

# The European Security and Defence Union

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of Excellence**  
An initiative of the European Union

## COMMON SECURITY

# Fighting pandemics and other CBRN risks and threats worldwide

Europe takes its role seriously!



### International cooperation based on CBRN risk mitigation

.....  
Antonia Marie De Meo,  
Director of UNICRI, Turin



### CBRN Medical Emergency Training in the Gulf region

.....  
Brigadier General Eng.  
Hussein Ahmed Al Harthi  
GCC regional CoE Director,  
Abu Dhabi



# STRONG ON THEIR OWN – TOGETHER UNBEATABLE

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## FUTURETECH

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# Solidarity will help Europe succeed

Like a tsunami leaving its devastating footprint, the Covid-19 pandemic struck the world like lightning and made no difference between rich and poor, leaving blighted hopes and provoking a societal crisis due to economic stagnation. Some countries will cope better than others, but the recovery will be long, painful and costly for all. Upcoming societal movements will be a concern to internal safety and the economy is worrying for international security. The cards of geopolitics are shuffled and there will be both winners and losers. In such a crisis, it is rather comfortable to have humanitarian organisations in the continents themselves and the United Nations, a global actor, with its pandemic roadmap to soften the first damages to people. Besides such fruitful humanitarian strategies, the designing of common security, the creation of structures, and the implementation of common interests are helpful and can be used as a support in crises.

This was true for the European Union in early February this year, when Covid-19 became a worldwide deadly threat. The EU happily acknowledged that its partners in its CBRN Centres of Excellence Initiative started an intense collective discussion on ways to mitigate the spread of the pandemic by identifying necessary means and help. The EU could help by funding some initiatives and counter measures.

In 2003, the European Union designed a security cooperation programme with partners in Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and central and southern Asia in the framework of the European Security Strategy, alongside the European Strategy against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. When they did this, nobody could imagine that ten years after its foundation in 2010, this

organisation might become so successful in combating a pandemic in 2020.

What is behind this EU CBRN Centre of Excellence Initiative?

This initiative is designed to strengthen the institutional capacity of non-EU countries to mitigate CBRN risks, which, if not countered, may also constitute a threat to the EU. It provides regional platforms to comprehensively tackle all CBRN risks, from natural disasters and accidental catastrophes to criminal behaviour and terrorist acts, by involving all stakeholders.

Funded by the European Union with a current yearly budget of about € 25million, the initiative is coordinated and managed by the European Commission (DG DEVCO) and the European External Action Service (EEAS). Regional cooperation is the key feature of the initiative as risks, by their nature, have a cross-border character. Therefore, regional cooperation best promotes practice and partner countries (eight regions with 61 countries and CBRN national teams) can benefit from each other's knowledge and experience.

This initiative is a telling example of collective action for the common good!

The European Union will have to continue playing a leading role as it did over past years with empathy, being open to ideas and proposals coming from the regions and their 61 countries.



Hartmut Bühl

Photo: private, L5photo.com

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The European – Security and Defence Union is the winner of the 2011 European Award for Citizenship, Security and Defence, and was awarded in 2019 the Jury’s Special Prize of the same competition.

## THE EU PRESIDENCY

### “Together for Europe’s recovery”

On 1<sup>st</sup> July, Germany took over the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from Croatia, for the next six months. Under the motto “Together for Europe’s recovery” the German Presidency is putting the focus on overcoming the Covid-19 crisis.

In her policy statement of 18<sup>th</sup> June, Chancellor **Angela Merkel** said that Germany is taking on the responsibility for the EU Presidency “at a time when the European Union is facing the greatest challenge of its history.” She added: “We need, on the one hand, to deal with the consequences of the crisis, but at the same time also make Europe more resilient and sustainable”. Ms Merkel underlined that “a pandemic calls for joint international action and mutual support.” She also welcomed that the European Commission’s plan for economic recovery that was put forward with its proposal for the next Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027), includes a



Joint Press conference by German Chancellor Angela Merkel (on the screen) and EC President Ursula von der Leyen, Brussels, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2020

photo: © European Union, 2020/EC-Audiovisual Service/Jennifer Jacquemart

large number of aspects of the Franco-German initiative in this field. The guiding principles of Germany’s Council Presidency are as follows:

- overcoming the Covid-19 pandemic permanently, as well as economic recovery
- a stronger and more innovative Europe

- a fair Europe
- a sustainable Europe
- a Europe of security and common values
- a strong Europe in the world

➔ **web** [www.eu2020.de](http://www.eu2020.de)

## EU BUDGET

### Commission proposes 2021 budget

On 24<sup>th</sup> June, the European Commission presented its proposal for the first EU budget under the new 2021-2027 Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF). Its proposed budget for 2021 of €166.7 billion, to be complemented by €211 billion in grants and approximately €133 billion in loans under the « Next Generation EU » recovery plan, aims at mobilising investments and kick-starting the European economy to address the immediate economic and social damage caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Commissioner **Johannes Hahn**, responsible for the EU Budget, said that the 2021 annual budget “will help hundreds of thousands of people, companies and regions to overcome the crisis and emerge stronger than before”. The 2021 draft budget is based on the Commission’s proposal for the EU’s next long-term budget put forward on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020. The proposal will now be submitted to the European Parliament and the Council, which will adopt their respective positions.

➔ **web** Budget 2021: <https://bit.ly/2NZYYm>

➔ **web** Factsheet: <https://bit.ly/2YZkK00>

### Schuman Report on Europe 2020

The “Schuman Report on Europe 2020” has been published by the Robert Schuman Foundation in a digital version. This annual reference work on European policies brings together contributions by high personalities and experts, sharing their views on the Europe of tomorrow. Edited by Pascale Joannin, the report also offers 33 original maps and a new set of commented statistics.

➔ **web** The digital version is available via the Foundation’s website: [www.robert-schuman.eu/en/](http://www.robert-schuman.eu/en/)

## BREXIT

### The future of EU-UK relations

On 15<sup>th</sup> June, a videoconference took place between the UK and EU leaders. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the President of the European Council, Charles Michel, the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Parliament, David Sassoli, and Michel Barnier, the European Commission’s Chief negotiator, took stock of progress in the EU-UK post-Brexit negotiations on their future relationship. They noted the UK’s decision not to request an extension of the transition period which will therefore end on 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020.



Videoconference on EU-UK relations with Boris Johnson (middle), 15<sup>th</sup> June 2020

photo: © European Union 2020 – Source: EP

In their common statement they underlined their “intention to

work hard to deliver a relationship which would work in the interest of the citizens of the Union and of the United Kingdom”. The parties supported the plans agreed by the chief negotiators to intensify the talks in July in order to create the conditions for concluding and ratifying a deal before the end of 2020. On 25<sup>th</sup> June, the Council adopted Conclusions on EU-UK relations.

➔ **web** Council Conclusions: <https://bit.ly/2CaxJna>

➔ **web** Timeline: <https://bit.ly/2ZKGIZR>

## TERRORISM

### Europol publishes new report on terrorism

On 23<sup>th</sup> June, Europol published its “EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2020” (TE-SAT).

- In 2019, a total of 119 foiled, failed and completed terrorist attacks were reported by a total of 13 EU Member States;
  - 1004 individuals were arrested on suspicion of terrorism-related offences in 19 EU Member States, with Belgium, France, Italy, Spain and the UK reporting the highest numbers;
  - 10 people died because of terrorist attacks in the EU and 27 people were injured.
- Europol notes an increase in extreme right-wing terrorism while jihadist terrorism is declining but remains significant. The EU agency is particularly concerned about the frequent use of explosives and firearms by activists, and stresses that anarchism and extreme left-wing terrorism continue to be a threat in many states.

→ **web** Download report: <https://bit.ly/2CeN06i>



**“We cannot afford to lower our guard in fighting terrorism threats, whether jihadists or right wing. Having law enforcement capabilities, tools and cross border cooperation that are fit for the digital age is key.”**

*Ylva Johansson, EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship*

photo: © European Union, 2019/EC Audiovisual Service/Jennifer Jacquemart

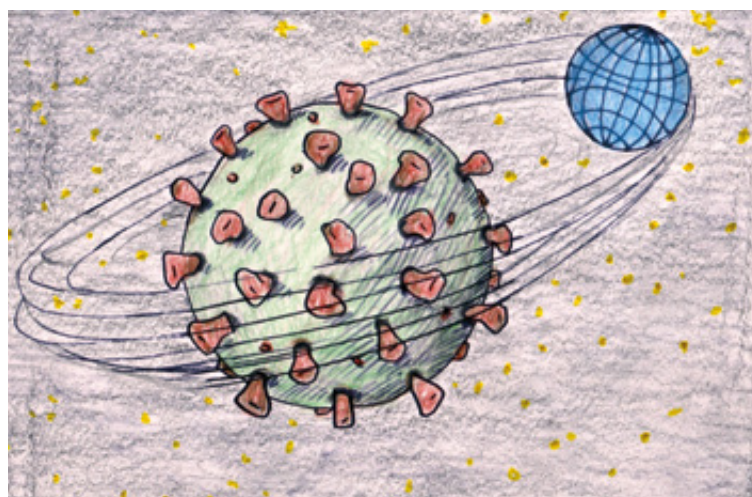
## CORONAVIRUS

### Successful pledging summit and concert

On 27<sup>th</sup> June, a pledging summit and concert entitled “Global Goal: Unite for our Future” in response to the coronavirus crisis was organised by the President of the European Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, and Global Citizen. The event, transmitted via broadcasters and social media worldwide raised € 6.15 billion to help develop and ensure equitable access to coronavirus vaccines, tests and treatments. The global pledging summit and concert brought together artists, scientists and world leaders, calling for universal access to coronavirus medicines.

