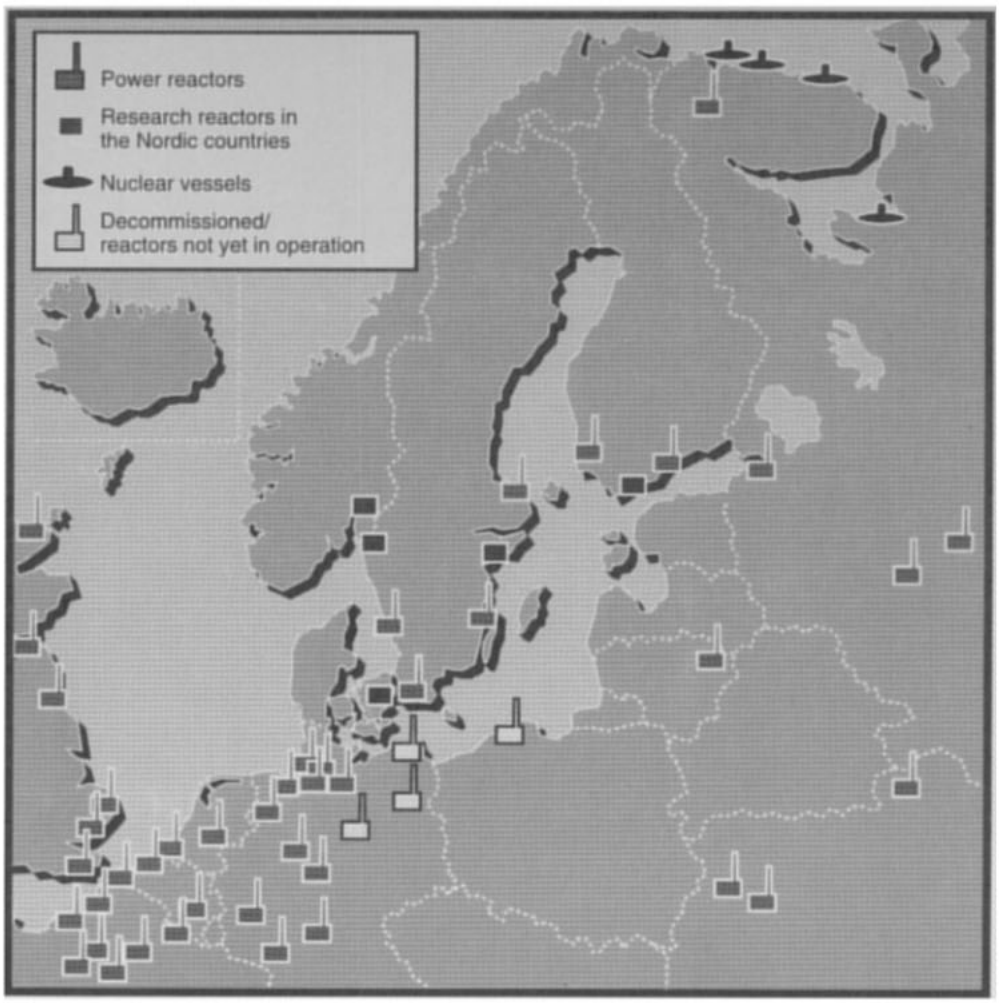
Nuclear Safety

Information and Communication

- in the event of abnormal situations relating to nuclear power

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Final Report of the Nordic Nuclear Safety Research Project BER-4

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The Nordic Council of Ministers
was established in 1971. It submits proposals on co-operation between the governments of the five Nordic countries to the Nordic Council, implements the Council's recommendations and reports on results, while directing the work carried out in the targeted areas. The Prime Ministers of the five Nordic countries assume overall responsibility for the co-operation measures, which are co-ordinated by the ministers for co-operation and the Nordic Co-operation Committee. The composition of the Council of Ministers varies, depending on the nature of the issue to be treated.

The Nordic Council
was formed in 1952 to promote co-operation between the parliaments and governments of Denmark, Iceland, Norway and Sweden. Finland joined in 1955. At the sessions held by the Council, representatives from the Faroe Islands and Greenland form part of the Danish delegation, while Åland is represented on the Finnish delegation. The Council consists of 87 elected members - all of whom are members of parliament. The Nordic Council takes initiatives, acts in a consultative capacity, and monitors co-operation measures. The Council operates via its institutions: the Plenary Assembly, the Presidium, and standing committees.

Summary

The need for a clearly outlined, regional information strategy, one which might bolster mutual confidence between information officers, the media and the public, became apparent as early as 1986. The events surrounding the Chernobyl accident had also made clear the importance of good working relationships between information officers across national frontiers in the Nordic region. The realization of a Nordic strategy would make it possible to attain the overall goal, viz. the coordinated presentation of information to the public. Regional collaboration with respect to information activities may help to avoid the spreading of widely divergent or conflicting information in the respective countries. Even though public information is, and should be, presented on a national basis, such information should be internally consistent and preferably be issued more or less simultaneously. Geographical proximity, cultural and linguistic affinity both speak for and facilitate such collaboration.

In the four-year period 1990-93, the foundation was laid for a system, at once permanent and flexible, which at best will guarantee individual residents anywhere in the Nordic region quick, consistent, straightforward and comprehensible information. Preparedness measures to deal with possible nuclear accidents in all countries at all levels share a common goal: to eliminate, or at least minimize the consequences of such an accident for individuals as well as for society as a whole. It should be stressed that an ineffective information function, or one that is poorly integrated into the overall emergency response, impairs the effect of all other emergency measures.

Within the overall response to a nuclear emergency, the information function — central, regional and local — forms an integral part of a highly flexible organizational framework that is equipped to handle a variety of emergency scenarios and situations.

A common strategy for information activities can assist the countries in their responses. Therefore a joint strategy, as well as a policy, for putting the strategy into practice was outlined.

