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ON THE OCCASION OF THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF ORGANISED RADIATION PROTECTION

Radiation protection, both as a multidisciplinary scientific discipline and as an attitude, has largely contributed to the protection of mankind and environment against the potential harm of ionizing radiation, safeguarding its beneficial and harmless use. It covers a wide range of domains and applications related to the development and operation of nuclear and radiation-related technologies. Over the past decades, for almost a century, professionals active in the field of radiation protection have significantly contributed to the development of legislation, regulations, monitoring and control, prediction of consequences, and the assessment of the risks involved with the use of ionizing radiation.

The harmful effects of radiation and the call for protection against it were recognized rather early, practically immediately upon the discovery of X-rays. However, radiation protection regulation, at the international level, is related to the foundation of the International Commission on Radiological Protection. In the same period, many national societies were established, placing us in a position to celebrate the 50th anniversary of organized radiation protection, both on a national and an international scale. Fifty years of organized professional activities in the area of radiation protection are certainly an excellent occasion to summarize the evolution and achievements of radiation protection professionals in the region known as former Yugoslavia.

FOUNDATION OF THE YUGOSLAV RADIATION PROTECTION ASSOCIATION

Activities in the radiation protection field in Yugoslavia diversified greatly at the beginning of the '60 s of the 20th century. Only some four years after the adoption of the protection policy, the conditions for the organization of an expert meeting – a symposium – were fulfilled for the very first time. The Symposium was held in Portorož (Slovenia), on October 8-12, 1963. Although the first in a series, it was a well-attended meeting, as 315 participants took part in it. It was also a remarkable confirmation of the fact that a large and already successful radiation protection professional community existed in the region at the time. The established international co-operation and participation in international meetings made professionals aware that national radiation societies had already been established in other countries.

Besides the outstanding program and the number of participants, the Symposium was a notable occasion because the Yugoslav Radiation Protection Association (YRPA) was also established at the time. At the inaugural session, a temporary management was elected and Grujica Žarković was elected the first president. The keystone principles of the Association outlined at its founding underlined the need that it should serve as a link between all professionals and organizations involved in radiation protection. The principal objectives and aims of YRPA were the following:

- organized activities for a continual improvement of the quality of the environment and the protection of the human and animal population from the harmful effects of radiation,

- organized initiation and support of scientific research in all fields in which radiation sources are employed for peaceful purposes,
- continuous training of employees and the application of radiation protection principles,
- oversee of an adequate social status of professionals employed in radiation protection dealing with radiation sources,
- promotion of professional and ethical principles in the application of radiation sources,
- organized efforts and fulfilment of requirements for a continual education of the public and information on radiation and radiation protection,
- collaboration with radiation protection associations and societies from other countries and international organizations and professional and scientific exchange programs,
- review and follow-up of the organization of the system of radiation protection and possible suggestions for improvement,
- training of professionals working with radiation sources in radiation protection services for efficient procedures in accidental conditions,
- organization of symposia, conferences, and other scientific meetings,
- active co-operation with the International Radiation Protection Association (IRPA) and other international organizations and associations in the field of radiation protection and participation in international professional and scientific conferences and meetings, and
- co-operation with other associations professionally interested in the field.

From 1963-1972, the name of the society was the Yugoslav Society for Radiological Protection, in the period from 1972-2003, it was known as the Yugoslav Radiation Protection Association and, in 2005, it was renamed to Radiation Protection Association of Serbia and Montenegro, as it is recognized to this day.

It must be noted that the first days of YRPA were also associated with certain difficulties relating to problems of a technical and financial nature. However, these difficulties were soon overcome, thanks to the enthusiasm of members who contributed to the organization of the Society, thus resulting in the normalization of the Association's activities in 1966. In the period from 1979-1981, all of the republics and provinces of former Yugoslavia established their own radiation protection societies and these societies become collective members of YRPA. Some of them, as the Croatian and Slovenian national associations are, at present, active professional societies and members of the IRPA. The general assembly of YRPA was established regularly, at the symposia of YRPA.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL RADIATION PROTECTION ASSOCIATION (IRPA)

Since the founding of YRPA, efforts have been made to contact and cooperate with similar organizations within the country and abroad. YRPA representatives have participated in the IRPA inaugural meeting, held in Paris in 1964, as well as its first annual meeting and congress in Rome, in 1966. The Yugoslav Radiation Protection Association became a legally recognized member of IRPA in 1969.

