

HERCA Inspection Week

INFORMATION LEAFLET

On the International Day of Radiology on 8 November 2016, 18 European countries will start a special series of inspections in a number of radiology departments and practices over Europe, as part of a European initiative launched by HERCA. HERCA (Heads of European Radiation protection Competent Authorities) is a voluntary association that brings together 56 radiation protection authorities from 32 European countries. These authorities develop national legal frameworks for the safe use of ionizing radiation and conduct inspections to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.

Where and when will the inspections take place?

Starting on 8 November 2016, 18 European national radiation protection authorities will be conducting inspections in a representative number of radiology departments and practices all over the European country, both private and public, large and small.

Who will conduct the inspections?

These inspections will be carried out by inspectors from the national radiation protection competent authorities following normal inspection procedures.

What is the topic of focus?

The inspectors will pay specific attention to the justification process of medical imaging procedures that involve ionizing radiation. The justification principle requires that each medical imaging procedure should contribute sufficiently to patient care to outweigh the possible detriment caused by radiation exposure. Justification is a complex process that requires various inputs and checks to be performed by different health professionals who each have their own responsibilities. The inspectors will trace the steps of a normal justification process and will try to verify to what extent the referrers, the radiological practitioners and staff working under their responsibility adhere to the corresponding procedures.

Who might be interviewed?

The inspectors might interview all those who are directly and indirectly involved in the justification process: the referring physicians, the radiological practitioners, reception staff, radiographers and nursing staff, the people responsible for quality assurance and clinical audits, etc.

What is the objective of these inspections?

The goal of this HERCA initiative is to monitor to what extent the justification principle is put into practice in diagnostic radiology all across Europe and to identify potential routes for improvement. The findings will be presented in a report that will be published on the HERCA website.

** HERCA is a voluntary association in which the Heads of European Radiation protection Competent Authorities work together in order to identify common issues and propose practical solutions for these issues. Its current fields of activity include, amongst others, medical and veterinary applications of ionizing radiation, radiological emergency preparedness and response, radon and naturally occurring radioactive materials. The program of work of HERCA is based on common interest in significant regulatory issues. HERCA brings together 56 radiation protection authorities from 32 European countries. These authorities develop national legal frameworks for the safe use of ionizing radiation and conduct inspections to ensure compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements.*