→ **web** Global Citizen website: [www.globalcitizen.org/en/](http://www.globalcitizen.org/en/)

### Hurled into a new orbit...



© Peter Slama

## US TROOP WITHDRAWAL

### The latest act in a comedy of errors

(Ed/Hartmut Bühl, Paris) The American President wants to act soon on his threat to Germany to reduce the 35.000 US troops stationed there by about 9.000 and relocate them to Poland. Donald Trump considers that Germany has not earned the privilege of having so many US troops stationed on its soil because Chancellor Angela Merkel has not kept her promise to NATO to raise defence spending to 2% of GDP by 2024. The President therefore concludes that Germany owes NATO several billion Euros and that he must punish Germany for not paying it.

These confused statements, demonstrating ignorance and a loss of a sense of reality, are now too much even for Republican members of Congress, who have written to the President to remind him of some strategic imperatives. If he continues to undermine NATO solidarity in this way, these moves can only harm the interests of the USA and benefit Russia and China.

**It is true** that in 2002, at the Prague summit, the allies agreed to do their best to increase their defence spending to 2% of GDP by 2024 and they reaffirmed several times.

**It is wrong** to assert that Germany owes NATO several billion Euros. The alliance has no military budget, only a small “civil budget” of less than €1 billion which is used to pay NATO’s civilian staff.

**It is unclear** how many NATO troops may be permanently stationed in the new member states on the basis of the Founding Act between NATO and Russia (1997). The deployment of nuclear weapons is clearly ruled out. NATO has stated that it does not intend to increase the permanent stationing of substantial numbers of combat troops.

**It is clear** that the US troops stationed in Germany are there primarily in the interests of the USA. Germany is the hub for all US operations, not easily be replaced.

It is high time that the President gets his facts straight about NATO, understands that NATO is not subservient to the US President. Trump’s attitude towards the NATO is a blow to mutual trust and damaging above all to the reputation of his own country.



# In the Spotlight

+++ Coronavirus crisis +++

Op-ed on the EU's reaction to the coronavirus crisis and the lessons learned

## For a united, resilient and sovereign Europe

by Josep Borrell, High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Vice-President of the European Commission, and Thierry Breton, European Commissioner for the Internal Market, responsible for the defence industry, Brussels

Beyond the health tragedy, the coronavirus crisis will have an accelerating effect on the major trends at work on our planet. It invites us to take a fresh look at the world, and at Europe's place in the world. It forcefully revives the central question of our autonomy, our sovereignty and our position as a player in world geopolitics, particularly in the face of growing tensions between the United States and China. The era of a conciliatory, if not naive, Europe has come of age. Virtuous "soft power" is no longer enough in today's world. We need to complement it with a "hard power" dimension, and not just in terms of military power and the badly needed Europe of defence. Time has come for Europe to be able to use its levers of influence to enforce its vision of the world and defend its own interests.

Faced with the sudden and devastating effects of the crisis, our fellow citizens are fully aware of the need for a resilient and autonomous Europe, assertive of its values, strong in its convictions, firm in its ambitions and confident of its means. A Europe ready to contribute to the great balances of tomorrow's world.

In order to come out stronger from the crisis, the European Union must be equipped with a recovery plan that is commensurate to the needs of its industrial ecosystems. That is the goal of the von der Leyen Commission's proposal for a € 750 billion recovery instrument, including direct grants and long-term loans. The magnitude of these resources will allow the EU to strengthen and modernise its internal market by taking solidarity, the basis of European integration, to a new level. This is an historic step.

The crisis has revealed areas where Europe needs to be more resilient to prevent and better withstand future shocks. These include health protective equipment and medicines of course, but also more broadly key technologies, certain critical raw materials (such as rare earths), security and defence industries and the media. Without isolating ourselves from our partners, without engaging in protectionism, everything calls for increasing our collective capacity to protect our own values and interests.

How would we justify our lack of ability to protect, where necessary, our strategic activities weakened by the crisis from predation by non-European players? We also clearly need to diversify and reduce our economic and industrial dependencies, as the pandemic has brutally revealed. And in the framework of our current security and defence alliances, we must also strengthen our strategic autonomy around common and interoperable capabilities, critical technologies and infrastructures (such as cyber security, drones, secure networks, quantum technology). Europe has the capabilities to do this. Does it give itself the means to do so?

In the wake of the crisis, Member States may feel the budgetary pressure in the defence field. That will make it more necessary than ever to spend better together, rationalise and strengthen our common capabilities, including in the field of EU external action. This requires an ambitious budget for the European Defence Fund and its industrial and innovation capacities, as well as for the European Peace Facility for stronger and more operational cooperation.

**“The coronavirus crisis invites us to take a fresh look at the world, and at Europe's place in the world.”**

Europe must also equip itself with the means to protect itself against disinformation, the “infodemic” which has grown dangerously worse during the coronavirus crisis. To counter attempts of manipulation by foreign powers. With its strong democratic values and principles, Europe can and must serve as a reference point in striking the fine balance between freedom of expression and the fight against disinformation. Solidarity between EU Member States will be the keystone of tomorrow's Europe – a more autonomous and sovereign Europe. Solidarity between generations through the Green Deal. Solidarity between Member States to preserve and develop our internal market. Solidarity to consolidate our economic and monetary union and strengthen our social cohesion. Solidarity in the field of security and defence. Solidarity, in sum, to protect our shared values that underpin our common project.

This op-ed was published first on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2020 on the EEAS website: <https://bit.ly/2ALNUal>



## The new EU4Health programme

As part of the Next Generation recovery plan, the new European health programme named “EU4Health” aims to fill the cooperation and coordination gaps between the Member States, revealed by the Covid-19 pandemic. Member States are primarily competent for health policy, but the EU can complement and support national measures, and adopt legislation in specific sectors. The European Commission proposes to invest €9.4 billion from the EU’s next long-term budget in the EU4Health programme, which will cover the 2021-2027 period.

The European Parliament had insisted on the creation of this programme. In a resolution adopted on 17<sup>th</sup> April, MEPs called for a dedicated budget to support national healthcare sectors during the Covid-19 crisis, as well as for investment post-crisis to make health-care systems more resilient and focused on those most in need.

### The three main priorities of EU4Health are:

#### Tackling cross-border health threats

- Ensure prevention, preparedness, surveillance and response to cross-border health threats
- Build emergency reserves of medicines, medical devices and other health supplies
- Establish a Union health emergency team to provide expert advice and technical assistance in case of a health crisis
- Coordinate emergency health care capacity

#### Making medicines available and affordable

- Make medicines, medical devices and other critical health supplies available and affordable for patients and health systems
- Advocate prudent and efficient use of medicines such as antimicrobials

- Support innovative medical products and greener manufacturing

#### Strengthening health systems

- Improve accessibility, efficiency and resilience of health systems
- Reduce inequalities in accessing health care
- Tackle non-communicable diseases such as cancer by improving diagnosis, prevention and care
- Exchange of best practices on health promotion and disease prevention
- Scale up networking through the European Reference Networks and extend it to infectious and non-communicable diseases
- Support global cooperation on health challenges to improve health, reduce inequalities and increase protection against global health threats

The programme is expected to start on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2021.

→ **web EU4Health:** <https://bit.ly/3efbNES>

**“The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that EU health policies need to be reinforced. The European Parliament has committed to using the EU health programme funds to create real added value to protect the future health of Europeans by joining our health forces.”**

*Pascal Canfin MEP, Chair of the Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety*



*Josep Borrell Fontelles (left) and Thierry Breton at the weekly meeting of the von der Leyen Commission, 17<sup>th</sup> June in Brussels*

photo: © European Union, 2020/EC-Audiovisual Service/Jennifer Jacquemart

# In the Spotlight

+++ CBRN cooperation +++

A network of networks to support CBRN risk mitigation, including non-proliferation

## The EU CBRN Centres of Excellence – 10 years of cooperation

by Tristan Simonart, CBRN risk mitigation, DG DEVCO, European Commission, Brussels

Celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year, the European external Chemical Biological Radiological and Nuclear Centres of Excellence Initiative (EU CBRN CoE) is considered as a long term global network programme of national CBRN networks and as a platform for regional capacity building on CBRN risk mitigation.

### Holistic and interagency approach

Initially launched in 2010 under the European external cooperation Instrument for Stability, it involves multilateral partnerships between the European Union and its 27 Member States with more than 60 countries worldwide, covering the EU Southern and Eastern neighbourhood, the Middle East, the Gulf, Africa, Central Asia and South East Asia. Its main objective is to mitigate chemical, biological or radio-nuclear risks of natural, accidental or intentional origin. It follows a holistic and interagency approach based on partnership and confidence building, with a strong focus on regional cooperation, in close cooperation with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). This is one of the largest long-term civilian security external programmes of the European Union. The CBRN CoE network provides to member countries protocols to assess – on a voluntary and strictly confidential basis – CBRN national and regional needs and risks. It promotes the legal adoption of national plans of action and the implementation of regional activities, through its eight regional centres. These may include train the trainer sessions, CBRN curricula, testing,

**“The CBRN CoE network is expected to further develop its liaising and capacity building activities in the near future.”**

demonstration and cross-border field exercises, always supported by a mix of local and international expertise. Eighty five projects were launched since 2010 under the programme and more than thirty countries have adopted their CBRN national action plans.

### Standing the test of the Covid-19 pandemic

As early as February 2020, EU headquarters, regional CBRN centres, national focal points from partner countries and ongoing project implementing experts started intense collective exchanges to identify means of contributing to the mitigation of the crisis. Using regional working languages (English, French, Russian and Arabic), this unprecedented mobilisation, supported by constant regional and global webinars, led to a series<sup>1</sup> of mitigating actions, which took several formats.