In addition to the need for continuous information during an emergency, needs which are naturally difficult to foresee, it is important for the general public to have access to basic general information about such emergencies without delay. Such information should be given a form which helps the reader apply it to the situation at hand. For this purpose a common booklet, "Basic Facts", has been produced for distribution in all the Nordic countries. The contents of this booklet can provide a common basis for information activities, while it may also help explain possible differences in the decisions and measures taken in the respective countries.

Several seminars for journalists and representatives of public authorities have been held. Since the mass media are often the only channels between authorities and the public, it is essential to educate media professionals and to establish a climate of mutual confidence between authorities and the media. In addition to the seminars an eight-day course for Nordic journalists was held in 1992. Participants visited a nuclear power plant in the Nordic region (Forsmark north of Stockholm) and one in Eastern Europe (Sosnovij Bor outside St. Petersburg) after which they discussed safety aspects with Nordic experts.

Human behaviour in crisis situations has been the object of numerous studies in the Nordic countries and elsewhere.The studies undertaken have

mainly focused on public reactions, i.e. the behaviour of laymen. However, even experienced managers and decision-makers can find themselves in situations where stress may adversely affect their judgement. At worst, decisions made under duress may impair the response to the emergency, and thus the situation of individuals. A scenario has been drawn up to illustrate the kinds of problems that can confront decision-makers in emergency situations.

As part of this programme two inter-Nordic preparedness exercises were held in 1993. The main purpose was to study the courses of action followed by decision-makers in their respective countries in response to essentially identical sets of conditions. The exercises provided opportunities to test the network of contacts established between information officers. The network functioned as expected, particularly in the second exercise. Such exercises should be held with some regularity so as to maintain these vital inter-Nordic links. Information officers in the respective countries should be engaged in the planning of the exercises. Even though emergency information to the public is issued on a national basis, the information function should be given greater attention in future Nordic exercises.

The focus of information should be the individual member of the public. In the project it is shown how a common foundation for informing the citizenry in a similar fashion can be achieved throughout the Nordic region. This common foundation primarily consists of the network of contacts established between information officers attached to various authorities. Although countries differ with respect to the distribution of operative responsibility and organization it is important to develop the contacts with Nordic journalists who have participated in joint courses and seminars.

Sammanfattning

Behovet av en gemensam nordisk informationsstrategi i händelse av en kärnkraftsolycka blev tydlig i samband med Tjernobylolyckan. Arbetet med att bygga upp ett ömsesidigt förtroende mellan kärnkraftsexperter, informatörer och journalister började också redan 1986 inom ramen för Nordiskt Kontaktforum, som bl.a. anordnade ett seminarium i Vikersund 1988.

År 1990 startades ett fyraårigt informationsprojekt inom ramen för NKS beredskapsprogram. I detta projekt har grunden lagts för ett system som på en gång är permanent och flexibelt, som kan ge de enskilda medborgarna i den nordiska regionen en snabb, enhetlig, sann och förståelig information om en olycka skulle inträffa.

Projektet har tagit fram en informationsstrategi och en informationspolicy, som har prövats i två nordiska beredskapsövningar under 1993.

En av de ursprungliga uppgifterna för projektet var att ta fram ett gemensamt nordiskt informationsmaterial, Basfakta. Detta delprojekt startades genom att en inventering av befintligt material gjordes. Därefter producerades Basfakta, som nu finns på svenska, finska, danska och norska. Materialet finns på datadiskett och kan snabbt sändas ut om en olycka skulle inträffa. Det är också enkelt att komplettera materialet med information om den aktuella händelsen. Detta material utgör alltså en gemensam grund för informationen.

Flera seminarier för journalister och myndighetsrepresentanter har hållits. Eftersom massmedierna ofta är de enda kanalerna mellan myndigheterna och allmänheten om en olycka inträffar är det nödvändigt att utbilda journalister i ämnet och skapa ett klimat av ömsesidigt förtroende. Ett seminarium hölls 1991 vid Oskarshamns kärnkraftverk i Simpevarp, Sverige, och ett 1993 vid Hanaholmens kulturcentrum i Esbo utanför Helsingfors.

1992 hölls en åttadagars kurs för nordiska journalister. Kursen anordnades i samverkan med Norska journalistinstitutet. Ett besök vid Forsmarks kärnkraftverk utgjorde starten för kursen, som fortsatte på båt till St. Petersburg, för att följas av ett besök vid kärnkraftverket i Sosnovy Bor.

Människans handlande i krissituationer har behandlats i många studier i Norden och på andra håll. Dessa har oftast fokuserats på allmänhetens reaktioner. Även de som arbetar inom räddningstjänsten och andra beslutsfattare kan påverkas negativt av stress så att deras omdöme påverkas. Projektet tog fram ett scenario för att illustrera de problem som kan möta beslutsfattare i en katastrofsituation.

Informationen bör fokuseras på den enskilda människan. I projektet visades hur en gemensam grund för informationen till allmänheten kan uppnås över hela Norden. Denna gemensamma grund består i första hand av det nätverk som har etablerats mellan informatörerna vid myndigheterna i de olika länderna. Detta nätverk har aktiverats flera gånger under perioden i samband med incidenter och rykten. Också de kontakter som etablerats med nordiska journalister under seminarier och kurser är av stor vikt i detta smmanhang.

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Introduction

Nordic Contact Forum

As a consequence of the Chernobyl accident the need for better communication and cooperation between the countries of Nordic Europe (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden) in case of nuclear accidents became increasingly obvious. An initiative in this direction was taken by the Nordic Liaison Committee for Atomic Energy (NKA), a intergovernmental body responsible for cooperation in the Nuclear field, established by the Nordic Council. Thus, the Nordic Contact Forum became a reality. The Forum was created to serve as an informal network among nuclear experts, information officers and journalists in the Nordic countries. The network has been held together by a committee consisting of one representative from each country, as appointed by the Governments.

