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EUROPEAN WASTE CATALOGUE – A PLATFORM FOR A COMMON APPROACH TO NORM AND OTHER INDUSTRIAL WASTE

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The European 96/29/EURATOM Directive leaves to Members states to decide which NORM "work activities" are of concern with respect to radiation exposure. Existing data have pointed out the strong needs to include non-nuclear industries where materials containing enhanced natural radioactivity occur into the regulatory scope of radiation protection but in reality these radiation risks are often still out of, not only any control, but even simple monitoring. This is caused by the shortage of information about radiation risk outside the sectors where sources of radiation are purposely used ("practices"). As a result, the potential end-users of TENORM-type residues are hardly ever aware of possible problems due to natural radioactivity or – if they are - they are afraid of negative consequences (cost, fear of workers and public, …) in case of implementing radiation protection measures. Finally, the radiation risk caused by the use or disposal of NORM is in many cases neglected. Each EU member states tries to regulate this problem case by case but the risk caused by NORM is yet rarely taken fully into account when the destination of such residue is planned. Often, the treatment of NORM residues is only regulated by the "classical" environmental regulations, which take only into account non radiological risks. This may engender serious problems from radiation protection point of view. An approach to the solution of the problem of NORM based on the application of universal so-called "clearance levels" is not always appropriate and often case-specific risk-assessment scenarios must rather be developed.
This article promotes the idea of using the European Waste Catalogue (EWC) to help developing the awareness of all stakeholders of concern. The list of waste already classified in EWC has been completed with basic information about potential content of natural radioactivity. A form for additional information supporting derived radiation risk assessment has been proposed. As an additional advantage, we stress the role of EWC as a tool for harmonization and consistency in the approach of radiological and chemical risk of NORM residues.