As a result, for example, interregional programmes like Medipiet, Medilabsecure or Stronglab reoriented their activities by developing specific online trainings or shipping urgent supplies to partners. In nearly all regional CBRN centres such as Tbilisi, Rabat, Nairobi, Abu Dhabi, Tashkent and Manila, day and night support was provided by the CBRN CoE regional technical on-site assistance experts (OSA). In Abu Dhabi, the OSA GCC expert was recruited in the Supreme Council for National Security. In other countries, national authorities used pre-deployed trained staff and equipment to support Covid-19 diagnostics. This happened in Amman International Airport in Jordan or in the Almaty Central reference Laboratory in Kazakhstan. Based on regional dialogue and national assessments, additional Covid-19 funding was then allocated by the European Commission:

- Reinforcing ongoing projects on biosafety and biosecurity, in order to deliver quick and efficient dedicated online training or shipment of necessary supplies (kits, reagents and small equipment) in particular in the European Southern

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### Tristan Simonart



Photo: National authorities of Uzbekistan

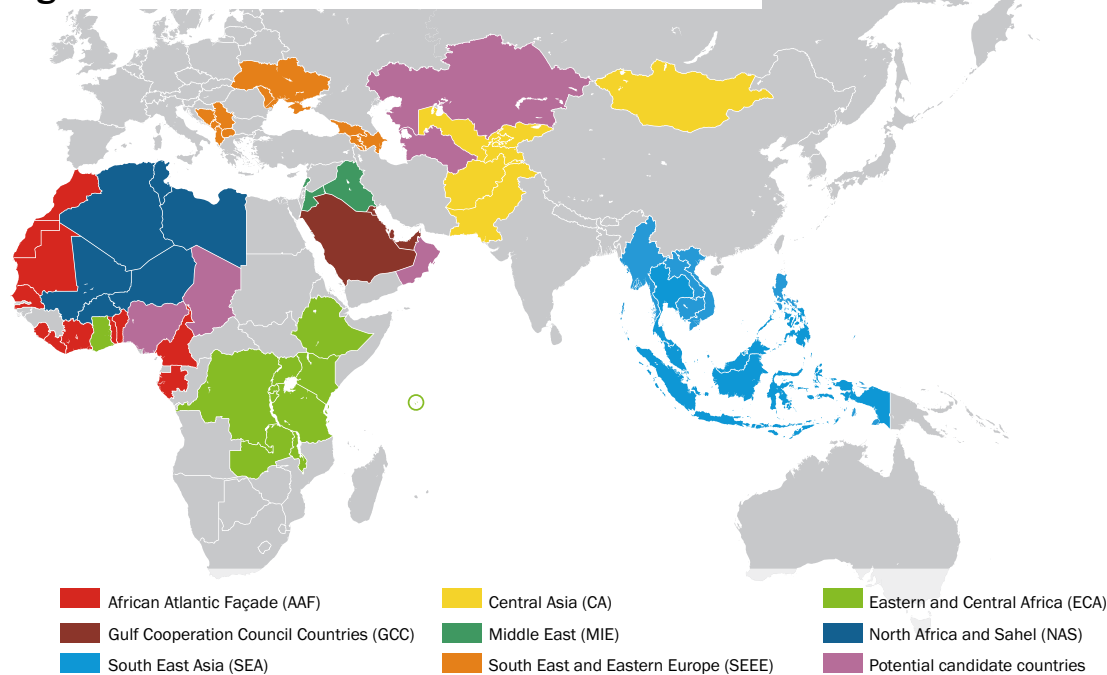
has been serving since 2013 the European Commission in the implementation of the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence programme. He previously led the EU CBRN-E security research programme (FP7-H2020) and acted as liaison officer.

Before 2008 he headed the water and environment service of the Pasteur Institute in Lille, coordinated EU and NATO funded activities on water quality and bioterrorism in Central Asia, Russia, Lebanon and Turkey.

*Disclaimer: the information and views set out in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official opinion of the European Commission.*



## The 8 regions of the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence



graphic: ESDU; source: DEVCO

and Eastern neighbourhood, in the Middle East, Central and South East Asia;

- Lunching LABPLUS AFRICA innovative offensive for mobile labs and scale-up an African epidemiological reference R&D and training centre in Dakar.

### The way ahead is paved

Beyond these examples, while not being a crisis management mechanism, but rather a network of networks and platform

triggering regional and inner-country cooperation, the CBRN CoE network is expected to further develop its liaising and capacity building activities in the near future. Let's assume that this extends its contribution towards a safer and more secure CBRN architecture at local, regional and global levels, in a spirit of win-win partnership and multilateralism, and for the benefit of EU Member States and CBRN CoE partner countries.

<sup>1</sup> Online update <https://bit.ly/3hUpeoo>

## The EU CBRN CoE Initiative

Launched in 2010, the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence (EU CBRN CoE) Initiative is the largest European civilian external security programme, with a budget of €155 million for 2014-2020. It is funded through the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP).

The EU CBRN CoE aims to mitigate risks and strengthen an all-hazards security governance in Partner Countries, following a voluntary and demand-driven approach. EU support is provided to implement a wide range of CBRN Risk Mitigation activities including needs and risk assessments,

national and regional action plans, trainings, Train the Trainer modules, table top and real time (including cross-border) field exercises.

A National Focal Point (NFP) is appointed by each of the 61 Partner Countries and a CBRN National Team is tasked with the implementation of the initiative at the country level. NFPs report to and rely on a Regional Secretariat hosted and led by one of the Partner Countries in the region and supported by a UN Regional Coordinator. Each of the 8 Regional Secretariats benefits from technical CBRN On-Site Assistance (OSA) and from specific CBRN security governance support upon request.

10  
YEARS



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The Initiative is led by the European Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO), in close coordination with the European External Action Service (EEAS). The European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC) provides technical support to Partner Countries, while the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) ensures coherent and effective national, regional and international cooperation. Other relevant International and/or Regional Organizations and experts also contribute to the Initiative.

The EU CBRN CoE network is a valuable tool for regional cooperation

## Europe's strong commitment to international security cooperation

Interview with Bakhtiyor Gulyamov, Head of the EU CBRN CoE Regional Secretariat for Central Asia, Tashkent

**The European:** Minister, at the end of Exercise Jeyran in Tashkent in November 2019, you concluded: “Finally we are striving together with the European Union for interregional cooperation in antiterrorism and CBRN mitigation.” Let’s take this ambitious objective as the starting point of our interview.

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** Indeed, this is my conviction, and there are several good reasons for it. Firstly, the Central Asian region is characterised by the presence of various threats against which our countries are trying to unite and strengthen cooperation. Secondly, the president of Uzbekistan is actively promoting the cohesion policy of Central Asian countries; and thirdly, there are a number of regional organisations striving to merge or consolidate the common interests of the countries of the region. Most importantly in this area, we are actively cooperating with the European Union in the framework of the partnership programme.

**The European:** What is the most convincing issue in the EU Initiative?

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** “To live in a safer world” is a universal aspiration where no exceptions exist on governmental levels among the partner countries of the EU CBRN CoE network and the EU itself. It is even wider in the geographical scope than that, if you take into account various international commitments, including the United Nations (UN) Security Council Resolutions 1373 and 1540 and subsequent relevant decisions to prevent the spread of terrorism. Repelling all attempts of terrorism proliferation around the globe, especially those forms of terrorism that are exploiting CBRN scenarios, could yield positive results. Currently, the EU CBRN CoE Initiative provides a reliable platform for an inter-regional forum to review and target common terrorist threats affecting regions. It is our duty to enhance and expand cooperation to protect the lives of citizens and help make the world safer. All the other Heads of the Regional Secretariats support this.

**The European:** Could regional objectives, which vary according to the regional threats, be harmonised?

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** We all know well that threats may vary from region to region, but their goals and consequences are almost the same, wherever they occur. Regional objectives

are determined by the needs of countries in these regions. Reconciling the objectives as well as coordinating them are among the most difficult and effort-consuming tasks, but they are also ones that can have the most discernible and effective outcomes. For sure, it is worth investing in the harmonisation of regional objectives with regard to CBRN risk mitigation and this is not a groundless statement from me.

**The European:** Could you underpin this by an example?

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** Of course. During the previous round table meetings, the National Focal Points in Central Asia expressed a wish to have a Regional CBRN Action Plan focusing on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 1540. While practically every country has its own 1540 National Action Plan with varying priorities, developing a regional plan might have been seen like an insurmountable task at the beginning. Nevertheless, recognising the advantages of the regional coverage, we have taken this path in cooperation with our partners in the European Commission (EC), its Joint Research Centre (JRC), the United Nations (UN), also inviting the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) to join in the discussion. Now we already have the first draft of the Regional Action Plan.

**The European:** Is it warranted to foster cooperation between regions on the priorities that might be shared by them?

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** It will be prudent to begin with two or three regions, to develop a meaningful and applicable solution considering the similar character of the threat and interdependency between nations. For instance, pursuant to the EU CBRN CoE support to tackle the Covid-19 crisis announced in May 2020, the intention is to elaborate a tailor-made capacity building programme for the two neighbouring regions – Central Asia and Southeast and Eastern Europe. It is not only geographical proximity that dictates the necessity for inter-regional cooperation, but also the elements of common history among countries. These justify a common approach to the reinforcement of capabilities through trainings and webinars. Thus, a lessons-learned inter-regional post-Covid-19 conference is also envisaged for these countries in late 2020 or early 2021 in cooperation with the Biosafety Association for Central Asia and the Caucasus (BACAC).



