

PIME 2006: Chairman's speech for Frank Deconinck

Monday 13 February 2006:

Opening speech

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to PIME 2006 and to the beautiful, romantic city of Vienna. More about Vienna later, but first I would like, on behalf of ENS and the co-organisers of this year's conference – FORATOM and the NEA/OECD – to thank the IAEA for hosting this year's PIME. We are also very grateful to the IAEA for the use of the Vienna International Centre. Our hosts have left no stone unturned in an effort to make us feel welcome and to provide the perfect environment for a constructive and interactive debate on the main issues facing communicators in our industry today. The contribution that they have made to the agenda is considerable too.

And so, to Vienna: Austria's iconic capital city is synonymous with music, culture and refinement. Its famous monuments, palaces and museums reflect its glorious past when, for seven hundred years, it was capital of the Habsburg Empire. Today, with its countless theatres, art galleries, coffee houses and contemporary urban architecture, Vienna maintains that tradition of style, flair and individualism.

Unless you have spent the last few weeks on Mars, it won't have escaped your notice that Vienna is also the focal point for celebrations to mark the

250th anniversary of the birth of one of Austria's most famous sons – the legendary Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart's music communicates so many messages to so many people. It challenges. It provokes. It asks questions. It provides answers. It seduces. Of course, taste in music is very subjective, but it's hard to remain indifferent to talent. There is a lesson to be learnt here for all nuclear communicators: as we strive to ensure that our communications reach the right targets and send the right messages, we would do well to consider the example of Mozart; our communications must be creative, imaginative and high impact. People must not be indifferent to them. They too, like Mozart, must challenge, provoke, ask questions, provide answers and seduce. As the nuclear renaissance continues to gather momentum and governments, environmentalists and citizens increasingly realise that nuclear energy provides the best option for combating climate change and ensuring security of energy supply, there are even greater rewards to be reaped from successful communications.

Our industry is not in the defensive mindset that it was in before. On the contrary, we must now make the most of the nuclear revival and go on the offensive.

We must reach out, with renewed confidence and conviction, to new audiences.

We must reiterate new as well as familiar messages. We must win over the skeptics and hesitators.

The PIME agenda is designed to provoke debate on the issues that really count. We will discuss how to communicate effectively the economic, social and environmental advantages that nuclear offers. The targets we will focus

on are varied: local communities, politicians and all levels of civil society. The communications tools at our disposal are varied too, with the Internet and blogging engaging more and more people in debate every day. And we have expert communicators to stimulate debate, share experiences with us and highlight best practices.

I urge all delegates to play the most active role possible in the debates and hope that they will return home with food for thought, inspired to push their communications to the next level. Nuclear is back and our communications should make that fact known - loud and clear.

I hope that you all enjoy a constructive and interesting conference and officially declare PIME 2006 open.

Thank you.