

10th session of the International School of Nuclear Law

by S. Kuş*

This summer, from 23 August until 3 September 2010, the Nuclear Energy Agency in co-operation with the University of Montpellier 1 will hold the 10th anniversary session of the International School of Nuclear Law (ISNL).

During the past nine years, the ISNL has trained more than 500 participants from all around the world, many of whom are still active in the nuclear field. Each session brings together between 55 and 60 participants from both developed and developing countries to take part in an intensive academic and practical training programme in the South of France, at one of the oldest law faculties in Europe.

The idea to establish the school was the result of many factors, most importantly the fact that education in nuclear law was, even in countries with substantial nuclear power programmes, practically non-existent. Universities were largely disinterested and nuclear institutions, both public and private, did not take any initiatives to fill the gap. Mr. Patrick Reyners, at that time Head of NEA Legal Affairs, proposed to establish an education programme in this field with several colleagues; he was encouraged by the NEA's Management to set up such an institution linked to a university. Since 2001, the NEA has organised annual sessions in co-operation with the University of Montpellier 1. From the very beginning, Mr. Reyners and Mrs. Odette Jankowitsch-Prevor, former senior lawyer at the International Atomic Energy Agency, have served as both tutors and lecturers at the school, guiding participants through the sessions with both patience and good humour. As of 2011, they will entrust this task to other hands, but the NEA will always remain grateful for the time, energy and dedication which they have devoted to this important activity.

The two-week course takes place each year at roughly the same period (end of August/beginning of September). Highly renowned specialists deliver lectures, in English, on virtually all aspects of international nuclear law, i.e. international institutions; protection against ionising radiation; nuclear safety and nuclear accident management; non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and safeguards; nuclear security; transport of nuclear material and fuel; management of spent fuel and radioactive waste; liability, compensation and insurance for nuclear damages; environmental protection; and international trade in nuclear material and equipment. In addition, participants are encouraged to engage fully in the question

and answer sessions following each lecture and are divided into small groups to examine the various case studies that are presented in connection with most of the subjects covered.

Over the years, the course has evolved and integrated new components into the programme. For example, both the response to the nuclear terrorism threat and the impact of environmental laws on nuclear activities have been integrated in recent years. In addition, the closing lecture of each session includes a special guest who addresses the participants on a particularly timely topic, such as global initiatives in pursuit of the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons or the legal implications of engaging in a nuclear power programme for the first time.

Subsequent to each session, an optional diploma programme may be pursued by candidates, constituting an ideal opportunity for professionals to acquire an academic degree in this highly specialised field. Independent of its teaching role, the school serves as a forum for participants to meet both professional and academic colleagues from around the world in a convivial atmosphere. Following the sessions, participants usually use the co-operation and networking opportunities which the ISNL offers to stay in contact for professional activities and social networking. The NEA facilitates communication between all former participants by keeping their co-ordinates up-to-date in the ISNL Alumni database.

In celebration of the 10th anniversary of the ISNL, the NEA will dedicate a special publication to the school containing scholarly papers which reflect the ISNL's teaching programme in the various fields of international nuclear law.

More information is available at www.nea.fr/law/isnl/.



* Ms. Selma Kuş (selma.kus@oecd.org) is Legal adviser in the NEA Legal Affairs Section.