**“Currently, the EU CBRN CoE Initiative provides a reliable platform for an inter-regional forum to review and target common terrorist threats affecting regions.”**

*Bakhtiyor Gulyamov is the acting Chairman of the State Committee of Industrial Safety of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Head of the Regional Secretariat for Central Asia of the EU CBRN CoE Initiative*

*photo: © National authorities of Uzbekistan*



**The European:** *To start with two or three regions strictly devoted to one or two objectives seems a pragmatic solution. What could be the role of the EU and what about arbitration?*

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** The role of the EU is already embedded in the EU CBRN CoE Initiative, since it is funded by the European Union and implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the European Commission’s Joint Research Centre (JRC). The European External Action Service (EEAS) is also involved in the follow-up of the Initiative. And in my view, the best results are delivered when a multiplicity of well-informed views are brought to the table.

**The European:** *That is what you did at the end of the Jeyran exercise at the end of November 2020.*

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** Yes, I invited all our international observers, you included, to speak out and share their assessment of the exercise. Then the Regional Secretariat produced a report where all these valuable observations were registered to inform our future efforts when organising similar exercises or to enhance the interoperability of the services.

**The European:** *Through what financial mechanism is the EU CBRN CoE Initiative being implemented?*

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** It is the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace, an interesting managerial approach of the EU institutions to define a tool with a special fund to provide short and mid-term assistance on conflict prevention, crisis response and peace building actions around the world. As I understand

it, the EEAS in the headquarters and EU delegations in the field are involved in running the instrument together with DG DEVCO. Concerning EEAS, it is an added value to use its ability to work closely with the foreign and defence ministries of the member states of the EU and benefit from its strong working relationship with the UN and other international organisations.

**The European:** *When would it be necessary to set up such an exercise with all affected countries, institutions and people?*

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** We first need to let the world settle after the Covid-19 pandemic, or for it to adapt to the “new normal” if we witness a new wave of the pandemic or if the coronavirus becomes endemic and never goes away. A field exercise takes time to prepare, especially an interregional one. Certainly, the duration of the preparations for a field exercise depends on international and national agreements, the number of experts involved and their commitment. My experience is to give it at least 1,5 to 2 years.

**The European:** *Thank you, Minister, for this interview*

**Bakhtiyor Gulyamov:** Thank you very much, I appreciated talking to your magazine. Taking the opportunity provided by this interview, I would like to express hope that we will be able to hold an inter-regional field exercise, where we will have the pleasure of welcoming the EU’s High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy/Vice-President of the EC, the Director of UNICRI and Director-General of DG DEVCO, as well as you, Mr Bühl.

# In the Spotlight +++ Franco-German couple +++

The current crisis gives Europe fresh impetus

## 10 points for a Franco-German partnership

The Regional Prefect (ret) Cyrille Schott, Member of the board of EuroDéfense France and the Editor-in-Chief of this magazine, Hartmut Bühl, set out their thoughts on the Franco-German partnership at the service of the European Union.



*"I welcome the constructive proposal made by France and Germany. It acknowledges the scope and the size of the economic challenge that Europe faces", declared Ursula von der Leyen, the President of the European Commission on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2020. She presented her own recovery plan for Europe on 27<sup>th</sup> May 2020, including the Franco-German ideas for mutualised debt issuance and striking a balance between grants and loans. The joint proposal put forward by Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, and Emmanuel Macron, the French President, is designed to pave the way for a new spending package. The joint statement by Richard Ferrand and Wolfgang Schäuble, co-chairs of the Franco-German Parliamentary Assembly, gives further backing to the Merkel-Macron agreement. It is now up to the institutions in Brussels to come up with specific proposals.*

Union were to create a fresh set of own resources, like a carbon border tax or a digital tax, independent of Member States' contributions. These new resources would facilitate the repay-

ment and are already being considered by the Commission.

### The 10 points of Cyrille Schott and Hartmut Bühl

1. The Franco-German "engine" is vitally important for the future of Europe. In spite of the differences in their respective political, economic and legal systems, and the necessity to take into account their public opinions, the two countries have again succeeded in reaching agreement because of their shared European convictions.
2. A fundamental change in the fiscal policy of the European Union (EU): Now that the Franco-German proposals have been put forward, they will of course be debated, but they are unprecedented in that they break with a fundamental budgetary taboo.
3. Raising money through EU loans: Member States have never allowed the EU as such to raise its own loans, despite its high credit rating. If the proposal is adopted, even with restrictions, we might think that in the long run the Union will be able to raise funds from the financial markets as a state.
4. Recovery plan will power the Euro: Europe's efforts to foster the necessary economic recovery of our countries will be substantial. EU loans would create the EU's own public debt as well as driving a global Euro bond market, a necessary further step in asserting the international status of the Euro.
5. Repaying EU loans: this would certainly be easier if the
6. The budgetary scope of the structural funds would be doubled: The allocation criteria of the recovery plan would focus on the countries, the regions and the sectors that have been the hardest hit by the pandemic; the amounts of Commission grants, and not loans, to Member States would more than double the € 500 billion already committed by Brussels.
7. Member States reservations are to be overcome: the proposals for spending the funds have raised reservations from Northern European countries like Denmark, The Netherlands and Sweden, as well as Austria. Their reservations focus on whether the funds should be distributed as grants, with no repayment requirements, or as repayable loans and how they should be allocated, with or without conditions. The forthcoming debates will focus on these issues and will probably lead to a compromise.
8. It is essential to avoid a "war" among Member States in view of the social and industrial situation of all countries after the pandemic: millions of jobs are in the balance; there should not be winners and losers from this crisis. Everyone must be a winner! There must be unprecedented solidarity in word and deed in order to relaunch our Union and not let it succumb to street protests and lose our soul.
9. An upheaval of the European institutions, endangered by the decision of the German constitutional court, must be warded off at all costs. The moment is crucial and the Union must, on the contrary, emerge stronger from the current crisis.
10. Solidarity must be at the heart of Europe: the Union has to honour this essential solidarity, cherished by its founding fathers, that focuses on the human being and that must be at the heart of its policy, for the benefit of our countries and the whole world that counts on a strong and liable Europe.





## **Common security: Europe takes it role seriously!**

*“From Covid-19 to climate disruption, from racial injustice to rising inequalities, we are a world in turmoil. At the same time, we are an international community with an enduring vision...to guide us to a better future.”*

António Guterres, UN Secretary-General, June 2020

# Common security and the proactive role of the European Union

The EU needs to preserve its unity, sanity and common sense

photo: © European Union 2019 –Source : EP

by **Tonino Picula MEP, Foreign Policy Coordinator for the S&D Group, European Parliament, Brussels/Strasbourg**

It is definitely not an exaggeration to say that the year 2020 will define the future of the EU and the multilateral world as we know it. When Croatian journalists asked me last year about the upcoming security challenges in 2020, I stressed the various threats, risks and issues which are complex, unpredictable and require constant action. These include the crisis of multilateralism, Brexit, terrorist threats, the issue of migration, and growing instability in the Middle East. These are just some of the multiple challenges that have not gone away but have been put aside by the biggest pandemic of our lifetime. The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an outburst to the already complex security environment and presented itself as a significant challenge for the new “geopolitical” European Commission.

## The global order is put into question

The year has started dramatically: we have witnessed the killing of General Soleimani, the escalation of the situation in Libya, the disaster in Idlib, Syria, the renewed migration crisis on the Turkish-Greek border, and the immediate consequence of Brexit day. The year was supposed to end with the crucial US presidential elections in November, on

which the future of global security in the multilateral world will also largely depend. US citizens face a stark choice between the continuation of the current “America first” doctrine by President Donald Trump, and a certain comeback to transatlantic values and cooperation through Obama’s former Vice-President Joe Biden. However, besides these elections, the complete global order is being put into question, and it is unclear what the aftermath will be in light of the upcoming global economic crisis, which is set to be the worst since the Great Depression of 1929.

The EU needs to preserve its unity, sanity and common sense, while maintaining cooperation and dialogue with all international partners to address the pandemic. At the same time, one

can see that there is an ongoing battle of narratives, disinformation wars and accusations which are shaping the global environment in unprecedented terms. Witnessing the ongoing strained relations between Washington and Beijing, there is one aspect I find particularly interesting: the politics of bluntness. While weighing words in a diplomatic surrounding goes without saying, one could not but see a complete lack of any diplomatic tact in the ongoing strained relationship and accusations between Washington and Beijing.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron have also called out China for its lack of trans-

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### Tonino Picula MEP

has been Member of the European Parliament since 2013. During his political career he has held offices in local authorities and in the Sabor, the national parliament of Croatia. Mr Picula was Foreign Minister from 2000-2003, then Mayor of the city of Velika Gorica (2005-2009) and Vice-chair of the Committee on Foreign Affairs from 2007 to 2011. He also served as Vice-President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly from 2011 to 2013.



**“The Covid-19 pandemic has caused an outburst to the already complex security environment and presented itself as a significant challenge for the new ‘geopolitical’ European Commission.”**

Tonino Picula

parency regarding the development of the Covid-19 pandemic, stating that Beijing has a lot of questions to answer. To clear up its image and to clarify the origins of the virus, China should therefore allow a transparent international investigation on its territory, under the auspices of the World Health Organisation.

### More power through better cooperation

We should also address the increased assertiveness of certain global actors and autocratic regimes, which can only be tackled through stronger EU cooperation. The pandemic has also shown an exceptional threat of foreign interference in terms of cyber-attacks, cybercrime and disinformation operations from state and non-state actors. It essentially challenges our democratic system, our values and our security, and we need to respond by strengthening our capabilities. Early warnings of the upcoming economic crisis clearly state our need to address possible foreign takeovers of our strategic sectors, assets and technologies, which pose a great risk to our security. Our critical infrastructure needs to be protected, and screening foreign direct investment in strategic sectors can be a useful tool to protect these assets. What was supposed to be the highlight of the Croatian Presidency of the EU, unfortunately had to be undergone in the different format of video conference. Indeed, the Zagreb Summit was supposed to bring leaders together to build stronger ties with the region through an ambitious and sustainable investment plan and a strong message that enlargement remains the EU's priority. It is of utmost importance

for the EU to maintain an active and constructive role in the region as the Western Balkans are partners of crucial importance, and their EU enlargement remains a vital EU strategic and security interest.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also revealed a strong need to encourage our partners to align themselves with our Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP), as that will be a matter of utmost importance in the post-Covid world. The EU needs to push more actively for security cooperation with the Western Balkans, not only through assistance and joint projects, but also through additional joint actions and partnerships, especially on strategic communication, to counteract false narratives and propaganda by external actors who do not share our values or interests. The EU provides content over noise, but it needs to have a strong voice to deliver a clear message to the region.