The Nordic Contact Forum arranged the first of three seminars for representatives of public authorities, the nuclear industry, and journalists in 1988 in Vikersund, Norway. The Forum also has established a network among information officers for the exchange of information of public interest within the nuclear field. As a result of its work an agreement has been reached as to when and how this information is to be disseminated, and lists of contact points have been drawn up. This will make it easier to give the public in each of the Nordic countries better and, above all, better coordinated information. The existence of this network has had positive results. Thus, on several occasions false rumours of nuclear accidents, radioactive clouds, etc, have been neutralized before they have caused unnecessary public concern.

The Nordic Information Project

When a new Nordic four-year nuclear research programme was planned in the year following the Chernobyl accident, it was obvious that different aspects of emergency preparedness should be included. Therefore, in the Nordic safety research programme 1990-93 (the fourth NKS programme), a special project dealing with public information and communications was set up.

A project group was established, made up of information officers from the nuclear regulatory agencies in the Nordic countries. Since the members of the project group included the committee members of the Contact Forum mentioned in the previous section, the group took over the activities of the Forum during the four-year project period. Thus, two new seminars were organised as a following of the 1986 Vikersund seminar.

The original tasks of the project were to formulate a communication strategy for information to the public in case of a nuclear emergency that might influence the Nordic countries and to produce information materials usable throughout the region. The fact that the tasks of the Nordic Contact Forum now had to be shouldered by the project resulted in a heavier work load: the project arranged two seminars, and worked towards the establishment of a network that would, if possible, function around the clock. All in all the purpose was to come as close as possible to a guarantee that the public would receive the most complete information.

The basis for the project group has been the public's need of, and right to information in emergency situations. With this in mind the group should determine how communication flows between the authorities, the media and the public should be organized. Authorities have to take measures to permit the public to obtain the necessary information as soon as possible. The purpose of this information is to give as accurate a picture as possible of the threat in order to help the public form its own opinion as to how to respond to the situation. The most important tool for reaching the public is the media. How journalists (and the public) act and react during emergencies is a vital point of departure for the information activities of authorities.

In view of the project group's intention to place the needs of individuals in focus, perhaps the word 'communication' is more appropriate than 'information'. Communication is a two-way process, whereas information normally is a one-way process. The project group stresses the importance of a dialogue with the public during all phases of an emergency in order to obtain a good understanding of the public's needs. Nevertheless, an information policy can be an important tool to instigate such a dialogue.

An information strategy and appropriate emergency planning is not enough to ensure success in informing the public in an emergency. Trust and credibility are key words in this context. If any suspicion of authorities' credibility should arise among the public, there is clearly a risk that instructions and advice given by the authorities might not be followed. If the authorities in neighbouring countries do not communicate with each other during an accident and, for that reason, give contradictory messages, public trust will be undermined very quickly.

The 'building up' of credibility is a day-to-day effort and takes time to achieve. If such a credibility has not been established before the accident or emergency, the communication process will be more difficult. Authorities in each country must etablish and maintain the necessary networks of contacts, especially with the media. If we are successful in this work, a mistake can be afforded without losing the credibility. If the credibility is lost, it will take a long time to rebuild it.

Information Strategy and Policy

In the context of nuclear emergencies, information involves the instructions, advice and explanations directed to the public in the event of rumours, incidents, accidents and other events in the nuclear power sector. Such information must not be confounded with the official exchange of operative information between countries which follows procedures set out in bilateral agreements.

Strategy:

An information strategy is the long-term information procedure how to inform in order to achive the overriding objectives of an organization .

The purpose of information offered during or after a nuclear accident is to give sufficient information to form a basis for the individual to take measures

1. during the warning-alert phase to protect himself against a coming sequence of negative events,
2. during the acute phase to eliminate or minimize the impact or consequences of the accident, and
3. during the recovery phase to return to as normal a daily routine as possible, as quickly as possible.

The information provided shall be prompt, relevant, as full as circumstances permit, and formulated in such a way that no doubts as to its proper interpretation can arise.

The 'target audience' is members of the public at large.

Within the general public there are subgroups who require specially adapted information. There are, for example, linguistic minorities and individuals who have a handicap or disability which makes it difficult for them to understand messages. Particularly exposed or vulnerable groups like farmers, rescue personnel and pregnant women require special attention.

Policy:

An information policy is the guidelines how the information is to be carried out within an organisation and the distribution of responsibility.

The project has defined the following guidelines

1. Within the framework of the established information strategy, the information policy shall help to give members of the general public in the Nordic countries access to the best possible basis for decision-making.
2. In the warning-alert and acute phases, authorities shall strive to provide relevant information quickly, even though such information may be incomplete and it may be difficult to forecast what will happen next. Information in these early phases should seek to specify the threat and keep the public abreast of the measures authorities

have taken. Furthermore, information helps authorities keep the initiative; the goal is for each central authority to get its message to the public immediately after the first indication has been registered.

3. Inter-Nordic contacts shall make use of the network of contacts maintained under the auspices of the Nordic Contact Forum. Established national channels shall be used to spread information within each respective country.
4. All coordination of information activities between countries shall be undertaken by the responsible authorities.
5. In each event which requires information to the public, coordination of information activities shall be managed by the national authorities in the country having access to the fullest range of data. That country shall also see to it that the other countries are kept abreast of developments.
6. The responsible authority is the central radiation protection or crisis management authority in each country.

A Network of Nordic Information Officers

A strategy — or policy — on paper is without value, however, unless it is implemented. Most of the activities in this project have aimed at securing implementation. The network that now links information officers in the Nordic countries has been used frequently. The Sosnovy Bor incident in March 1992 was the first real challenge the network faced. With this and other information exchanges concerning rumours and incidents and participation in various exercises, a mode of operation crystallized.

