

Radiation Protection Research in Europe: Alignment of European and National Efforts

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BACKGROUND

Nathalie Impens is a PhD in chemistry and started her career at the Belgian National Nuclear Research Centre SCK•CEN in 1998. Initially she was involved in various radioactive waste treatment projects and in 2006, she initiated a research project to develop radiopharmaceuticals for targeted radiotherapy and theranostics. Since 2009, she has been involved in the coordination of various European low dose effects research and radioecology research projects. She supported the setup of the Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) between the European research platforms MELODI, EURADOS, NERIS, ALLIANCE and EURAMED as well as with NUGENIA, and continues to support the implementation of these MoUs. Nathalie Impens is Work Package Leader of the current H2020 CONCERT project responsible for priority setting for research calls and for the development of the Joint Roadmap for Radiation Protection Research. Since 2011, she was involved in MELODI to support the MELODI Secretary. In 2018, she was elected as vice chair of MELODI. At national level, she acts as the Secretary of the Belgian Convention for Radiation Protection Research.

ABSTRACT

Radiation protection research in the EURATOM H2020 programme has been organised within the European Joint Programming (EJP) project CONCERT (<http://www.concert-h2020.eu/>). EJP aims to optimise the alignment of research activities between and within the Member States. CONCERT gathers in association with research institutes and universities from most EURATOM countries the different radiation protection research platforms MELODI, EURADOS, NERIS and ALLIANCE, as well as the recently established EURAMED platform*. Some countries such as Finland, Spain and Belgium are also strengthening national collaborations to optimise the research network at the national level as well. Hence, a close interaction between the national and European levels is ensured.

Next to organising research calls and implementing research projects, one of the major objectives of CONCERT is the preparation of a joint roadmap for radiation protection research. The aim of the joint roadmap is to identify common research needs and challenges, to enable planning of research for the next decades. Other activities within CONCERT are related to interaction with stakeholders and scientists up to the global level, management of the accessibility and visibility of research infrastructures, and education and training activities.

The draft Joint Roadmap¹ is currently undergoing a stakeholder consultation process. Before the end of CONCERT (2020), the final version of the Joint Roadmap should serve as an instrument to support the set-up of a long-term call planning system accompanied by appropriate budgets to perform research in a coherent and feasible way.

Whereas the joint roadmap is a high-level societal challenges driven document omitting technical descriptions and primarily addressing end-users and decision-makers at all levels, science-based roadmaps are being prepared by the individual research platforms and by experts in social sciences and humanities. The individual roadmaps will refer to and explain the joint roadmap challenges in a technical and scientific way per discipline, to inform research managers and scientists in a more detailed way.

To roll out the European initiatives towards national scale, some examples and the challenges of national alignment activities in different countries are presented.

***MELODI** – Multidisciplinary European Low Dose Initiative (<http://www.melodi-online.eu/>)

ALLIANCE – European Radioecology Alliance (<http://www.er-alliance.eu/>)

EURADOS – European Radiation Dosimetry Group (<http://www.eurados.org/>)

NERIS – European Platform on preparedness for nuclear and radiological emergency response and recovery (<https://eu-neris.net/>)

EURAMED – European Alliance for Medical Radiation Protection Research (<http://www.eibir.org/scientific-activities/joint-initiatives/european-alliance-for-medical-radiation-protection-research-euramed/>)

¹Impens, N.R.E.N., et al., CONCERT deliverable D 3.4 – First joint roadmap draft. <http://www.concert-h2020.eu/-/media/Files/Concert/News/>