

COMMUNICATION FROM THE NMEu EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (ERT)

Subject: COVID-19 AND THE GLOBAL SUPPLY OF Mo-99 AND OTHER ISOTOPES

Brussels, 30 March 2020

The Security of Supply Working Group (SoS WG) Emergency Response Team (ERT) held a teleconference on 30 March 2020 to discuss the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Mo-99 and other radioisotope production. NTP informed the ERT that the cessation of most scheduled international flights in/out of South Africa interrupted bulk Mo-99 shipments from South Africa during the past week. A number of options are being investigated in order to resume shipments from South Africa.

On a positive note, ANSTO reported that it has received regulatory approval from the Australian nuclear regulator ARPANSA to resume Mo-99 export production. However, ANSTO advises that a gradual transition from its current two production runs per week will be required, also taking into account measures put into place to protect staff and to ensure production during the COVID-19 pandemic. IRE, Curium, NTP, SCK CEN (operator of BR2 reactor), NRG (operator of HFR reactor), Maria reactor (Poland), LVR-15 reactor (Czech Republic) and Transrad reported that they have been able to maintain operations with suitable personnel protection measures for COVID-19.

The ERT has been informed that a group of nuclear medicine companies is continuing to advance efforts to arrange dedicated charter flights between the U.S. and Europe for shipments of medical radioisotopes. NMEu circulated last week a request for interest and specific information to member countries that may wish to participate in this effort and awaits further responses.

NMEu advises that Tc-99m generator shortages may be foreseen in various regions due to the transportation problems being encountered in shipments of both bulk Mo-99 and Tc-99m generators. Medical institutions should contact their Tc-99m generator suppliers or radiopharmacies to be informed of the expected supply situation.

The ERT will continue to carefully monitor the situation, consult as needed, and Nuclear Medicine Europe will provide regular communication updates.

Bernard Ponsard,
Chairman ERT

Ira Goldman,
Chairman NMEu SoS WG

For the reactors:

Bernard Ponsard, Chairman ERT, SCK CEN

For the Processors:

Frank DeLange, Curium and Erich Kollegger and David Achiolas, IRE

For the Generators:

Ira Goldman, LMI and Nassar Hussein, GE Healthcare

For Transport

Gilles Degauque, Transrad

By invitation:

Piet Louw, NTP