

RICOMET 2015
Risk perception, Communication and Ethics of Ionising Radiation
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**Communication of Risk and Public Perception during
Fukushima Crisis in a European Non-Nuclear Country:
Experts, Non-experts and Media**

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Portugal:

- Has a 1 MGW swimming pool research reactor
- Does not produce electricity from nuclear sources
- Has borders with a nuclear Country
- Imports energy from nuclear energy producers

Questions:

- How did the Country perceive the Fukushima accident ?
- Was there a structure and expertise to address R&N emergencies ?
- Is there a specific language to effectively communicate R&N emergencies to the public?
- What was the role of social media in addressing Fukushima in PT ?
- Which factors influence the communication of R&N emergencies in a non-nuclear country?
- What do we need to do to build up confidence with stakeholders and reach out to the general public?

IST-ID

Associação do Instituto Superior Técnico
para a Investigação e Desenvolvimento



PREPARE

Innovative integrated tools and platforms for radiological emergency preparedness and post-accident response in Europe



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E TECNOLOGIAS NUCLEARES

Stakeholder involvement and local preparedness and communication strategies – views and experiences from Portugal (a non-nuclear country)

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- **CNER - National Commission for Radiological Emergencies:**

- ✦ **Objectives:**

- ✓ Follow up on the radiological situation resulting from the Fukushima accident.
- ✓ Take decisions regarding the measures to be implemented in Portugal.

8 governmental organizations

ANPC (National Authority for Civil Protection)
APA (Portuguese Environment Agency)
GPP (Office of Planning and Policies)
DGS (General Directorate for Health)
DGEG (General Directorate of Energy and Geology)
IPMA (Portuguese Institute for Sea and Atmosphere)
INEM (National Institute for Medical Emergencies)
CTN (Campus Tecnológico e Nuclear, former ITN)

7 Invited Members

ASAE (Authority for Food and Economic Safety)
AT (Portuguese Customs and Taxes Authority)
DGAV (National Authority for Food and Animal Welfare)
ANAC (National Authority for Civil Aviation)
DGACCP (Bureau of Consular Emergencies - Consular Affairs and Portuguese Communities)
DGC (General Directorate of Consumer)
IPTM (Institute for Ports and Maritime Transports)

**Fukushima was not considered an emergency in Portugal.
Relevant problems were the ones related to public information/health concerns.**

- **CNER Actions**

- **Communication and Information**

Definition of a communication strategy:

- ✓ DGS – IR health effects
- ✓ APA - radiological situation in Japan and alert monitoring network
- ✓ CTN - environmental monitoring data (air monitoring station)

Revision of an informative document to be available to the social media and to the public in DGS site.

- **Monitoring**

Articulation between entities (ASAE, DGAV, AT, GPP, CTN, DGS and APA) to establish radiological monitoring procedures to control foodstuff from Japan.

Elaboration of a statement for companies with monitoring procedures for consumer goods from Japan (CTN site).

