European Commission

Basic Safety Standards

On 5 December 2013, the European Commission adopted the Council Directive 2013/59/EURATOM which lays down the basic safety standards for protection against the dangers arising from exposure to ionising radiation, and repealed Directives 89/618/Euratom, 90/641/Euratom, 96/29/Euratom, 97/43 /Euratom and 2003/122/Euratom. This Directive is focused on 'environment' with respect to human health protection with the scope stating:

'*This Directive applies to any planned, existing or emergency exposure situation which involves a risk from exposure to ionising radiation which cannot be disregarded from a radiation protection point of view or with regard to the environment in view of long-term human health protection.*'

Within the Directive, the definitions of planned and emergency exposure situations both make reference to the potential for an effect on the environment however these definitions do not place any requirements for considering environmental protection from ionising radiation releases.

The Directive does recognise that contamination of the environment may pose a threat to human health. The Directive goes on to recognise that the Community's secondary legislation so far has regarded such contamination only as a pathway of exposure to members of the public directly affected by radioactive effluent discharged to the environment. While the state of the environment can impact long-term human health, this calls for a policy protecting the environment against the harmful effects of ionising radiation. For the purpose of long-term human health protection, environmental criteria based on internationally recognised scientific data (such as published by EC, ICRP, United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation, International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)) should be taken into account.

There is therefore no explicit requirement for consideration for the protection of the environment in its own right unlike the International Basic Safety Standards (2014).