

Growing international co-operation



One of the major strengths of the NEA is its capacity to provide an efficient conduit for international co-operation in the nuclear energy field. In addition to the in-depth, international studies it carries out as part of its regular programme of work, it supports numerous other multinational projects.

Seventeen joint projects and information exchange programmes are currently being carried out under NEA auspices. The projects under way address specific aspects of nuclear safety, radioactive waste management and radiological protection (see pages 26-29 for details).

In January 2005, the NEA was confirmed as Technical Secretariat of the Generation IV International Forum (GIF), which is exploring new nuclear energy systems and the related research and development needed for their deployment by 2020/2030. Just this autumn, the NEA also took on the function of Technical Secretariat of Phase 2 of the Multinational Design Evaluation Programme (MDEP). This Programme and its objectives, which include identifying common regulatory practices and regulations that enhance the safety of new nuclear reactor designs, are described on page 24.

Another example of expanding international co-operation is in the recent approval by the NEA Steering Committee of a Joint Declaration on Co-operation between the NEA and the Government of the Russian Federation in the Field of the Peaceful Uses of Nuclear Energy. Following formal approval by the OECD Council, the Joint Declaration will pave the way for experts from the Russian Federation to share their knowledge and



experience with NEA member country experts in all NEA standing technical committees and their working groups. The Agency looks forward to mutually beneficial exchanges and progress worldwide regarding the safe, environmentally friendly and economical use of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

All of these developments are a reflection of the importance being accorded by numerous countries around the globe to the continued, and likely growing, use of nuclear energy. Its benefits as a nearly carbon-free source of energy with stable and affordable prices are no longer questioned. At the same time, its safety record grows stronger, and progress is being made to find and implement acceptable, long-term solutions for radioactive waste management. Experts agree that the natural resources required for producing nuclear energy are largely sufficient, and not a limiting factor for its further deployment. Set against this backdrop, policy makers across the OECD area and beyond are giving increasing consideration to the nuclear option and its future development.

Luis E. Echávarri
NEA Director-General