- **CNER Actions**

- ⊕ **Health and Environment**

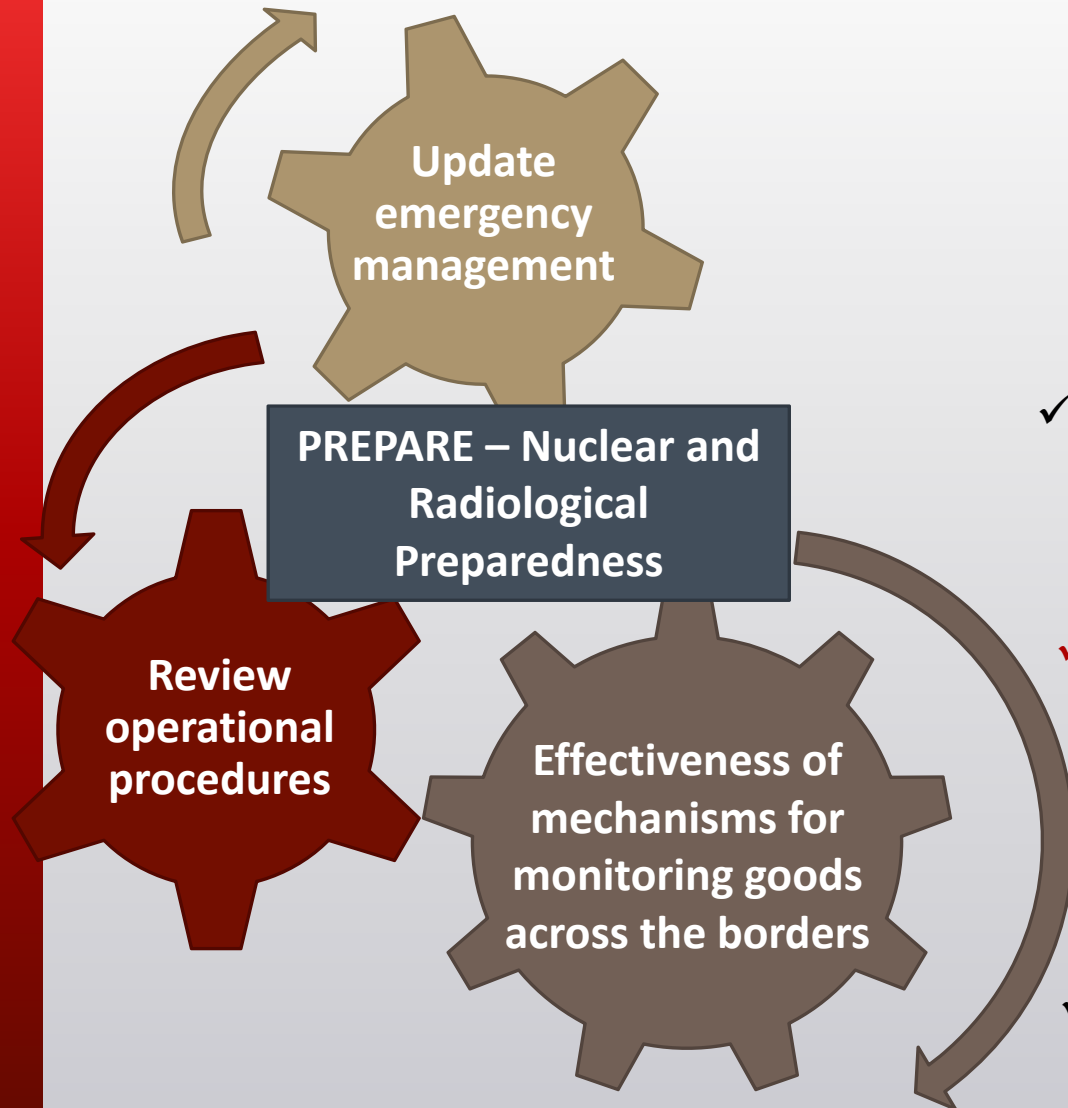
Follow up of the trip back to Portugal of the Portuguese students that were in Tokyo at the time of the accident (reception at Lisbon airport by DGS and APA).

- **CNER Final Outcome**

**Effective, fast and appropriate response to the situation.
The decisions were implemented in an integrated way and were transversal to all the institutions involved in the follow up actions.**

The measures adopted in Portugal took into account the international information, from specialized international organizations and European partners.





- ✓ **APA - WP2 – Analytical Platform:**
Development of operational procedures of the AP
- ✓ **IST-ID - WP3 – Consumer Goods:**
Panels were organized with experts covering a wide range of national stakeholders.
- ✓ **IST-ID - WP6 – Information and participation of the public:**
Interviews were conducted to experts involved in the follow-up of the Fukushima accident.
- ✓ **APA - WP7 – Testing + Dissemination:**
Participation on exercises and testing of the developed tools.