In the case of Brexit, there are still many open questions on the future relationship and it is very hard to determine at this point in time how the situation will evolve, pending the much-needed extension of the transition period. The new reality can prove to be a good turning point for even closer security cooperation with the UK, but for that it takes two. It is definitely necessary to conclude an agreement with our UK friends to continue close cooperation through our CFSP framework, as we share the same set of values and face the same immediate threats to our peace, security and stability.

### A realistic approach to security and defence

It will be interesting to follow the development of the Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) and the strategic review expected this year. I believe that the already undertaken commitments could be deepened as a result of this crisis, especially in developing strategic autonomy through capabilities and readiness. Updating the PESCO framework, while addressing possible coherence and synergy with other EU defence initiatives, would build up the EU's capability as a global security actor, to the benefit of its citizens.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the EU has addressed the increased instability in its southern neighbourhood, and in April launched a new CSDP military operation “Iriní”, which replaced operation Sophia. The aim of the operation is to protect the Libyan peace process, implement the UN arms embargo and monitor illegal exports and smuggling from Libya, while training the Libyan Navy and Coast Guard to enforce law at sea. The EU needs to maintain a proactive approach to security and stability in the Mediterranean, having in mind the possible consequenc-



### The Conference on the Future of Europe

The idea of a Conference on the Future of Europe from 2020 to 2022 was discussed by the European Council at its meeting held on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2019. The idea is to get citizens involved in a wide-ranging debate on Europe's future in the coming decade and beyond, including in light of the Covid-19 pandemic. On 24<sup>th</sup> June 2020, the Council agreed its position on the arrangements for the conference that should be launched as soon as the epidemiological conditions allow it. The Council proposes that citizens should be involved through debates at national, regional and European levels, through multilingual internet platforms and citizens' panels in Member States.



**“We need an open and inclusive debate across Europe about the future priorities of the EU and concrete solutions on how to emerge stronger and more resilient from the current crisis. This broad dialogue with citizens and various other stakeholders will help guide the way ahead, contributing to a joint vision of the direction the EU should take in the next decade and beyond.”**

Andreja Metelko-Zgombić, Croatian State Secretary for European Affairs

es of the pandemic and the economic crisis. Needless to say, results in its immediate neighbourhood are the ones that will be most felt by EU citizens. The weak health system, lack of medical staff and supplies on the African continent is very worrying and can have severe consequences on the health and security of African citizens. We have a responsibility to provide crisis management help through our CSDP instruments, and we have to prepare for a possible worsening of existing conflicts. While writing this text, our lives, lifestyle and everyday work have significantly changed. We do not know yet when all of this will end and when we will be able to return to normal life, but it is already clear that nothing will be the same. We need to learn valuable lessons from the whole situation, looking at past mistakes while planning a sustainable future and playing an active and credible role. Internally, our biggest enemies are selfishness and nationalism, and we need to fight with all forces against them. That is why the value aspect is important. The EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy Josep Borrell said to EU defence ministers in May that the pandemic will very likely deteriorate the security environment in the years to come, and that would only increase the need for

a stronger EU approach to security and defence, as health is now a security issue as well. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for the EU and its Member States to achieve an active role and to create a new multilateral system based on our values of peace, stability and cooperation. This is more important than ever and can only be achieved together, through common solutions and united action, to tackle the threats that affect our Union.

### Europe's role to play in global order

The EU in the post-Covid and post-Brexit world needs to make a substantial contribution in addressing global challenges and threats to global order and international law, including through a new Global Strategy. We must push for a stronger European role on the uncertain global stage, and we should not hesitate to push for the strategic autonomy of our continent. We need to use this opportunity to underline who our partners and allies are, and to strongly reassert our position on the global map. Hence, our valuable partnerships with actors such as the UN, NATO and the OSCE need to be preserved, to prevent various threats to our security. Finally, our CFSP needs to be an active

part of the Conference of the Future of Europe where we need to clearly set ambitious goals for the future. The Covid-19 crisis has shown that security and defence will have a very prominent role in the future. Europe should be a frontrunner in technological change and innovation, building on the Commission's strategy for artificial intelligence, being ethical, open and curious toward new opportunities, while ready to respond to incoming challenges through effective crisis management. I would strongly welcome the highest possible ambition to achieve these goals and to strengthen our strategic autonomy, in order to reduce our dependence on the global supply chain, as our citizens are expecting from us.



European solidarity – download of protection masks from a military aircraft in Italy

photo: © European Union, 2020/EC-Audiovisual Service/Piero Cruciatti

Europe's institutions must be able to anticipate and efficiently manage upcoming crises

# Regaining trust: for a more resilient and effective Europe in the face of crises

by Natalia Pouzyreff, French member of Parliament  
and member of the Parliamentary defence committee

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown the shortcomings of European states' coordination efforts. This observation is now shared by Europe's politicians, such as Wolfgang Schäuble, the President of the Bundestag, who spoke on this subject recently. Displays of national retrenchment increased as the virus spread through the continent, as European states enacted unilateral border closures and took a predatory approach to the procurement of personal protective equipment (PPE). These behaviors have eroded the European peoples' trust in our common institutions. Adherence to the European project entails subscribing to the relevance of the Union and trusting its ability to protect its citizens. To do this, Europe's institutions must be able to anticipate and efficiently manage upcoming crises.

## Strategic autonomy...

The resilience of our production systems is a prerequisite for coping with and overcoming crises. Based on this premise, a new consensus is emerging for the need to develop the European Union's strategic autonomy. This willingness to defend European sovereignty means limiting our dependence on third-party countries, as well as protecting our strategic assets, such as high-tech and health sector companies, which could fall prey to extra-territorial acquisitions. In addition, we must reinforce the resilience of goods and information flows, as exogenous shocks can disrupt entire supply chains and transport routes. In our world of interdependencies, it would be illusory to think that we would be able to bring all strategic activities back to Europe. We must therefore agree at the Union level on which sectors we need to control at all costs, in terms of technologies and data.

## ...and improved crisis management coordination

In 2016, EU Member States adopted a regulation concerning the provision of emergency aid within the Union to enable the institutions to respond more rapidly to large-scale crises. This objective has clearly not yet been achieved. While many mechanisms exist, they seem to be too diverse and fragmented. For instance, the European Commissioner for Crisis Management is responsible for an Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) on which the civil protection reserve RescEU depends. Its late deployment forced the President of the Commission, Ursula von der Leyen, to apologise to Italy.

In parallel, planning and deployment instruments are placed under the responsibility of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy: the Civilian Planning and Conduct

Capability (CPPC) and the Military Planning and Conduct Capability (MPCC).

We can legitimately question such an abundance of mechanisms and to what extent their dispersion does not hinder the overall effectiveness of the response. Similarly, it is regrettable that certain means of action, such as the solidarity clause between Member States, have not been used. As the French defence minister, Florence Parly, expressed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July before the European Parliament *"Europe cannot and must not be a set of structures: (...) it must become an active force"*.

## Strengthening the operational governance

The aim is therefore to strengthen the operational governance of the Union and to ensure a more direct link between the decision-making level and operational implementation.

**A first approach** would be to clarify the roles of each entity within the EU, particularly between civilian and military capabilities in charge of planning and conducting operations.

**As a second step**, a common strategic culture should be developed. This is the aim pursued through the European Intervention Initiative (EI2), an approach that would have to be adopted in light of health, environmental and humanitarian risks.

**Finally**, the increasing number of confrontations between sovereign states also underlines the need to strengthen cohesion between European allies. At the beginning of June, a Turkish frigate "lit-up" the French frigate Le Courbet with its naval targeting radar, even though it was flying under the NATO flag. Although France has obtained the support of eight European nations, no common stance has been taken. The Member States have a duty to show their solidarity, otherwise the Union is merely a name that will be all the less respected outside our borders as it is not honoured within them.

Therefore, the idea of establishing a European security council, introduced by the French President and the German Chancellor, would facilitate decision-making in critical situations. This idea also implies a questioning of the principle of unanimous voting, which Angela Merkel mentioned at the inauguration of the German EU Presidency.

In the face of adversity and of the uncertainties that remain, the European Union will be able to regain the peoples' trust only if it fully embodies the promises of solidarity and protection that it was founded upon.



Natalia Pouzyreff is French member of Parliament (LaREM) since 2017 and member of the Parliamentary defence committee

Photo: Stéphane Kyndt

A useful tool during the Covid-19 pandemic

# International cooperation based on CBRN risk mitigation

by Antonia Marie de Meo, Director of UNICRI, and Marian de Bruijn, Programme Coordinator at UNICRI, Turin

In the area of Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) risk mitigation, no country and no region can advance and play safe in isolation. Consequently, from 2010, the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) has supported the European Commission to create and implement the CBRN Centres of Excellence. This initiative is shaping new comprehensive international cooperation models and standards based on a universal perception of risks and a global commitment to jointly share responsibilities.

During its 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the initiative faced one of the biggest CBRN crises in the history of mankind, the Covid-19 (SARS-CoV-2) outbreak. All 61 partner countries of the initiative as well as the Member States of the European Union were affected by Covid-19. In this context, the initiative has proved to be very useful during the global pandemic. There are three foundational pillars that helped the initiative be an effective network for international cooperation.

