESARDA associated membership. The membership is free of charge.

The INMM has always been a strong, and is definitely the most important, partner from outside the EU. Cooperation between INMM and ESARDA exists on multiple levels. The INMM/ESARDA Workshop may be the most visible joint activity, but there are other examples, such as the INMM ISD meetings at ESARDA Symposia, the collaboration of INMM and ESARDA in the International Workshop on Gamma Spectrometry since 2008, the participation of INMM members at ESARDA meetings and vice versa, and, some of us even belong to both associations.

Cooperation always becomes difficult when it causes additional activities, associated with additional needs for time and funds, and this is also reflected by the numbers of European participants at this workshop: 5 from EC; 5 from Austria, including the Agency; 5 from Germany; 3 from UK; and 1 from Finland, in total 19 participants from institutions in Europe among almost 120 at a joint INMM/ESARDA WS or, in other terms, only 3 out of the 32 ESARDA parties.

Maybe, at some time in the future, we should envisage also other forms of cooperation between INMM and ESARDA, acknowledging that both associations have their own history, objectives, structure, rules and procedures. Other ways of cooperation that

would allow us, to the extent possible given the nature of either association, to address some issues of mutual interest explicitly on a joint basis, rather than working on it in the INMM, in ESARDA and in addition by joint activities. Modern communication technologies can be of great help in bringing people together. In this line, WG 4 on education and training is trying to overcome this issue by connecting with the ESARDA Training and Knowledge Management WG through a telephone conference on Tuesday morning. It might also be useful to coordinate or probably distribute some R&D topics and activities among INMM and ESARDA by a higher-level joint committee, while, again, keeping the nature of either association and avoiding to add just another layer of hierarchy and/or bureaucracy.

However, these are just my initial, personal thoughts and I would welcome any feedback or input from you.

Let me close by expressing our appreciation and gratitude to the organisers. On behalf of ESARDA, I would like to thank Michael Whitaker, Erik Wolfart, Shirley Johnson, Katy Snow, Jessica White-Horton, Sean Morell, the members of the technical committee and all people involved in the organisation, all participants and last but not least our sponsors for making the workshop possible in this beautiful setting.

I wish you a fruitful meeting and a very pleasant stay in the gorgeous Grand Teton National Park.

Thank you for your attention.

Irmgard Niemeyer  
ESARDA Vice President