PREPARE PROJECT

WP3: 1st National Panel - Contaminated foodstuff and feedstuff

“Management of contaminated foodstuff and feedstuff after a radiological or nuclear accident” - 11th of April 2014 at IST/CTN

WP3: 2nd National Panel - Contaminated consumer goods

Management of contaminated consumer goods after a radiological or nuclear accident” - 9th of April 2015 at IST/CTN

WP6: Information and participation of the public

Interviews to different actors involved in Fukushima communication



WP6: Information and participation of the public

- Interview Process in Portugal



WP 6.1 - Emergency & post-emergency networks interactions

✓ Non institutional experts:

~~NSO~~ (1), Press (1) and University (1);

✓ Institutional experts:

Regulator's (2), Civil Protection (2) and State Labs (1).

8 people
8 institutions


- ⊕ Interviews were face-to-face (2-3 h time) and by email.
- ⊕ Interviews were developed accordingly to the functions and role of the responder during the Fukushima crisis
- ⊕ Answers received were an exclusive responsibility of the interviewees and were not, necessarily, the views of the organizations they represented



Information & Communication


- **Communication channels and information reliability**

Information related to Fukushima accident arrived through ECURIE (EU) and ENAC (IAEA) platforms and through RASFF system (Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed-EU).

 National level: official information from ECURIE/IAEA platform was received and treated at APA and ANPC.

In the beginning of Fukushima event, the information received from the Japanese authorities was difficult to analyze due to the high frequency of documents being issued with contradictory information (not possible to validate).

Information sources available were the possible ones. The information transmission was “globally positive, adequate and without alarmism’s”.



- **Institutional experts, social media, opinion makers and public communication**

Lack of people with the technical competences in risk communication.

Press conferences were not programmed. Only the emission of press notes by the authorities when they felt that the situation needed clarification.

Contacts with the official channels are seen by the media as always difficult and lengthy due to bureaucracy and ignorance of who is the contact point for the press in each institution.

Lack of training in the usual vocabulary as well as lack of the adequate background knowledge is the basis of most incorrect information and all respondents were clear about the willing to change that.



**Difficulties in understanding the contents of reports or press deliveries issued by national and international authorities to the public.
National institutional experts are difficult to reach.**

Social networks referred as a preferential source of information used by the media due to the huge amounts of available information in a short time.

The role of opinion-makers was seen in a different light depending on the responder.

Information conveyed by the opinion-makers may not be totally reliable in terms of scientific and technical content once they do not possess the knowledge of the field and do not know the real scenario.

General feeling from the overall interviews that people should not wait for an emergency to happen to become acquainted with the main players and the technical jargon involved.

Relations between media and institutional experts need to be refreshed and further implemented by having more contacts between them, including the organization of working meetings and the presence of the media in planned national and international emergency exercises.

Implementation of E&T activities in basic aspects, vocabulary related to these areas of expertise, the training of the institutional experts and media, in terms of briefing adequately and clearly, should be pursued.

This means direct contact with the ATI's and specific training in emergency evaluation and planning.

- **Education and Training (E&T)**

E&T schemes expanded to a wider professional audience at national level.

Suggestions:

- ✓ Strategic plan of E&T should be design and implemented, involving the various stakeholders.
- ✓ Media specific language and ethics of communication should be also included in the workers E&T programs

Media was the professional group that more complains made about the lack of E&T initiatives

Some Remarks

- ⊕ Credibility of the information is a fundamental step to achieve public confidence in the authorities' decisions. Regulators and operators shall comply to fulfill safety requirements.
- ⊕ Be able to efficiently communicate scientific and technical issues should be a concern for all parts involved
- ⊕ Training of the institutional experts and media, in terms of debriefing in a clear language that can be understood by everybody and conveyed to the general public.
- ⊕ Information dissemination needs a better preparation/coordination - dialogue between stakeholders is a daily effort
- ⊕ Education and training needs should be regarded as fundamental for technical, scientific, *media* and general public.
- ⊕ Communication problems in non-nuclear countries seem to be similar to nuclear countries and this need to be assessed in the overall analysis
- ⊕ More...



Thank you for your attention!