## Covid-19 response through effective cooperation

The first pillar is the design of the structure for international cooperation. To facilitate dialogue and cooperation between different UN Member States, the CBRN Centres of Excellence were not created as a physical structure, but as a **decentralised network**. This network was designed to be agile and easily adaptable to different challenges. The initiative is based on 8 regional hubs or Regional Secretariats, each led by a Head of Secretariat, appointed by the host country, and an international UNICRI staff member who performs the role of Regional Coordinator. Together with the Head and the rest of the Secretariat Team, the Regional Coordinator is in daily contact with all National Focal Points, each of them representing a UN Partner Member State in the region.

During the Covid-19 crisis, the decentralised network has proved to be resilient. While the emergency changed daily and differed from country to country, the UNICRI Regional Coordinators were able to keep a finger on the pulse. Hence, the initiative could easily tailor its strategies and respond to both the national and regional conditions. Most of the National Focal Points, who are still now preventing and combating the impact of the Covid-19 crisis, could rely on a functional international network to access knowledge and resources and respond rapidly to their domestic priorities. Notwithstanding the difficult circumstances, this regional and international cooperation network remained connected and operational. The second foundational pillar that has been important during the pandemic is the **ownership of the partner countries**. Ten



Photo: UNICRI

## Antonia Marie De Meo

is the director of UNICRI. Prior to this, she was Chief of the Human Rights, Transitional Justice and Rule of Law Service at the UN Support Mission and Representative of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in Libya.

years ago, it was decided that the participation of UN Member States should be on a voluntary basis. Although this approach generated skepticism, especially from those who believed that there cannot be commitment without a politically or legally binding agreement, volunteerism has been essential to ensure that the partner countries are not simply beneficiaries, but owners of the initiative.

The third pillar is directly linked to the second: UNICRI and the European Commission (EC), throughout the years, have embraced and promoted a **country driven approach**. This means that resources were allocated based on the needs identified by the partner countries. To do so, partner countries have established national CBRN teams who are responsible for identifying national priorities, conducting need assessments and producing National Action Plans. In this regard, the partner countries are in the driver's seat, not only in their cooperation with the EC, but also vis-a-vis other regional and international partners that are addressing CBRN related issues. This mechanism has proved to be highly effective during the Covid-19 crisis, when partner countries could identify main needs and communicate them to their Regional Secretariats. In turn, the Regional Secretariats worked together with the EC and other partners to ensure that available expertise was mobilised to answer specific needs.

Today it is possible to affirm that key decisions that were taken ten years ago at the outset of the Centres of Excellence Initiative are extremely valid and enable partner countries to mitigate the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic more effectively.





# NATO JCBRN Defence COE – EU HORIZON 2020 eNOTICE project

## Test bed for NATO-EU & Civil-Military Cooperation

photo: NATO

by Colonel Wolfgang Karl-Heinz Reich, Vyškov  
Dr Olga Vybornova and Professor Jean-Luc Gala,  
Louvain

In general, and like 24 other NATO accredited Centres of Excellence (COE), the Joint Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Defence COE (JCBRND COE), located in Vyškov in south-eastern Czech Republic, is a NATO military body and a multi-nationally sponsored organisation. It offers recognised expertise and experience to the benefit of the Alliance and other partners. Its activities are focused on support to NATO's transformation process, operational support by providing CBRN defence advice, and support of CBRN defence education, training and exercises.

### NATO-EU and civil-military cooperation

The JCBRND COE is working closely together with the NATO HQ Committee on Proliferation (CP) and the Civil Emergency Planning Committee (CEPC) and assists in translating civil-military non-binding guidelines into action. It also supports NATO's Euro-Atlantic Disaster Response Coordination Centre (EADRCC) with operational planning and CBRN reachback support, especially in planning and conducting their huge multidisciplinary exercises.

### The 2019 Advisors Conference

A promising example of civil-military cooperation is the 2019 JCBRND COE Advisors Conference. The non-binding guidelines for enhanced civil-military cooperation to deal with the consequences of large-scale CBRN incidents were analysed and discussed with military and civilian stakeholders of NATO HQ and its strategic commands. In addition, the JCBRND COE produced

a scenario-based paper on cross-border operations in case of CBRN incidents. Now, NATO is working with all relevant bodies on the recommendations and action items of this conference. At this first Advisors Conference there was no participation of the EU and its relevant bodies – this has been recognised and the following four actions were proposed to integrate the EU in the upcoming 2020 CBRN Advisors Conference:

- Intensify NATO – EU cooperation in the area of CBRN defence related civil-military cooperation in accordance with the 2018 Joint Declaration on EU-NATO cooperation;
- Develop common civil-military terminology for CBRN response;
- Investigate options stockpiling CBRN defence equipment for NATO's and the EU's operations and population, improving the mitigation of large-scale CBRN incidents;
- Consider a mechanism to delineate responsibility between NATO and the EU in support of response to large-scale CBRN incidents.

### Support to EU civil projects

Furthermore, the JCBRND COE supports the EU and their civil projects with expertise and training solutions, e.g. the Life Agent Training (LAT) which is conducted in the vicinity of Vyškov and is certainly one of the very rare possibilities in Europe to train with real chemical agents outside of buildings. This LAT is offered to students of the University of Rome 'Tor Vergata'/ITA, and to members of the EU CBRN Risk Mitigation CoE initiative.

Close links to these EU CBRN CoE initiatives have been established. The JCBRND COE presented the ways they could support up to 61 nations, grouped in 8 regions, with regard to CBRN defence training (residential courses, LAT, Mobile Training Solu-

## Colonel Wolfgang Karl-Heinz Reich



Photo: private

is Deputy Director of the NATO Joint CBRN Defence Centre of Excellence. He holds an Masters in economics and has a broad background in CBRN defence through leadership positions such as Company Commander including a KFOR Mission; Deputy Battalion Commander including NATO Response Force 4 and 7; CBRN-WMD Subject Matter Expert in NATO Allied Command Transformation, Norfolk, Virginia; Head of Capability Development Division of the Bundeswehr CBRN Defence Command.

tions and Advanced Distance Learning), but also with CBRN Reachback, with Modelling and Simulation and Evaluation of CBRN capabilities. All this is within our capabilities, capacities and within the framework of NATO's releasability policy, of course. There is a Mobile Training Team planned in September 2020 to conduct a course in Morocco – this is just one practical outcome of NATO-EU and civil-military cooperation in the area of CBRN defence.

### The EU Horizon 2020 eNOTICE project

The JCBRND COE is also an active partner in the eNOTICE project, which stands for **E**uropean **N**etwork **O**f CBRN **T**raining **C**entres under the umbrella of EU Horizon 2020. The project started in September 2017 and will finish in August 2022. It encompasses twelve partners including three military training centres. A Joint Activity (JA) was already conducted in Vyškov

in February 2019. The I-RAPTOR course was the basis for this JA and more than 30 students took part in it including many of the eNOTICE partners. The objective of the eNOTICE project is to build a dynamic, functional, and sustainable pan-European network of CBRN training centres, testing and demonstration sites (CBRN TC). The eNOTICE network seeks to improve European preparedness, resilience and incident response to CBRN attacks and emerging threats through close multi- (stakeholders) and single-discipline (practitioners) interactions. Considering the variety of disciplines involved in managing CBRN risks, collaboration has always been quite challenging. CBRN TC act as the perfect operational intermediary between all civilian and military CBRN actors, relevant EU bodies and policy-makers, and thus serve as the best cradle for expansion of a network of CBRN professionals. eNOTICE TC gather all interested stakeholders – practitioners, representatives of EU research and industry, policy makers at multidisciplinary field exercises, table-top exercises, serious gaming and simulations that are open to external attendees during the project lifetime. These exercises and face-to-face meetings in operational settings provide unique opportunities for visibility of the TC and their training capability, identification and development of user-driven technological solutions, e.g. through the identification of genuine users' needs, technical testing, validations, demonstrations, focus groups etc. Lessons learned from these joint activities result in recommendations to improve their organisation and their output, for optimised resource allocation and enhanced collaboration both at operational and strategic (policy) level.

### eNOTICE policy meetings

eNOTICE has held two captivating meetings, first with the EU and second with German CBRN policy representatives. The first policy meeting with representatives from DG HOME, DG ECHO and DG DEVCO was organised on 20th June 2018, the day after the eNOTICE large-scale field exercise Bio Garden at the military base in Peutie-Vilvoorde, Belgium. The second policy meeting with representatives of German national, regional and local authorities, both civilian and military, took place during the eNOTICE Joint Activity in Dortmund, Germany, on 20th September 2019. Civil-military and international cooperation were the main line of discussion and are recognised as an absolute must. However, it was underlined that civil-military cooperation still lacks an overall overarching concept guiding both military and civilian actors and defining their collaboration at all levels, facilitating communication, interoperability, and joint training. The main conclusions from the meetings and recommendations expressed by the participants were:

- Deeper and more structured civil-military cooperation between CBRN training stakeholders, in particular through the NATO Framework Nations Concept (FNC) – the driving paradigm of multinational defence cooperation. Integration



## NATO JCBRND COE

The JCBRND COE is made up of 14 Nations and encompasses 75 military and civilian personnel. The missions and tasks of the COE are:

- CBRN Concept and Doctrine Development
- Capabilities Development and Defence Planning
- Experimentation support
- Training, Exercise and Education
- CBRN Lessons Learned, Evaluation and Analysis
- CBRN Operation support
- CBRN Modelling and Simulation
- CBRN knowledge distribution to NATO community
- COE-organised Courses, Workshops and Conferences
- Support other COEs and mutual cooperation among COEs
- Support the NATO Ballistic Missile Defence
- Support Partners in CBRN Defence on request
- Cooperation with the EU

## Dr Olga Vybornova, PhD,



Photo: private

is a senior researcher at the Centre for Applied Molecular Technologies at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL-CTMA), Belgium. She is responsible for coordination and management of the eNOTICE project. Her research interests are in the field of ICT technology for crisis management and security applications, decision making support systems, innovation management practices and support for security end-users.

