

Public/private cooperation regarding safety

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SLIDE 1: PRESENTATION TITLE & NAME

Dear colleagues, and Madam Moderator; I bring warm greetings from Oulu, in Northern Finland. Today, I am delighted to tell you about our STR's role in ensuring public and private co-operation regarding energy safety.

Energy policy in Finland has always been very challenging. As the winter is so cold in the whole country, for many months, energy is essential for survival.

SLIDE 2: THREE KEY ENERGY CHALLENGES IN NORTHERN FINLAND; HIGH CONSUMPTION; LIMITED RESOURCES; LONG DISTANCES - Map of Finland showing neighbours and highlighting Northern Finland

In Northern Finland, where I come from, we have high energy consumption per capita. Our industries, for example, wood, chemical and metal processing, need a lot of energy, and we have a long lighting and heating season. Conventional energy sources refer to locally sourced wood, peat and hydropower, and when necessary, imported coal. We are developing and using a variety of renewable energy resources, for example biofuels, but these are not part of my speech today,

In our region, we have long distances from imported energy sources and also to some of our energy consumers.

SLIDE 3: AVI ORGANISATION HIGHLIGHTING THE DIVISIONS INVOLVED IN SAFETY

The Ministry of Employment and the Economy is responsible for Finland's energy policy, and energy security is based on laws. The National Emergency Supply Agency guarantees enough energy is available in Finland, during emergency situations, and energy companies are committed to maintaining a sufficient energy store.

SLIDE 4: THREE KEY TASKS: ENVIRONMENTAL, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY, PREPAREDNESS

There are three key tasks when we talk about the STR's role in public and private cooperation regarding safety:

Firstly, the environmental perspective - we make decisions on environmental licences and permits, including those required for energy production.

Secondly, occupational health and safety – our task is to make sure that companies producing, supplying and using energy, follow regulations to prevent accidents.

Energy companies and other industries make continuous efforts to improve workplace safety. Every accident is considered one too many, and the energy sector enterprises have the goal of zero accidents.

Thirdly, preparedness – our business is to take care, that municipalities, authorities, enterprises and citizens are well-prepared in situations when we have problems and, for example, cannot get enough energy. Preparedness is a key task for us, it highlights public and private co-operation with regard to safety.

So it is this issue I am going to focus on.

SLIDE 5: PREPAREDNESS BOARD - PICTURES

In the case of a catastrophe in Northern Finland, I call together the **Preparedness Board**, of which I am the chairperson. The board includes the Director-General of the other state regional organisations, and representatives from municipalities, the Regional Councils, frontier guards, defence forces, the police, fire and rescue organisations, hospitals, NGOs, and the media (national and our own). The most important task of the Preparedness Board is to guarantee that the society continues to function and vital services are secure in every circumstance.

Nowadays, we emphasise, it is every citizen's duty to prepare for catastrophes. To be well-prepared we need wide cross-sectoral co-operation, between, public authorities and private enterprises, civil servants and private citizens.

The municipalities are responsible for security and preparedness in practice, and our STR's co-ordinate operations and support municipalities.

Every year, we organise preparedness exercises and courses to test municipality preparedness plans, and promote co-operation between public and private organisations. Quite often we focus on a lack of energy and the wide effects of power cuts, in urban and rural areas.

SLIDE: 6 REGION MAP HARSH / WINTER CONDITIONS NORTHERN FINLAND

Last winter, Oulu's energy company asked us to co-operate in a special preparedness exercise, involving a wide range of public and private organisations. The fictional case was a dangerously low supply of energy resources in December, with minus thirty-five degrees.

The weather in all of Europe was exceptionally cold. In central Europe a lot of homeless people died. And in Finland, the whole country had arctic weather conditions. We were told, there were transport problems because we didn't get enough arctic diesel, peat and wood supplies were already used up, and we had empty coal stores. Coal ships were not due to arrive until January.

There were violent protests at the energy company, police were needed to calm the situation. All in all, it was the worst case scenario you can imagine.

Representing the STR, I called an emergency meeting of the Preparedness Board. The representatives reported their situation, and we, the STR, planned and co-ordinated the event. We sent an overview of the situation to the government and were in contact with the media and all the public and private organisations needed to avert the crisis. We had very close contact with the municipalities who had to organise the help people needed.

People at risk were evacuated to pre-decided places, for example, schools. Rescue organisations gave instructions to people at home, especially in rural areas where a lot of elderly people live alone. We, the STR, needed to co-ordinate many tasks to reduce energy use, prioritise the use of electricity and heating, keep citizens calm, prevent crimes, and manage leadership roles during the crisis.

Participating in the exercise increased our knowledge regarding how authorities should lead in a crisis, how we can minimise risks in the future, and how public and private enterprises need to co-operate to secure energy supplies. This was an exercise, but of course it could be close to reality.

SLIDE 7: AVI TASKS WELL-BEING, EQUALITY AND SAFETY

Our organisation's main tasks are to promote people's well-being, people's rights, and people's security, in our area. These goals can only be achieved through close co-operation between public and private enterprises. STR's have a very important role in this. We need to discuss these issues with our contacts in other countries, as we do here, and learn how they have organised preparedness. Our closest neighbours in Northern Finland are Sweden, Norway and Russia. So it is very important to have preparedness exercises together every second year, as we do.

As we can see, the STR's role in maintaining a functioning society is important at local, regional, national and international level.

SLIDE 8: PICTURES OF OULU/NORTHERN FINLAND Thank you.....