

Editorial

This last radioecology congress whose 2008 edition was held in the city of Bergen in Norway was not only a large meeting of specialists but also a gathering of regulators, industry and civil society representatives.

It is a great pride, for people deeply interested in the future of radioecology, to observe that the synthesis of what it is made of is done at the uppermost level. Radioecology is not only a combination of usual metrology, of some empirical transfer relationships and of some damage indicators. It is of course a combination of all these specialties but using the best that each can offer. For example the metrology of radioactivity uses the best probes, the best processing sequences in dedicated laboratories and sophisticated chemistry to concentrate small traces. Research on the transfers relies on increasingly complex models. And lastly evaluation of the damage to living matter is not limited to transposing without precautions the dose-effect relationship coming from “classical” epidemiology like the Hiroshima case. It goes deeper and deeper in the functioning of cells, tissues, organisms and ecosystems. The difficult problem of small and long lasting exposures is of course an essential research area, including multigenerational effects that may change population dynamics. Hence radioecology deserves more and more the root “ecology” that is part of its name.

This set of contributions, as well oral as poster, made in the congress was reviewed by its scientific committee. The reader will note that it includes academic research (experiments made in laboratory or in-situ to choose between possible hypotheses) and also applicative works, description of operational organizations and lastly viewpoints of regulators, industrialists and society representatives. We left on purpose these papers in an arbitrary sequence rather than organizing them by topic. We wish to encourage a random reading that is the best way to have a global appreciation of radioecology and we would avoid that the reader goes immediately to his favorite topic.

Our ambition is that this book, as well as the congress it is coming from, presents in a single place a full seeing of the state of the radioecology in the year 2008. By comparison with publications of previous ECORAD congresses since 2001, it will be a useful tool to appreciate the long term evolution of the discipline.

We thank all those that made this congress a success: The Norwegian Radiation Protection Authority, who hosted the event, the French “Institut de Radioprotection et de Sûreté Nucléaire” that participated to the organization, the scientific committee of the congress that selected the contributions and reviewed them, the International Union of Radioecologists that helped the diffusion of information and of course all those who made presentations or attended the congress.

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