

The need for a high-level scientific network

Climate change issues continue to be on the international political agenda and the undoubted benefits of nuclear power to the process of emissions reductions does not need to be aired here. However, the changing international political climate toward a more pro-nuclear stance is worthy of acknowledgement, and debate. Such a change needs to be underpinned by all of the technical know-how and support that only organizations such as the European Nuclear Society can provide.

Increasingly, our focus – indeed the sustainable future of our own learned society – must be on nurturing and developing ENS as an international scientific network of the highest stature.

The aims of ENS are to promote and to contribute to the advancement of science and engineering in the field of the peaceful use of nuclear technology. In addition to the daily networking, we organize various activities in order to ensure the transfer of nuclear know-how now and for future generations and to communicate on nuclear science and technology – within and beyond the “nuclear world”.

Our aim as a scientific learned society must be to trigger discussion and debate, while at the same time enhancing our own profile as *the* platform for dialogue on nuclear matters. ENS should be an open house for reflection on all the issues which have a bearing on the nuclear industry. It is with these thoughts that we should look to the ENS Program Committee (PC), the High Scientific Council (HSC) and its sub-committees to be the engines that power our new mission and profile as a high-level scientific organization.

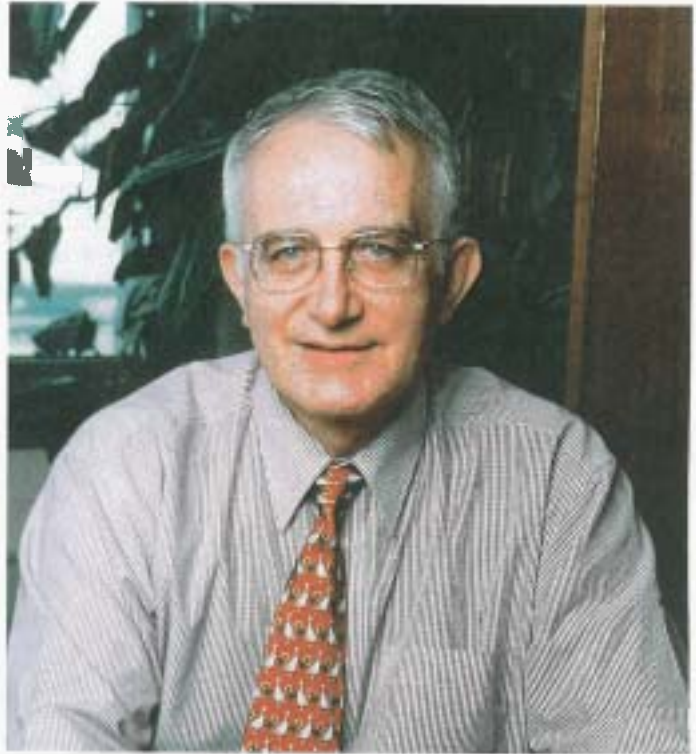
The ENS network itself does not “contain” the scientific know-how that we speak of. This expertise is present within our member countries, industrial experts in those countries, the universities and research centers. Harnessing that combined wisdom into an international bank of knowledge should be our new task, at the same time working to ensure this vast resource of knowledge is visible, interchangeable and subject to discussion at a European level.

The ENS Steering Committee (SC) and the Young Generation are of the utmost importance to strengthen, tighten and enlarge the network within the nuclear community as a whole to transform ENS into a power-house of knowledge and ideas with a sound scientific base.

The new-look PC should be regarded as a task force rather than a working group, with a nomination, working and decision-making process.

The PC is not only there to act as a working group that takes short-term decisions such as on sponsorship classification and on coordination of national conference initiatives. Its primary function should be to reflect on long-term conference strategy. That will not only ensure the scientific profile of ENS itself, but will also contribute to the efforts to put the nuclear debate in the right perspective.

New topics of interest need to be identified while at the same time “streamlining” initiatives.



The existing PC is now mainly a “virtual” committee, working remotely through e-mail. In e-mail groups, there is always a certain number of “passive” members, which can make a formal decision process under this procedure almost impossible. It is more important to have a “workable” committee of active members – a task force – rather than trying to have a representation of each member country. The chairman of the PC, together with the ENS president, will make a proposal for the constitution of the task force to be formally adopted by the ENS SC.

A “reduced program task force” comprising up to seven or eight members, backed up by a committee comprising member country representatives can work through e-mail and have several meetings each year, depending on the working plan. The back-up committee would be mainly a “virtual” committee, working through e-mail together with the task force and would have one or two meetings on “strategy” with the task force chair. In this respect, the most logical is that the SC itself serves as the back-up committee of the task force.

Strategic decisions are to be taken by the task force, with a formal agreement by the SC and the SC meetings, while the task force should stay in close and continuous contact with the Joint Information Committee and the YGN.

More urgent decisions would be taken by the task force, based on an annual “mandate” given by the SC.

Bertrand Barré
Vice president ENS