The project group has not engaged in research in any strict sense of the word. All activities, however, have been based on research. Research results have been reported, discussed and followed up. The project has had close connection with research carried out by the National Swedish Board of Psychological Defence (SPF), and its director of research has been an adjunct member of the project group.

"Basic Facts"

An inventory performed at the start of the project revealed a considerable body of diverse publications on the subject of nuclear energy and related issues in the Nordic countries. No systematic overview of this literature was available, however, and it was clear that gaining such an overview would be an important first step in the efforts to produce *common* Nordic information material.

A bibliography of recent information materials in the four Nordic countries was compiled during 1991. Most of the titles date from after 1986 and are intended for mass audiences, mostly the public at large, i.e. they do *not* specifically address readers with expert knowledge of the subject.

The review revealed marked differences between the countries; the fact, for example, that two of the countries have nuclear power plants, whereas two do not. Differences in culinary traditions and diet are reflected in the recommendations concerning consumption of fungi and wild game in the three northern countries after Chernobyl.

This review of the literature proved of interest not only to information officers; it gave engineers and other experts a welcome insight into the regulations that applied in neighbouring countries. It is therefore vital that updated editions of this bibliography of current information materials in the Nordic countries continue to be published.

Taking existing materials as point of departure, the group proceeded to draft a common text for use in all four countries. The prime emphasis in this material are radiation, radiation protection and emergency preparedness. The aim is to provide a common basic orientation for the media and the public in all areas in which the countries have the same or highly similar policies. This material, entitled "Basic Facts", has been translated into the main four Nordic languages. Designed to serve a wide variety of uses, it is distributed nationally. The intention is that the text will be generally available without delay in the event of a nuclear emergency. A computer based copy of "Basic Facts" is also available on disc, which permits editors to use and adapt portions of the material as circumstances dictate.

National editions of "Basic Facts" are available from the responsible authorities in each country:
in Denmark, Danish Emergency Management Agency
in Finland, Ministry of the Interior, Rescue Department,
in Norway, National Radiation Protection Agency
in Sweden, Swedish Rescue Services Board.

Communication and Networks

Among the main tasks of the project group was to establish and maintain formal and informal networks and communication channels between journalists on the one hand and public authorities and spokesmen, scientists and the nuclear industry on the other.

Through different activities in the course of the project a good basis for further communication and mutual understanding has been established. A close network has also been established between information of the national authorities in the Nordic countries concerning matters relating to nuclear power and safety. It is important to underline that these achievements may also prove useful in other than emergency situations.

It is a basic assumption that contacts and networks between authorities and media have to be based on *informal* structures. Formal structures are contradictory to the basic philosophy of free media in democratic societies and will, furthermore, generally not be accepted by the media. Nor will they create the desired mutual confidence and balance in the triangle, public — media — authority.

Consequently, communication networks including journalists have to be built on mutual confidence and be of an informal character. Such networks have to be developed over time and actively maintained to secure accurate and efficient communication in the event of crisis.

Even if this kind of activity is not very visible, it constitutes an important and central challenge. It is of vital importance that media newsrooms have open access to the relevant authorities when necessary. Therefore, the project has given priority to establishing contacts with editorial staffs in the Nordic countries and to increasing basic knowledge of nuclear energy among journalists as a corps.

Meanwhile, the project has also strengthened the communication channels between information officers, scientists and public authorities. It is also essential to increase the knowledge of crisis communication among official representatives as well as journalists. The project committee regard these groups as vital intermediaries in this field. The project has cooperated closely with the Swedish National Board of Psychological Defense (SPF) to provide research material and practical experience on how communication can be handled during crises and critical events.

The main challenge in all communication work is to establish confidence and credibility between source, media and the public. It is a prime goal to give journalists and specialists on nuclear power and radiation protection a familiarity with each other's work.

Crisis Management and Communication in Crises

A common topic in discussions of public information is 'crisis communication'. Such discussions often focus on the receivers of the information by senders — usually authorities of one kind or another. Considerable research has been devoted to how receivers — the media and, above all, the public at large — react under stress and in critical situations, and how such reactions might best be handled. The reactions of the senders of information in such situations have not received quite as much attention.

The Swedish National Board of Psychological Defence (SPF) has surveyed the research literature on the reactions of authorities and institutions, the media and the general public in various emergency situations. The project group studied this SPF review. Future reviews undertaken under the auspices of SPF should be followed by Nordic Contact Forum or corresponding organ.

Regardless of the role they play in a critical situation, both senders and receivers are human beings who are subjected to, and must cope with the same kinds of stress. Failure to cope may have undesirable consequences. Thus, it is important to try to analyze the problem complex from the point of view of the sender of information — the authorities.

The project has felt it particularly important to focus on the situation of individuals who play key roles in the emergency preparedness organization, viz. executive officers in the respective agencies.

One approach to this problem area is to illustrate in various ways executive responses to situations resulting from the largely uncontrollable repercussions of a nuclear power accident. The executive officers in Nordic preparedness organizations meet at least once a year, and these meetings afford an appropriate forum for such presentations.

For this purpose a consultant was engaged to draft a scenario that simulate a series of events and the various stress factors that may be expected to confront these executive officers in the event of a nuclear emergency. Thus, there is not only reason, but also some preparedness to hold such an exercise at some appropriate time.

Journalist Orientation

The possibility of arranging a special orientation course for Nordic journalists was raised in conjunction with the 1991 seminar at Simpevarp, Sweden. The need for a more thorough orientation in basic concepts relating to nuclear energy and emergency preparedness was apparent. After a period of detailed planning, an invitation was directed to journalists in all five countries to participate in an eight-day course, 29 September—6 October 1992.

Responsibility for organizing the course was entrusted to the Norwegian Institute for Journalism. In the course of planning the arrangers found it possible to include a visit to the Russian nuclear power plant at Sosnovij Bor. This afforded an opportunity for first-hand comparisons of an older Eastern plant with a modern Western one.

