

# WINFO

Newsletter of Women in Nuclear WIN No.11 (1/96)

## WIN at a Crossroads – Which Way Now?

WIN now has some 400 members in 26 countries. However, its organisation still comes under the auspices of the ENS information committee. WIN president Irene Aegerter says the growing size of the worldwide membership means the time has come for a new organisational structure – either a worldwide umbrella group or a stand-alone WIN organisation. At its last meeting, in Budapest, the Executive Leading Group discussed the two possibilities. Members listed the following pros and cons:

### Arguments for own

#### WIN organisation:

- could make own decisions
- would be new pro-nuclear grouping with own profile
- would have its own funding
- would have improved profile
- authorities could take part in WIN
- could market own communications know-how

### Arguments against:

- feminist touch
- tough competition with other nuclear organisations
- would have to find its own financial support
- problems with scientific and professional image

Dr. Aegerter points out that each solution would need a communications programme and a business plan. She says both will be discussed at the next meeting of the enlarged leading group, on February 3rd.

## 1996: How to WIN the Communications Game

The Executive Leading Group meeting in Budapest, on October 21st, also drew up a communications programme, which divides WIN's goals into two categories – existing and future.

### Existing goals:

- to contribute to providing the public, particularly women, with objective information about nuclear energy and radiation, so as to eliminate women's unfounded fears about radiation
- to communicate the nuclear industry's uniquely rigorous approach to safety issues

### Future goals:

- by the year 2000, 75% of women in important positions within the nuclear industry should be WIN members
- by the year 2000, there should be a WIN group in every country which uses nuclear energy
- WIN should also be promoted among the authorities and medical professionals

Additionally, WIN believes there are three key messages which it has to get across:

- Radiation: Many fears, especially among women, are unjustified. Radiation is part of everyday life and, used in the right way, can be beneficial.

- Safety: Nuclear safety needs to be put in perspective. Safety is not just a technical issue; it is also an emotional feeling. Nuclear safety needs to be seen in an overall context and put in perspective by comparison with safety in other industries.
- Protecting the environment: Women want their children to have a sustainable world. Nuclear energy can make an important contribution to providing a sustainable energy supply.

Finally, WIN's communication strategy is based on an attempt to integrate emotion and reason to achieve communication on three different levels: the technical/scientific level, the economic level and the level of ethical values/emotions.

The key concept is: communication should always concentrate on the human aspect.

## Executive Leading Group Meeting in Hungary



Caption: Pictured above are members of the Executive Leading Group, taking a break from business in the garden of the Paks Representatives' Office in Budapest.

Top row: Ipek Yigit (UK), Agneta Rising (Sweden).

Middle row: Ludmilla Kiss-Zoltanné (Hungary), Irene Aegerter (President, Switzerland), Marke Heininen-Ojanperä (Finland).

Bottom row: Corinne Souwer (Netherlands), Judith Bacs (Hungary).

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## PIME '96: Public Information in Practice

WIN-ners planning to head for Belgium next February to discuss communications strategy at ENS PIME '96 will get a chance to discuss WIN activities beforehand with local members. WIN Belgium has invited all participating WIN-ners to attend a pre-conference meeting on Saturday, February 3rd. Those registered will be notified of the details.

ENS PIME '96, the 8th International Workshop on Nuclear Public Information in Practice, promises to be the most ambitious, most provocative and most forward-looking PIME yet. The four-day conference, which begins on Sunday, February 4th, will take as its ambitious overall theme the question: how to put nuclear back into fashion? Among the provocative issues to be addressed: "Why does nuclear remain a scapegoat for the ills of society; what mistakes have we made; how can we change this?" The conference will analyse the reasons for the current state of affairs and discuss how to formulate effective strategies, implement them worldwide in a coordinated manner and generally give nuclear a new "style".

It will take an equally critical look at the issues of the future. Will the new, safer advanced reactor designs really be enough to win public confidence? How can the information superhighway be used to improve nuclear communication? PIME has become the annual meeting point for the world's nuclear communicators. Its essence is that it gives nuclear communicators from around the world the chance to learn from each other.

There is already record interest in this year's PIME, and it appears that it will be sold out. WIN-ners interested in last-minute applications should contact Iris Dornbierer immediately on fax number +41 31 382 4466.

## WIN Goes to Russia

The next annual meeting of WIN will have a Russian flavour – the venue is the historic town of St. Petersburg, from May 29th to 31st, 1996. The Enlarged Leading Group will meet on Wednesday, May 29th, with the General Assembly and presentation of Country Reports taking place the following day. A panel will then discuss safety culture, after which there will be an early evening bus tour of the city. Friday will give participants a chance to visit Sosnovy Bor, "Leningrad" nuclear power plant and Petergoff, and there will be a cultural programme on Saturday for those ladies who have not already left.

## WIN Country Reports:

### Belgium:

WIN Belgium, which started up officially last year, is now trying to come to terms with the tricky question of whether to become part of the Belgian Nuclear Society.

### Bulgaria:

WIN Bulgaria lists the formation of a women's nuclear lobby as a section of the Bulgarian Nuclear Society as one of three goals for the near future. The other two are: to organise meetings with other women's groups, female intellectuals and female members of parliament; and to forge contacts with residents near Kozloduy NPP by means of meetings and theatrical performances.

### Finland:

The Finnish Energy Channel Group, which started nearly five years ago, now has 52 members, of whom 26 have joined WIN. The WIN members form the most active part of the group, while the others receive articles and memos and participate occasionally in member meetings. Throughout the year, the group's public information activities have centred on the subject of nuclear waste.

### France:

Public support for nuclear power in France appears to be increasing year by year, with a large majority of both men and women still favouring the status quo. However, men are still more in favour than women. WIN France organised two main meetings this year, the first focussing on medical applications of radiation, the second a meeting with senior regional officials near La Hague reprocessing plant.

### Great Britain:

The WIN committee in the UK has not yet been officially set up, but the hope is that specific activities by the committee and members will start up once the industry (now facing partial privatisation) settles down. As regards public support for nuclear power, the relative number of men and women seems to vary according to the issue.

### Japan:

Japan's WEN, founded nearly three years ago, now has more than 60 members – the majority full members, plus some supporting members. They meet regularly to exchange information and experiences and to renew personal contacts. Among the topics which needed expert communications skills this year were the Kobe earthquake in January, and its possible implications for nuclear safety.

### Romania:

WIN Romania is one of the newest country groups, but it is already forging ahead with its public education policy, concentrating on educational activities in schools. One such activity in 1995 was a cartoon contest for children up to 14 years old, on the theme "Nuclear Energy Saves the Environment". The group plans to increase its contacts with children in the coming year, informing them about all aspects of nuclear energy.

### Spain:

WIN Spain was founded just a couple of months ago, at the annual meeting of the Spanish Nuclear Society, which took place in Tarragona-Reus on October 25th–27th.

### Switzerland:

WIN Switzerland was also founded this year, at a meeting in April in the town of Olten. The Board includes WIN President Irene Aegerter, who gave a slide presentation in connection with the 9th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident. Five WIN representatives also participated in a hearing in Zurich in May, concerning the Superphénix fast breeder prototype in France.

### Taiwan:

WIN Taipei has an active programme for the next year, including: a science camp for school children and/or a parent/child outing with an "energy" theme; more public speeches with panel discussions; a campaign to get all members to participate actively; and – possibly – another fund-raising sale, to follow one last January.

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