

### **André-Claude Lacoste (1999 - 2003, the first WENRA Chair)**

Now that WENRA is turning ten years old, I remember, with pleasure and pride, the way we have gone.

Ten years ago, with some friends, other Heads of Safety Authorities in the EU, we decided to create a "club", to share views, make progress and become stronger.

At the very beginning we were just a few of us, Judith, Juan Manuel, Jean-Paul, ... Now we are 17, representing all the nuclear countries of the EU, plus Switzerland, still friends but always challenging each others, for the sake of nuclear safety. I hope that sometimes we will be even more, with all EU countries, including the non-nuclear ones and also with other countries in Europe, like Armenia, Russia or Ukraine.

When we started, our first mission was devoted to assess the safety of the nuclear power plants in, at that time, the so-called "candidate countries ". Now, all together, we have improved the level of safety in the EU and I would even say that we have reached, thanks to WENRA, a level I would not have expected in such a short time. Today, I think that WENRA has become a "reference", beyond the EU. Often, in Asia or in the USA, I am asked about the work of WENRA, our coming projects and challenges. Actually, I am not surprised with these questions because it is exactly what WENRA is about: sharing with others and high expectations.

So, ten years is young, but WENRA has already become a "reference". What is next, one could ask? My personal conviction is that WENRA will continue to assume a leadership in nuclear safety and radiation protection. As is well known today, WENRA has managed to issue a sound common basis for the regulation of the safety of existing nuclear power plants in the EU. Doing so, we have contributed to create a new space of harmonisation and cooperation in Europe. We are ready to do more, to strengthen that movement, working on the safe management of radioactive waste and on new issues and challenges, like new reactors, the task we have recently undertaken, under the chairmanship of Dana.

Let me end with a personal word. Years ago, I was sometimes feeling a little lonely while defending my positions and convictions about nuclear safety and radiation protection. Now, I never feel that way again because I am backed by a family, my "peers" in WENRA. I wanted to thank you all for this and I wish WENRA many other birthdays.