Eighteen journalists from Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden convened at the start of the course at the Forsmark power station north of Stockholm. At the outset many of the participants were decidedly critical of nuclear energy and sceptical of authorities' preparedness in the event of a nuclear emergency. At the end of the course, a marked change in attitude was noted. While the journalists had hardly become advocates of nuclear power, they had gained valuable insights into the complex of problems relating to energy supply.

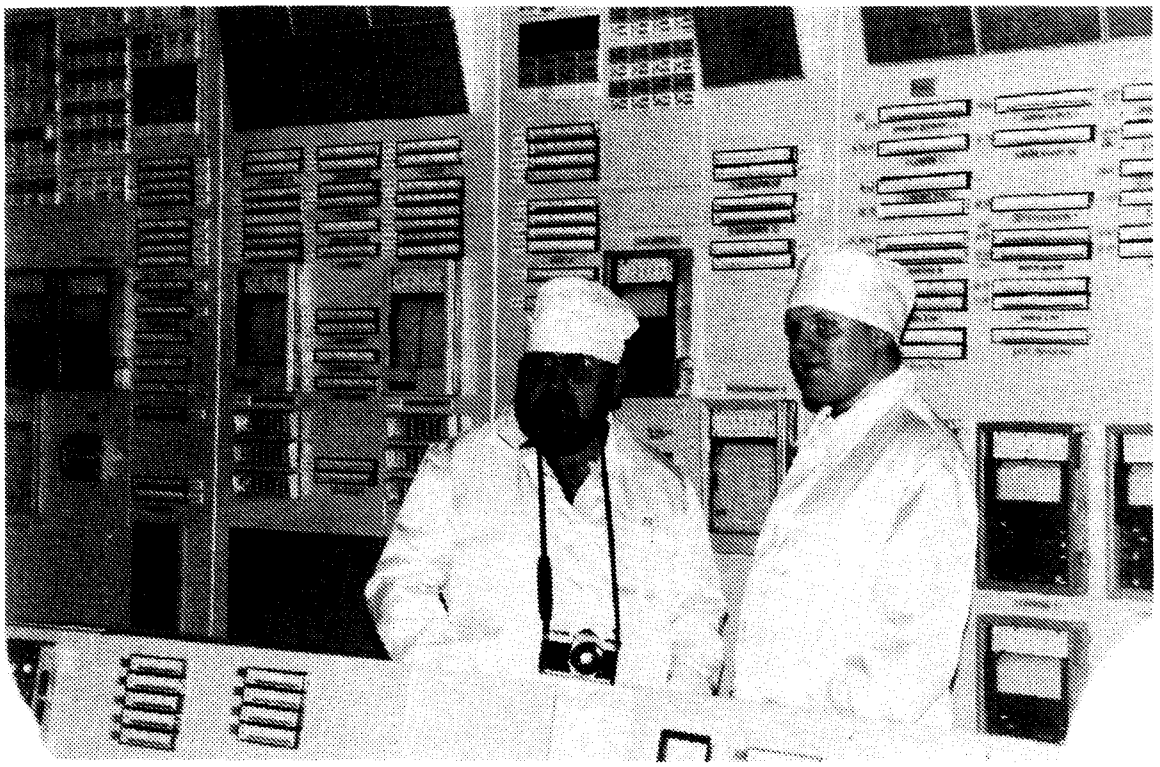
The course started with an orientation covering central concepts like radioactivity, dose measures, half-life, etc., by Jack Valentin of the Swedish Radiation Protection Institute (SSI).

Roland Nordlund, Director of Research at the Swedish National Board of Psychological Defence, discussed attitude change, the need for critical evaluation of news sources using examples from coverage of the Gulf War, and problems relating to informing the public in time of crisis. Building mutual confidence between journalists and authorities is a long-term undertaking, something that is achieved in the course of day-to-day interaction, Nordlund stressed. Journalists have a responsibility to sort out and process the vast flow of information and to serve as ombudsmen for the citizenry. The triangle, citizens — authorities — media should be as 'equilateral' as possible.

At the time of the Chernobyl accident in 1986, Roland Nordlund was District Manager of Radio Uppland, the public service radio station serving the region in which the Forsmark nuclear plant is located. Thus, he experienced at first hand the series of events that followed upon the first indication of radioactive fallout over Sweden. In the first hours the source was believed to be 'local', very possibly the Forsmark plant itself. Indeed, due to the fallout registered, an alarm was sounded at the plant. There had been several false alarms earlier in the year; this time the alarm was real.

A series of contradictory reports — ranging from "no danger" to a factual report that "500 employees have been evacuated" from the plant — ensued. These reports, together with the unfamiliar jargon of nuclear engineers and safety experts concerning levels of radiation resulted in widespread confusion among a population in need of simple answers to urgent questions. Conflicting information about the Chernobyl fallout continued to confuse readers and broadcasting audiences in the weeks that followed, with the result that public confidence in the media declined.

Lennart Franzon, Director of Information at the Forsmark plant, related



Journalists in the control room of the Sosnovij Bor nuclear Power Plant.

his experience of the event, noting that the items on the preparedness check-list he followed took much longer to carry out than anticipated.

Journalists and the spokesmen for public authorities present at the course discussed relations between the media and 'experts' and the proper role of media professionals in the event of a nuclear accident: should they be 'megaphones' for the authorities or critical 'watchdogs'? In the course of the discussion a certain consensus developed, initially, journalists would tend to be 'megaphones', among other things because 'critical scrutiny' takes time. Consequently, there was agreement as to the need for personal contacts and contact lists.

Gunilla Wünsche, Director of Information for the Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate, outlined the problems associated with Eastern European nuclear reactors, following a comparative analysis of risk factors in nuclear technology East and West. Wünsche particularly noted differences in the 'safety culture' prevailing among plant personnel in the two cultures.

