NSS NATIONAL PROGRESS REPORT

- BELGIUM -

(March 2012)

1. (Support the Universality of the CPPNM and ICSANT)

Belgium has ratified the International Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (ICSANT) on 2 October 2009. Regarding the ratification of the 2005 Amendment to the Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material (CPPNM), the approval law has been adopted on 15 July 2008. Belgium stands ready to deposit its instrument of ratification in compliance with the Euratom Treaty. Pending this deposit, Belgium fully implements the Convention as amended.

2. (Contribute to the IAEA’s Nuclear Security-Related Activities)

Belgium supports actively the IAEA’s nuclear security action, and Belgian experts have participated in many of these activities. For instance, Belgium has actively participated in the process of developing documents in the IAEA’s Nuclear Security Series; Belgian experts have participated in IPPAS missions in other States; Belgium shares also information on the illicit trafficking of nuclear and radiological materials by participating in the IAEA ITDB.

In addition, since the 2010 Washington NSS, Belgium has contributed 300,000 USD annually to the IAEA Nuclear Security Fund. A similar contribution will be made in 2012.

3. (Support for Nuclear Security-Related International Initiatives)

Belgium is a partner country in the G8 Global Partnership and channels its financial contribution to concrete and sustained projects related to nuclear security through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. Belgium also participates in the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism and attended its 2010 and 2011 Plenary Meetings. Belgium is committed to the full implementation of Security Council Resolution 1540 and has fulfilled its national reporting obligations in this regard. Belgium is supportive of all efforts to promote nuclear security.

4. (Contribute towards efforts on HEU security and minimization)

In order to reinforce our commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, Belgium subscribes to the internationally recognized policy to eliminate in time, when economically and technically feasible, the use of highly enriched uranium for civilian purposes.

As such, Belgium has:
- exchanged diplomatic notes with the United States to convert the research reactor BR2 of the nuclear research centre SCK•CEN at Mol to low enriched uranium, as soon as an appropriate high density fuel has been qualified for this purpose;
- exchanged diplomatic notes with the United States to convert the processing facility of the National Institute for Radioelements (I.R.E.) at Fleurus for medical radioisotopes to low enriched uranium.

In the framework of the first mentioned diplomatic notes, the SCK•CEN is participating in irradiation experiments for the qualification of the high density fuel which has to replace the HEU fuel, not only for its own reactor, but also for foreign reactors in France and the United States. As such, the SCK•CEN takes the lead in a broad international cooperation.

In the framework of the second mentioned diplomatic notes, the I.R.E. has started the necessary research and development activities and technical investment studies to convert its processing facilities to LEU. In order to accelerate the conversion, cooperation agreements have been signed with Argentina and South Africa.

Furthermore, in the framework of the GAP program, the SCK•CEN is working with the appropriate institutions of the United States on the earliest possible transfer of certain quantities of HEU and separated plutonium, for which use is no longer foreseen.

5. Regulatory framework

Belgium has recently strengthened and updated its physical protection legal and regulatory framework. The new law and royal decrees have been taken in compliance with the relevant international conventions, in particular with the CPPNM and its 2005 Amendment; in addition, they reflect to the largest possible extent the INFCIRC225 document as revised and other recommendations documents from the IAEA Nuclear Security Series.

6. DBT

Belgium's Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (CUTA) and the national authority responsible for nuclear security, the Federal Agency for Nuclear Control (FANC) have pooled their activities to update the design basis threat for the nuclear sector nationwide and to complete the DBT-process for the nuclear sector. In particular, thanks to a fruitful collaboration with the stakeholders, the specific reference threat for each nuclear operator has been established.

7. Enhance National Nuclear Security Capacity

The FANC, which is an independent public agency responsible for issues related to nuclear security, safety, radiation safety and for many aspects related to safeguards, develops as far as possible a genuine nuclear security culture. In this frame, the FANC has already organized some domestic workshops around nuclear security issues; the next workshop will be devoted to the insider threat.