## Professor Jean-Luc Gala, MD, PhD,



Photo: private

is a full professor in biomedical sciences at the Université Catholique de Louvain (UCL). He is also chief resident/specialist registrar at the Cliniques Universitaires St Luc (CUSL/UCL) and head of the military biological CBRN research led by the BE Defence Laboratories Department-Biothreats unit (DLD-Bio). He is the head of the integrated military-academic platform CTMA/DLD-Bio, and scientific and medical counsellor for the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Defence.

in this dynamic is significant for eNOTICE.

- Combining military and civilian knowledge and competence to improve risk assessment, CBRN incident response and standing operation procedures (SOPs).
- Offer more training and exercising opportunities, with the focus on a standardised approach in cross-border training in order to comply with the procedures and standards of neighbours.
- Look into legal constraints, learn and take into account of (un)acceptable procedures in different Member States.
- Prioritise training the trainers, and sending the trainers instead of full teams of trainees. This would save resources for travelling, accommodation and costs of training itself. At the same time it would help to cope with the language barrier issue in cross-border training, since it's far easier to find a limited number of trainers, than larger groups of first responders who fluently speak and understand the language of training.
- Use of military capacities in operations led by civilian actors.
- Conduct more comprehensive civil-military scientific and technological research, development and innovation, with alignment of civilian and military research programmes and funding mechanisms to avoid duplication of efforts and conflicts of interest.
- Combine CBRN defence exercises with training first re-

sponders to use new technologies and tools.

### A promising network

Besides linking with individual training centres and first responder organisations, eNOTICE establishes links with existing professional networks, such as national associations of firefighters, networks of law enforcement agencies, etc. Targeted dissemination of the eNOTICE network to the national actors is considered key to success. Each category of actors is addressed according to its specific needs, without trying to unify them all, as it is impossible to treat all stakeholders in the same way. We believe that the strength of the network is its diversity. The network encompasses training centres, and in a larger sense first responder organisations, of various disciplines, size, infrastructure and contents of training. The major requirement for network membership is that a training centre should be supported by and act on behalf of the local, regional or national authorities, in line with national (and if applicable, with international) policy, rules and regulations. Commercial organisations not being part of a national or international system and/or not officially supported by the national authorities cannot be members of the network.

Finally, in the area of CBRN defence one might state that NATO's JCBRND COE plays a leading role in NATO-EU as well as in civil-military cooperation within NATO but also within the EU; where the eNOTICE project is certainly the most successful H2020 project regarding civil-military cooperation, encompassing 3 military consortium members, both national and NATO.



## Future activities

To intensify and enhance NATO-EU as well as civil-military cooperation, a couple of activities are already planned for this year and next:

- The JCBRND COE Advisors Conference from 5<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020 will invite EU stakeholders and will also cover the current Covid-19 pandemic.
- Live Agent Training, Vyškov, CZE, from 12<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> October 2020,
- The JCBRND COE offers the following training/courses open to partners: Consequence Management after a CBRN Incident Course, Vyškov, CZE, from 23<sup>rd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2020. This course will be opened as the eNOTICE JA inviting participants from other EU projects
- The Dissemination Workshop at the INTERSCHUTZ Fair 2021 will encompass 4 other EU H2020 network practitioners projects,
- The eNOTICE JA in 2021 in Rieti, Italy will be a civil-military multidisciplinary field exercise.





60 years of scientific experience

# The JRC's longstanding effort to support the EU CBRN programmes

by Said Abousahl, Head of Unit,  
Joint Research Centre (JRC), Brussels

Established as a Joint Nuclear Research Centre by the Euratom Treaty, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) draws on 60 years of scientific experience and continually builds its expertise, sharing knowhow with EU Member States, the scientific community and international partners. With time, the JRC broadened its field of research to non-nuclear disciplines, which now represent around 75% of its activities. Under its Euratom research and training programmes, the JRC currently dedicates an important part of its nuclear activities to nuclear safeguards and security. This includes research and support of the implementation of EU Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) safety and security programmes and comprises the technical implementation of the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence (CoE) Initiative.

## Some history of current relevance

The JRC activities in nuclear security started in 1969 with the development of dedicated competences in the field of nuclear safeguards, supporting the implementation of the Euratom

Safeguards system in Europe. This expertise became internationally recognised, with the establishment in 1982 of the European Community Support Programme to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), led by the JRC. The knowledge was then used to support the implementation of other EU strategic programmes. After the 1986 Chernobyl accident and the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1989, serious concerns were raised about the safety of some nuclear power plants in Eastern Europe and the risks associated with the loss, theft or misuse of nuclear materials.

## The TACIS programme

The 1992 G7 summit in Munich entrusted the EU with addressing the relevant problems. The European Commission established the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) programme. The JRC played an important role in its technical implementation from 1992-2006. One of its projects focused on combatting the illicit trafficking of nuclear materials in partnership with the Institute for Nuclear Research in Kiev. Nuclear forensics competences had been developed in JRC Karlsruhe labs based on the experience gained from nuclear safeguards and from the cross-fertilisation between the various projects carried out on site, especially those related to fuel characterisations and performances.

## Security response plans

During the end of the 1990s and beginning of the 2000s, a period of preparation for the enlargement of the EU to Eastern European countries, the European Commission launched several programmes to secure the future new borders of the EU.

**“The JRC plays an important role in ensuring the interface between internal and external EU CBRN activities.”**

The JRC was given the opportunity to implement some nuclear security related projects. It also developed, together with the new EU States, dedicated response plans, also used for practical exercises based on scenarios of illicit trafficking of nuclear materials. The Nuclear Security Response Plan developed by the JRC was later used by IAEA's Nuclear Security Office to support its Member States. Under the TACIS 2 programme (2001-2006), a dedicated budget was allocated to combat the illicit trafficking in the CIS countries. The most important project was the so-called Multi-Country Project to Combat Illicit Trafficking, involving seven different countries: Russian Federation, Kazakhstan, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Moldavia and Belarus. Illicit movement of nuclear materials can happen at any border, even in non-nuclear states.

### The role of the JRC within the CBRN CoE Initiative

Multi-country collaboration to efficiently fight illicit trafficking of nuclear material and radioactive material was therefore seen as the best approach to tackle the challenges. This regional approach was central for launching the EU CBRN CoE initiative in 2010 under the Instrument for Stability (2007-2013), currently continued under the Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace (2014-2020). This initiative allows the European Commission to extend its outreach activities to regions beyond CIS while at the same time expanding in a holistic way to radiological nuclear risks together with other risks related to chemical and biological materials.

### A dedicated Task Force for technical support

The JRC was entrusted by DG DEVCO to establish a dedicated Task Force involving nuclear experts, JRC experts in the field of biological and chemical risks, and support staff in communication and IT. The JRC supports the network of currently 61 partner countries, their officially nominated National Focal Points and CBRN National Teams in assessing their needs and drafting the subsequent integrated CBRN National Action Plans. So far, 39 countries have assessed their needs and 27 have completed their action plans. The development of the latter is ongoing in an additional 12 countries. Since the launch of the first projects in 2012, the EU CBRN CoE initiative has hosted more than 200 training events, ranging from border control and combatting illicit trafficking to crisis management and public health impact mitigation, with altogether around 2000 participants. The JRC has created a database with more than 460 training materials produced by the projects in different languages.

### Implementation of the EU CBRN Action Plans

The JRC also plays an important role in ensuring the interface between internal and external EU CBRN activities and is an important contributor to the implementation of the action plans. The JRC is monitoring EUSECTRA (European Nuclear Security

### Dr Said Abousahl



photo: JRC

is the Head of the Euratom Coordination Unit at the Joint Research Centre (JRC) of the European Commission, in charge of coordinating the JRC activities in the field of nuclear safety, safeguards and security. From 1993-2006, he worked for 3 years at the JRC/Geel laboratories on uranium and plutonium measurements, then at the JRC/Karlsruhe Laboratories as head of sector on nuclear analytical measurements.

Training Centre), inaugurated in 2013, which also serves as a platform for knowledge transfer among experts and development of training modules. At the end of 2016, the JRC led the high-level radiological and nuclear security exercise APEX Europa, which allowed identification of some priority areas for enhanced intra-EU cooperation in nuclear security and improving detection of CBRN materials. Another important objective in the EU CBRN Action Plans is on improving detection of CBRN materials.

The JRC has been entrusted with the coordination of the Illicit Trafficking Radiation Assessment Programme (ITRAP+10), implemented by the European Commission and the US Department of Homeland Security (Nuclear Detection Office). In the framework of ITRAP+10, the JRC carried out testing, evaluation, and comparison of all radiation detection equipment available in Europe. ITRAP+10 also entailed capacity-building activities with EU Member States for the testing of radiation detection equipment: the transfer of knowhow acquired by the JRC to selected Member States' laboratories was a first step towards a European certification scheme for detection instrumentation.

### Coordinating international activities

Finally, the JRC also coordinates EU technical CBRN activities with international partners. It co-chairs (with the United States) the Nuclear Forensic International Technical Working Group, which gathers nuclear and law enforcement experts from over 35 countries to develop effective technical solutions for unlawful or criminal incidents involving nuclear or other radioactive material.

The Border Monitoring Working Group, established in 2005 by IAEA, US and EU and currently chaired by EU (JRC) is another important international forum to strengthen global capacity to combat the illicit trafficking of nuclear and other radioactive materials. It has established itself as a model for successful multilateral working groups, inspiring other similar coordination initiatives related to nuclear security.

We at the Joint Research Centre are proud of what has been achieved and we continue to strive for a more secure world.