Differences in the procedures for establishing public health criteria relating to contaminated foodstuffs and the problems such differences give rise to, were among the subjects Sven Carlsson of the Swedish Radiation Protection Institute discussed.

Tiina Peltola Lampi, Senior Advisor, from the Ministry of the Interior Rescue Department in Finland, described the Finnish input in the crisis at the Sosnovij Bor nuclear plant outside St. Petersburg, only 100 km from Finland. Efforts are being made to improve communications and to establish personal contacts between colleagues across the frontier.

Naturally, the course included a guided tour of the Forsmark plant and adjoining final storage site for low and medium radioactive waste. Thereafter the participants embarked M/S Ilich for St. Petersburg and Sosnovij Bor.

The course continued on board, starting with Jean-Pierre Bento from KärnkraftSäkerhet och Utbildning (KSU), an industry-sponsored training and information organ. Bento provided a valuable orientation in nuclear technology and energy use, pointing out that many of the technological systems we rely on to improve our living conditions are associated with risks.

A discussion of journalists' responsibility and professional ethics in relation to catastrophes ensued. Georg Parmann, an editor for Universitetsforlaget, an Oslo publishing house, penetrated questions like, "information or sensations?", "can we trust the experts?" and "to report or not report".

Upon arrival in St. Petersburg, Norwegian Radio's veteran correspondent in Moscow, Einar Seljevold gave participants an all-round introduction to Russian history, culture and mentality — a valuable orientation which helped the journalists gain a better understanding of Russian nuclear technology.

At Sosnovij Bor we were received by the plant's Deputy Director, a spokesman from Moscow, a representative of the local government, and the plant's senior engineer, Yuryv Garusov, our guide through the plant. Garusov also answered the journalists' numerous questions.

Garusov considered it unfortunate that Sosnovij Bor's proximity to St. Petersburg and other countries had given it such widespread and critical media exposure. Although numerous fixtures in the plant had been painted in advance of a visit on the part of Finnish experts, it was nevertheless apparent that the installation in many respects was far below Forsmark's standard.

It was also clear that plant management, although the visit was expected, were not prepared for the inquisitive behaviour the group of Nordic journalists displayed. After only a few minutes the group were all over the control room, first stop on the tour.

Garusov impressed on the group that measures had been taken to ensure that an accident like that in Chernobyl could not happen at Sosnovij Bor. He was much more worried about conditions at three military reactors in the vicinity - a sensational disclosure that prompted many questions.

The programme on the return voyage to Stockholm concerned authorities' duty to inform , responsibility for public information, relations between the media and public authorities, and crisis management and emergency preparedness in the Nordic countries. Speaker/moderators were Helge Iversen, Director of Information in the Public Health Department of the Ministry of Social Affairs in Norway, Vibeke Hein, Director of Information for the Danish Emergency Management Agency, and Anneli Andersson from the Swedish Rescue Services Board.

The Danish organizational model, whereby staff members of the Danish Broadcasting Corporation and the Ritzau News Agency are attached to the leadership of the emergency response organization in the event of an emergency, aroused considerable interest and discussion. Fears that the representatives of mass media might become 'hostages' of the authorities were discounted by the Ritzau journalist in attendance.

The final evaluative session revealed that participants not only had a great need, but also a strong desire to learn more about the subject. All felt they had learned something, but they had also discovered new areas they wanted to learn more about. All signed a list indicating interest in a future course.

All were agreed that the course had been highly time-efficient, with lectures all day and discussions far into the night. The level of intensity, what

is more, rose as the course progressed, which is not always the case in courses of this length.

The project group is convinced of the vital importance of establishing good contacts between authorities and the media *before* an emergency occurs. Thus, it is to be hoped that work toward this goal will continue, building on the experience gained to date.

Preparedness among Senior Administrators and Journalists

The project held a second seminar for executive officers in the civil defence sector and journalists in late October 1991. The venue was the Oskarshamn nuclear power plant in the Swedish village of Simpevarp.

The overall theme of the seminar was "Boundless Information", i.e. flows of information that do not respect national frontiers and messages which, to be credible, must be global in scope. Whenever a nuclear accident occurs, both the event and the measures it elicits will receive international attention. Not least in the Nordic region, where linguistic and cultural ties lower national boundaries, the experience of Chernobyl showed how people and the media are well aware of what goes on in neighbouring countries.

This was the overall point of departure for the participants, representatives of public authorities and the media in four Nordic countries. Numerous lectures and interventions contributed to a fruitful climate of debate concerning the role of information in protecting the populace in the event of a nuclear accident.

The lectures covered several areas, ranging from a survey of how psychological factors affect perceptions of the instructions and recommendations offered in a crisis situation to views on press ethics, on the value of truth in competitive media landscapes, and so forth.

A panel consisting of representatives of authorities and the media discussed mutual expectations in emergency situations. The debate became heated, especially concerning the proper role of the media in an acute crisis situation. One senior official argued that the role of the media should be that of spokesmen or 'megaphones' of the authorities. The journalists pointed to the heightened need of a watchful 'public eye' in acute situations and an opportunity for the citizenry to have answers to pressing questions about what they were experiencing. The journalists further pointed out that authorities are only one of several sources of information which the media use.

Some of the spokespersons for authorities present could see a value in a dialogue between themselves and the media, which have immediate, day-to-day contacts with the population. The media can help ensure that authorities do not ignore 'dumb questions', that they do not lose sight of the reason for all the research and analyses, namely, to ensure that the public receives adequate information and advice about what they should, and should not, do. In short, there may be something to be gained by confronting a press that does not unquestioningly accept administrative limits.

Part of the seminar involved a 'game' that was intended to cast light on the relationship between authorities and journalists, and the premises on which the two corps of professionsals operate. The idea was a good one. Still, the goal of mutual understanding was primarily achieved through personal interaction and discussions outside the framework of the 'game'. At the end of the seminar no doubts were expressed as to the value of this kind of contact and interchange.

