



*14th International Symposium on the Packaging and  
Transportation of Radioactive Materials (PATRAM 2004),  
Berlin, Germany, September 20-24, 2004*

Blocking period 20<sup>th</sup> September 2004, 9:00 hrs.

Welcome message

of the Under-Secretary of State  
in the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour (BMWA)  
Georg Wilhelm Adamowitsch

On the occasion of the opening event  
Of PATRAM 2004

On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2004  
In the ESTREL Hotel, Berlin

The spoken word applies.

## **I. Welcome**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Federal government I would like to welcome you warmly to the “14<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on the Packaging and Transportation of Radioactive Materials (PATRAM 2004)”, and to Berlin.

There are two reasons why I, as a representative of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, speak to you today: On the one hand, the German Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing (BAM), as the conference organizer, belongs to the portfolio of my Ministry. On the other hand, I would like to underline by this the major economic relevance that materials research and testing has for a modern economy. In this way, technological progress produces prosperity for our society, but also changes and risks must be mastered. For this reason we need the competencies of institutions such as the BAM, which has been supporting the Federal government in all issues of public-technical safety for half a century. At the same time, the national and international cross-linking with science as well as with industry and commerce, but also the commitment in the area of standards, is indispensable. A leading industrial nation cannot survive without a competitive technical-economic infrastructure. This is an important location factor in international competition.

In addition to serving economic needs, public-technical safety has a special significance for our citizens. Here, we should not forget the broad debate on the problem of technology acceptance in our society, especially in Germany.

## **II. PATRAM and its Area of Research**

Major events such as PATRAM demonstrate the need for discussing the issue of public-technical safety. Ladies and Gentlemen, please use this international forum for specialists from science, industry and administration to move problems at issue closer to solutions. Ensuring the safe transportation of radioactive materials has a special relevance for the continued utilization of this technology. With this, you are supporting a preventive protection of the population and of the environment against the technical risks of medical, industrial and scientific use of radioactive materials. This is an area – and we are agreed here – that is highly sensitive.

In the Federal Republic of Germany, functions in this field are primarily exercised by the Federal Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing (BMVBW).

Its work is largely supported by three federal agencies:

- by the Federal Office for Radiation Protection (BfS) as an accreditation authority and as a specialist agency responsible for radiation protection,
- by the Federal Institute for Materials Research and Testing (BAM) as a specialist agency responsible for technical safety and producer quality assurance,
- by the Federal Railway Authority (EBA) as the specialist agency responsible for supervising rail transport.

In Germany, the responsibility for monitoring compliance with dangerous goods regulations lies with the state regulatory agencies and state supervisory authorities.

Here, regulations for the safe transportation of nuclear materials and the high level of safety in Germany are the foundation. But to this end, responsible action by the competent authority as well as the industrial companies involved in packaging and transportation is indispensable. In 1998, we had to experience how extremely sensitive your area of work is perceived in the general public. The exceeding of surface contamination limits of fuel element transport containers became a public and economic problem. In many European countries, transportation of spent fuel elements could only be resumed after an elaborate research into causes and the implementation of aggravated inspection mechanisms. The

necessity and efficiency of additional safety measures has been confirmed by the many now complying transports.

### **III. Safety for the Population**

Nevertheless, the loss of confidence in the population was considerable. Especially, since a substantial part is extremely critical of the use of nuclear energy. For this reason, the Federal Government has established a new disposal strategy as set out in the so-called "consensus on nuclear energy".

Key points are:

- an agreement with industry concerning the remaining operating lives of nuclear power plants and
- a termination of transports of spent fuel elements to the reprocessing plants (in France and Great Britain) by mid 2005.

In the future, spent nuclear fuel will be stored in transport and storage containers in on-site interim storage facilities located next to the nuclear power plants for a period of up to 40 years. With these so-called CASTOR transport and storage containers, the vital safety functions are ensured. Their inspection and appraisal by the federal agencies BfS and BAM are crucial preconditions for securing standards.

### **IV. Safety through BAM**

Because only an excellent safety standard can establish and regain the necessary public acceptance for the transportation of radioactive material. An important precondition for this is the use of state-of-the-art testing and examination methods.

Our Ministry has made an important contribution to this goal by erecting a new large drop test facility through the BAM. I am pleased that this testing facility for container weights of up to 200 tons has been completed just prior to this conference. The commissioning of this unique facility with 9-meter drop testing of large fuel element transport and storage containers on a one-to-one scale is imminent. And as conference participants, you have the opportunity of attending the first-time testing.

### **V. Closing Remarks**

PATRAM was organized by BAM as early as 1980. Back then, the event took place in West Berlin, as Berlin was at that time a divided and walled-in city. Thus, to me it is a great pleasure that today's event can take place in the city of Berlin, the reunited Germany's capital.

I would like to express my warm thank to the BAM for their role as host and organizer of this congress.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I hereby open the 14<sup>th</sup> International Symposium on the Packaging and Transportation of Radioactive Materials – PATRAM 2004.

I hope the conference will take a successful course and wish all participants many new insights for their work.

Enjoy your stay in the City of Berlin. It is a town of power, fun, welfare – and at a place, where you can see, in which way the history after the Second World War, where the world was divided in two parts of political influence, brought the people together, a great present for us Germans, and a great challenge with a lot of problems.