
Preface – Nuclear safety: an obligation and a duty

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Biographical notes: Carlo De Masi is Secretary General of FLAEI-Cisl since 2001. He graduated in Economics and Political Science. In 2013, he was appointed President of Atoms for Peace, becoming the Editor in Chief of *Atoms for Peace: An International Journal*.

It is a great honour for me to accept the role of Editor in Chief of *Atoms for Peace: An International Journal*.

First of all, I would like to express my sincere thanks to Professor André Maisseu, who carried out this task from the first issue of the journal. Moreover, I want to thank all the staff of Inderscience for their cooperation in the achievement of this number.

Nuclear technology is a tool that I consider essential, not only for the contribution it can supply to the hunger for electricity that continues to grow globally (as well as for the significant role it plays in the field of medical and scientific applications in general) but also because it represents a form of clean energy that can help to reduce the effects of global warming and the consequences that this produces worldwide.

I say this even though I live in a country, Italy, that has decided, by a popular referendum, to renounce to the use of the atom for the production of electricity. However, this cannot absolve us from taking on obligations and responsibilities in dealing with this issue with awareness: not having nuclear power plants for the production of electricity does not shelter us from the risks of an accident that may occur in other countries (that does not depend exclusively by the presence of nuclear reactors in the proximity of our borders, but as demonstrated, in particular with regard to Italy, by the Chernobyl accident that directly involved us due to atmospheric factors); the risk posed by nuclear weapons (compared to which we are committed to the project 'Megatons to Megawatts' for the conversion of nuclear weapons into electricity), is concrete and real for all of humanity; the need to solve the problem of radioactive wastes, whether arising from the waste of energy production of electricity (and in the case of our country from the decommissioning of old nuclear power plants), whether they are from the uses of the atom in nuclear medicine, in research, in diagnostic radiology and so on, is a duty.

In this context we are particularly interested in the issue of security, which is the crucial element to overcome fear and resistance of the public opinion towards the atom.

I wanted to dedicate a large part of this issue to articles by Italian authors, inspired by the reports that were presented at the Atoms for Peace International Conference 'Knowledge management: a key element to assure nuclear safety', held in Rome in 2012: this is a demonstration of the interest, studies, attention and debate that are going on in Italy on nuclear issues.

The next step of the Italian nuclear road map will be the creation of a National Repository that imposes a path that should see the involvement and the aware participation of all stakeholders (governments, institutions, companies and trade unions) and a work of information and communication addressed to public opinion to overcome the adverse effects of the NIMBY syndrome: just saying a 'no' beforehand in the name of a false environmentalism represents only an additional element of an uncontrollable risk for all.

Therefore, knowledge and safety are the main vehicles to attain this goal.