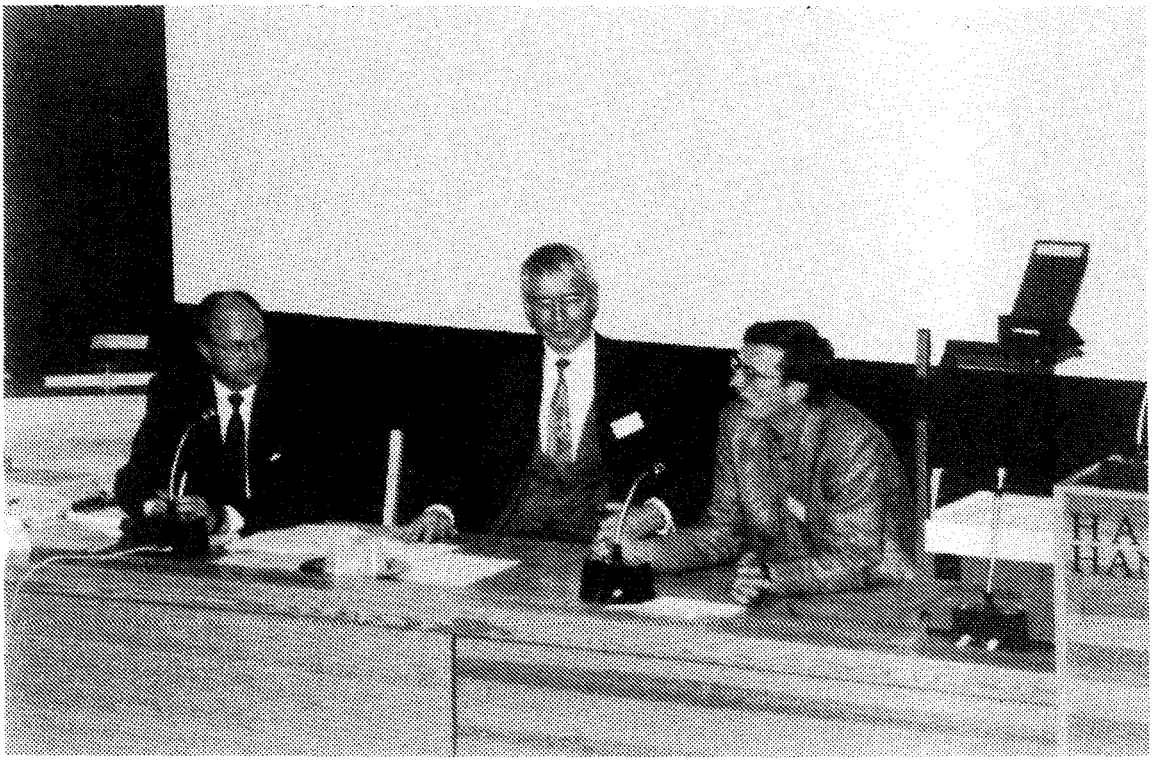
"Perceptions and Facts", the third Nordic Seminar

The third Nordic seminar was arranged by the project 19-20 October 1993, this time at the Hanasaari Culture Centre in Espoo, a suburb of Helsinki. As during the two previous seminars, the participants, 81 in number, consisted of information officers from the emergency authorities and nuclear power regulatory organizations, journalists, and representatives of the Swedish and Finnish nuclear power corporations. The media representatives came from the four of the Nordic countries represented in the project, and the group was happy to see a great number of journalists from all countries.

The programme, based on the feedback from the latest seminar in Simpevarp and the course for journalists held in September 1992, was on the whole considered to have been well accepted. The lectures not only reflected the high level of Nordic expertise in the field of nuclear power, but also the international organizations working in this field (IAEA, NEA, EC, NUCNET) had an opportunity to explain their tasks. Research findings on the attitudes of the public concerning nuclear energy and human behaviour in emergency situations were also presented. There were also lectures on military uses of nuclear energy, on potential risks, especially in Eastern Europe, and a discussion of nuclear waste problems. Nordic information material was displayed in conjunction with the seminar.

Immediately after the seminar a continuation course following up the previous course for journalists was held in the same place. A number of journalists participating in the continuation course had taken part in all three seminars, and that of course afforded an extraordinary and unique opportunity to establish contacts, which was appreciated by the journalists, as well.

Finally, participants visited the Loviisa nuclear power plant, bringing the course to a successful finish.



A lively discussion between representatives from authorities and the media at Hanaholmen Culture Centre.

Preparedness Exercises

During 1993 the first two inter-Nordic preparedness exercises ever were held, the first in January and the second in November. These exercises are under review by a special evaluation committee, and details are included here only for the sake of information.

The main objective was to study how decision-makers in the respective countries responded to essentially the same data, and the extent to which, and the means by which the public was informed of the decisions and judgements made. The two exercises were quite different. The first exercise, designated NORA, concerned the acute phase of an accident, where the risk of radioactive contamination of Nordic territory could not be ruled out. The second exercise, designated ODIN, concerned a period of some hours five to six days after an emission had occurred and, at the outset of the exercise, had caused radioactive contamination of a proportionally equal area in each of the countries.

The information requirements in these two phases differ markedly. In the former case — the acute phase — speed is of the essence, whereas the data at one's disposal are often incomplete and uncertain. In the latter case, later in the event, when the prime operative task is to make decisions and take measures to minimize the consequences of the fallout, speed is less important, whereas the factual basis for messages to the public is beginning to fill out and data have been verified. (It should be noted that the activities of the media, too, vary: in the initial phase the media devote nearly all their energy to reporting; later they increasingly turn toward evaluation and analysis.)

The NORA and ODIN exercises illustrated these two information situations quite well. Thus, in the early stages of NORA participants found it difficult to establish contact with Nordic information colleagues and, at the same time, satisfy the information needs of various target audiences. Some communication difficulties of a technical nature contributed, as well.