SYMPOSIA, BULLETINS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

In the period from 1963-1991, the YRPA organized a number of symposia and international and regional meetings, as well as some specialized meetings related to the particular topic of radiation protection. The conferences were the significant activities of the YRPA at the time, both in terms of topics covered and of the number of participants present, as shown in tab. 1. The symposia were held regularly, in bi-annual intervals, from 1963-2013.

In the 50-year long history of radiological protection, 27 regular symposia with more than 4000 participants and 2810 presentations took place. In spite of all difficulties, YRPA upheld the tradition of publishing the proceedings of the symposia. Based on the topics of the papers published, it is obvious that the Society kept a tradition of a multidisciplinary approach in radiation protection. Papers covered both fundamental and applied aspects of radiological protection. In many cases, the topics related to actual nu-

Table 1. Symposia on radiation protection held from 1963-2013

No	Year	Venue	Number of participants	Number of papers
I	1963	Portorož	310	162
II	1965	Mostar	250	48
III	1967	Banja Luka	210	88
IV	1969	Baško Polje	250	151
V	1970	Bled	200	110
VI	1972	Ohrid	160	96
VII	1973	Kastel Stari	150	92
VIII	1975	Herceg Novi	150	83
IX	1977	Jajce	150	109
X	1979	Arandjelovac	120	88
XI	1981	Portorož	150	116
XII	1983	Ohrid	200	139
XIII	1985	Pula	250	182
XIV	1987	Novi Sad	250	117
XV	1989	Priština	150	119
XVI	1991	Neum	130	108
XVII	1993	Beograd	120	74
XVIII	1995	Bečići	106	86
XIX	1997	Golubac	95	75
XX	1999	Tara	105	90
XXI	2001	Kladovo	94	82
XXII	2003	Petrovac	100	80
XXIII	2005	Donji Milanovac	80	69
XXIV	2007	Zlatibor	95	75
XXV	2009	Kopaonik	74	64
XXVI	2011	Tara	82	78
XXVII	2013	Vrnjačka Banja	80	97

clear accidents or similar events relevant to radiation protection were also presented. Overall, the majority of papers dealt with problems in radioecology, followed by topics in radiobiology, dosimetry, radiation measurements and many others.

As mentioned, besides regular biannual symposia, thematic meetings and conferences followed by published proceedings were organized occasionally:

- Population Exposure to External Radiation Due to Non-Medical Uses of Radiation Sources, Arandjelovac, Yugoslavia, May 20-21, 1976,
- Health Surveillance of Medical Workers, Cavtat, Yugoslavia, October 13-15, 1988,
- Natural Sources of Radiation, Belgrade, Yugoslavia, 1995 (ed. M. Kovačević), and
- Chernobyl, 10 Years after the Accident, Budva, Yugoslavia, June 4-7, 1996.

Starting with the '60s, up to the end of the '80s, YRPA regularly published bulletins 3-4 times per year, bringing important information related to the activities of the society, its executive board, actual topics in radiation protection, interactions with other similar professional societies, reports from relevant organizations dedicated to the issues of radiation protection, news from IRPA and the latest literature on the topic. The first issue of the bulletin was published in 1965. According to the information provided in the bulletins, it is interesting to note that YRPA had an important liaison role between professional radiation protection organizations, providing instructions for implementing new approaches and methodologies or unifying the reports on measurements. It also has to be noted that members of the YRPA had, at the time, provided educational material for public use, related to radiological protection. Unfortunately, due to lack of adequate support, the material has never been published.

CURRENT SITUATION

The long-standing tradition of radiological protection provided a sound basis for the national societies currently existing in the region. The societies active in the region at present are: Croatian Radiation Protection Association, Radiation Protection Association of Serbia and Montenegro, and Slovenian Radiation Protection Association. All three are members of the IRPA. Croatian and Serbian societies regularly organize biannual national symposia attracting a number of experts and radiation protection professionals from their respective countries and the region. For many years, there is a formal co-operation between the two societies in the form of a regular exchange of delegates and participation of scientists from one country at national symposia of the other.

At present, the Radiation Protection Association of Serbia and Montenegro has approximately 100 active members and acts as a professional and non-profit organisation with the aim of improving the protection of people and environment from the harmful effects of radiation. The principal activity of the association is that of encouraging organized research in all fields of the application and use of radiation sources and of stimulating and monitoring the professional and ethical principles in the application of radiation sources. The association actively participates in the drafting and reviewing of national regulation related to radiation protection, co-operates with other professional societies and radiation protection associations from other countries, as well as with international organizations and associations. Together with the Serbian Nuclear Society, the Radiation Protection Association of Serbia and Montenegro is the co-founder of the international scientific journal *Nuclear Technology and Radiation Protection*.

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