These kinds of problems did not figure as prominently in ODIN. The exercise seemed to simulate quite well the kind of information situation that will arise should a real incident of this kind occur. Although it sometimes proved impossible to reach the person specified in the network, this did not prevent the establishment of the intended lines of communication.

Exercises of this kind should be held on a regular basis. Information personnel should be more closely involved in the planning and preparation of such exercises than has been the case to date. That would help ensure that the outcome of the efforts of the emergency preparedness organizations will be well adapted to, and accessible to those for whom they are made, viz. individual citizens. Furthermore, their participation will make it possible to take the various 'roles' information personnel and media professionals play during different phases of an emergency into account.

Concluding Remarks

It is difficult to recount all the experiences which the project has provided, let alone rank them in order of priority. Nevertheless, perhaps the most important outcome is the fact that the members of the project group have become acquainted and have the utmost confidence in one another. Such familiarity is the best way to reduce the risk of misunderstandings in critical situations.

The Nordic network formed by the participants thus consists of individuals who act as contact persons. Of course, the communication must not break down should one of these persons not be available. An attempt has been made to ensure sufficient flexibility in the system so that channels can be opened across national frontiers thanks to familiarity with each other's organizations.

The project has resulted in better insight into similarities and differences in our countries. We share the same fundamental point of view concerning how to manage information and communication, although we live in societies with different traditions. The fact that we live and work in democratic countries is extremely important considering that our prime target group is the media.

Differences in the organization of emergency preparedness, different national professional codes for journalists and differences in the relationship between the media and authorities are examples of realities we must be aware of in our ambition to make messages to the public as clear as possible.

The evaluation document concerning the NORA exercise states: *"It is important to continue the Nordic cooperation which is presently under way under the umbrella of the NKS programme project BER-4 in some form or other to maintain the personal contacts between the information officials of the central authorities"*. The main problem when this project is finished is not how to communicate with the public and the media, but how to ensure that the links established in the project are maintained. The best way to do this is, in one way or another, to revive the Nordic Contact Forum.

It is essential to keep now existing communication channels open and to continue the work started by the project. In our open societies information and communication is an ongoing process. Moreover, the Nordic Contact Forum had some specific tasks, one of which was to arrange seminars. The experience gained in the seminars to date has been positive. They provided an informal occasion for contacts among media representatives and information officers from the entire Nordic area. Further orientation of journalists will contribute to increase knowledge and confidence among the entities involved. Crisis management and information under stress are other important aspects that deserve further attention.

The Nordic information project has proven of value even to countries outside the Nordic area. This may well lay down the foundation for further international cooperation, especially the Nordic support programmes for Russia and the Baltic states.

In conclusion, information and communication are among the most important ways to increase popular knowledge of the complex field of nuclear safety. This is true above all in situations of crisis, which of course is the most critical situation in which knowledge can help individuals make the right decision at the right moment. That is why information and communication have a natural part in Nordic nuclear safety cooperation.

The following list represents activities that are essential to successful information management. The above-mentioned continuous process requires:

- continuous updating of existing alarm lists
- maintaining and servicing the network between information officers, technicians and journalists
- continuous updating of information material
- participation of information officers in preparedness exercises.

Those who are responsible for information and communication face a much more challenging situation today than ten years ago. The public has access to more TV channels and more broadcasting networks. In order not to jeopardize their credibility representatives of the authorities must try hard to avoid giving contradictory information.

In the case of Chernobyl different information was given in the Nordic countries. Different intervention levels were adopted, and the situation was assessed in different ways. This caused confusion among people living close to the borders, who were able to receive the neighbouring country's radio and television stations. We must remember that as representatives of the authorities we perform a service function to the public — and to the media. This means that we have to prepare an organization which, within a given frame, can provide an even greater number of media representatives the best possible basic information.

Participants

Sven Carlsson	Swedish Radiation Protection Institute (chairman)
Britt Ekman	Swedish Radiation Protection Insitute
Gunilla Wünsche	Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate
Anneli Andersson	Swedish Rescue Services Board
Vibeke Hein	Danish Emergency Management Agency
Helge Iversen	Norweigan Board of Health
Tiina Peltola-Lampi	Ministry of the Interior, Finland

Adjunct members:

Roland Nordlund	Swedish National Board of Psychological Defence
Lena Raami	Inchem Oy, Finland

Information and Communication

- in the event of abnormal situations relating to nuclear power

The Chernobyl accident revealed serious shortcomings in emergency preparedness routines concerning information to the media and the public. Above all, the coordination of information between and within the Nordic countries was found wanting. Therefore, one of the NKS projects addressed these problems exclusively. The principal results are a strategy, a policy, a common body of information material, and a network linking information officers in the Nordic countries - all of which focuses on the needs of individuals in an emergency situation.

The Nordic Committee for Nuclear Safety Research - NKS
organizes pluriannual joint research programmes. The aim is to achieve a better understanding in the Nordic countries of the factors influencing the safety of nuclear installations. The programme also permits involvement in new developments in nuclear safety, radiation protection, and emergency provisions. The three first programmes, from 1977 to 1989, were partly financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The 1990 - 93 Programme
Comprises four areas:

* Emergency preparedness (The BER-Programme)
* Waste and decommissioning (The KAN-Programme)
* Radioecology (The RAD-Programme)
* Reactor safety (The SIK-Programme)

The programme is managed - and financed - by a consortium comprising the Danish Emergency Management Agency, the Finnish Ministry of Trade and Industry, Icelands's National Institute of Radiation Protection, the Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority, and the Swedish Nuclear Power Inspectorate. Additional financing is offered by the IVO and TVO power companies, Finland, as well as by the following Swedish organizations: KSU, OKG, SKN, SRV, Vattenfall, Sydkraft, SKB.

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