# A decade of CBRN risk mitigation

(Ed/nc) The current global coronavirus crisis has brought biological risks and the necessity to prepare for pandemics to the fore. But the mitigation of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) risks and threats has already been part of the European Commission's activities for over a decade. In 2009 the Commission presented its first EU CBRN Action plan for 2010-2015, which was followed in 2014 by the "Communication on a new EU approach to the detection and mitigation of CBRN-E risks". In 2017 a new EU CBRN Action plan was presented, building upon the work launched in the EU with the first Action Plan and addressing emerging threats.

## Excerpts from the 2014 communication:

"[T]he threat from CBRN materials and explosives remains high and is evolving. [...]"

The EU debate on radicalisation recently intensified. Latest reports suggest that of particular concern are returnees from Syria. Some of these and other radicalised individuals, having access to and working in sensitive areas might use their insider knowledge to strike against critical infrastructures, such as a water purification plant, or they may disable railways electrical power supplies. Such insider threats may have transnational

impacts and therefore also pose threats to EU security. [...]"

While work at national level continues to play a vital role in the fight against terrorism, a robust, better designed, and proportionate strategy to anticipate and deter future CBRN-E risks at EU level is needed, including tackling illegal methods of production, handling, concealing and storing these materials. It is therefore important to adopt a proactive approach and to put effective, proportional safeguards in place, including prevention, preparedness and response measures at EU level, while respecting fundamental rights. [...]"

## A new approach to the detection and mitigation of CBRN-E risks

The objectives of this Communication are to better assess the risks, to develop countermeasures, to share knowledge and best practices, test and validate new safeguards with the ultimate goal of adopting new security standards. [...]"

## Better detection

[...] The Commission will

- support further short-term trials for practitioners in order to improve detection ... ultimately leading to creation of an EU approach to public events security
- review and build on the gap analysis on the detection of explosives
- carry out a gap analysis on the detection of CBRN materials
- prepare analytical papers and overviews of CBRN and explosives threats and risks indifferent areas of public security, including transport to support policy
- organize and support more actions dealing with the issue of insider threats [...]"

# Major historical CBRN incidents and attacks

**1976, July**

Chemical accident



## Seveso, Italy

- Overpressure value in the manufacture of the disinfectant hexachlorophene
- Release of highly toxic and cancer-causing dioxin compound TCDD into the environment
- 447 people were found to suffer from skin lesions or chloracne
- 3,300 animals found dead
- 80,000 animals had to be put down.

photo: CGP Grey, CC BY 2.0, Flickr.com

**1984, December**

Chemical accident



## Bhopal, India

- Gas leak incident at a pesticide plant in Bhopal
- Over 600,000 people living in the nearby shanty town exposed to methyl isocyanate (MIC) gas and other chemicals
- At least 3,787 people killed (government figures refer to 15000 over the years)
- At least 558.125 people injured

photo: Jean-Pierre Dalbéra, CC BY 2.0, Flickr.com

**1986, April**

Nuclear accident



## Chernobyl, Ukraine

- An explosion and fire at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant released large quantities of radioactive particles into the atmosphere (Level 7- maximum classification)
- radioactive particles spread over much of western USSR and Europe
- 31 people died during the accident
- Long-term effects like cancers, radiation syndrome or leukemia still being investigated

photo: Uwe Brodrecht, CC BY 2.0, Flickr.com

**1995, June**

Religious terrorist attack



## Tokyo

- The religious movement Aum Shinrikyo released sarin nerve gas in Tokyo subway
- 13 people died
- More than 6,000 others suffered the effects of the nerve gas
- This worst attack in modern Japanese history prompted global concern about terrorist groups obtaining chemical weapons

photo: Luca Mascaro, CC BY-SA 2.0, Flickr.com



### Using better research, testing and validation

[...] The Commission will

- continue to ensure that research takes security policy needs into account ...
- further support CBRN-E research, testing and validation activities, and progress towards appropriate detection standards adapted to each type of environment...

### Training, awareness and capacity building

[...] The Commission will

- further develop training tools, encourage the sharing of best practices and develop guidance materials to support practitioners with state-of-the-art training, in particular helping law enforcement practitioners improve their detection practices ...
- continue to raise awareness of the limitations of explosives detection equipment ...
- address the human factor risks by promoting a programme to ensure that those who operate detection equipment are well trained and motivated, and improve communication between industry, security service providers and Member States through workshops

and tools and improve the level of security

- ensure CBRN risks are taken properly into account in the development of the European Emergency Response Capacity
- closer links with training and exercises provided in the framework of the EU Civil Protection Mechanism should be explored [...].

### Promote more lead country initiatives and work with industry

[...] The Commission will

- proactively engage with stakeholders and organise meetings with Member States' representatives on CBRN-E affairs to better handle prevention, preparedness and response measures;
- set up a platform for the exchange of information between the Commission, Member States and other stakeholders, and organise regular workshops on the research needs of end-users;
- continue to help Member States put forward lead country actions under one or more of the actions in the CBRN or explosives action plans. The Commission will in particular encourage initiatives that address detection issues.

### The external dimension

CBRN-E threats know no borders, as shown by the SARS and bird-flu (H1N1) viruses [...]. Threats from commercial and homemade explosives, such as the 2010 Yemen cargo bombs, are another example of external threats that go beyond EU borders. For this reason, we need to build relationships with, and support preparedness and detection measures, in third countries to ensure that we can adequately protect the EU. [...]

### Conclusions

With the innovation and opportunism shown by terrorists seeking to inflict damages using CBRN-E materials, the EU needs to adopt a more proactive approach to detecting CBRN-E materials. This new step by step approach includes considering each threat and environment, using better research, testing and validation, promoting awareness building, training and exercises while engaging all stakeholders. With this approach, the Commission believes it can play an active role at EU level in helping Member States and other important actors to make Europe a safer place for its citizens. [...]"

→ web 2014 Communication: <https://bit.ly/3gY20cZ>

→ web 2017 Action Plan: <https://bit.ly/32dlyAU>

## 2010, October

### Industrial accident



### Ajkai, Hungary

- Burst of a dam at the reservoir of the Ajkai Tímőldgyár alumina plant, freeing about one million cubic meters of toxic liquid waste (red mud)
- Several nearby localities were flooded (village of Kolontár/ town of Devecse), about 40 square kilometers of land were affected
- 150 people were injured
- 10 people were killed

photo: © European Union, 2010 / Source: EC – Audiovisual Service / Photo: Balint Pomecz

## 2011, March

### Nuclear accident



### Fukushima, Japan

- Nuclear accident (level 7), following a major earthquake
- A 15-metre tsunami disabled power supply and cooling of three reactors of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant leading to meltdowns and hydrogen-air explosions
- 200,000 people evacuated
- 10,000 tons of radioactively contaminated water flowed into the ocean

photo: Jean-Pierre Dalbéra, CC BY 2.0, Flickr.com

## 2013, August

### Military chemical attack



### Damascus, Syria

- Syrian military rockets containing chemical agent sarin struck suburbs around Damascus
- at least 3,600 people displayed "neurotoxic symptoms" (Médecins Sans Frontières)
- Estimates of death toll among civilians: from at least 281 people to over 1700
- Deadliest use of chemical weapons against civilians since Iran-Iraq War

photo: Adam Jones, CC BY-SA 2.0, Flickr.com

## 2014–2016

### Ebola epidemic



### West Africa

- Ebola fever: disease caused by one of five different Ebola viruses
- Contagious through contact with body fluids from infected people
- First human outbreaks in 1976
- Epidemic in 2014 to 2016 in West Africa (outbreak in Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia)
- 28,712 cases (WHO figures)
- 11,372 people died

photo: CDC Global, CC BY 2.0, Flickr.com



photo: © ESDU

# The African CBRNe Masters – a high level training course

Taking account of the specificities of each region to anticipate CBRNe risks

Interview with Mohamed Salami, Head of the Regional Secretariat for the African Atlantic Façade (AAF), EU CBRN Centres of Excellence, Rabat

**The European:** *Monsieur Salami, you are the Head of the Regional Secretariat for the African Atlantic Façade (AAF), one of the eight regions in the CBRN Centres of Excellence initiative (EU CBRN CoE) set up by the European Union in 2010. Today, this initiative encompasses 61 Partner Countries and fosters national, regional and interregional cooperation throughout the world to better anticipate chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear incidents or disasters. What is the role of the Director of a Regional Secretariat?*

**Mohamed Salami:** The role of the Director of a Regional Secretariat is enshrined in the charter of Regional Secretariats of the EU CBRN CoE. The Director liaises with member countries, particularly on political and legal issues. He forges consensus among member countries of the Centres of Excellence in his region and liaises with them and the relevant stakeholders, including EU delegations and international and regional organisations, EU Member States and donors present in the region. Finally, the Director contributes to the drafting of project proposals on the basis of regional needs.

**The European:** *If I understand you correctly then, the charter is identical for all regions. But given the big differences between them, how are the specific needs of each region taken into account?*

**Mohamed Salami:** Yes, you are right, the charter is indeed the same for all regions, but each region has its own specificities. That is why the person who is appointed Head of the Regional Secretariat may take initiatives of his own, as long as they are consistent with the general philosophy and the principles underlying the initiative. This means that the Head of the Regional Secretariat has to be able to devise responses to the various challenges facing his region, beyond those advocated by the charter.

**The European:** *Are we talking here mainly of national projects or are there joint projects coordinated with other partners in the region? And what is the role of the European Commission, or more particularly DG DEVCO, in the projects initiated in the eight regions?*

**Mohamed Salami:** The projects and their goals are usually the result of needs expressed by the regions themselves. Each region has its own methodology, established jointly by the Regional Secretariat and the various National Focal Points (NFPs) that have been designated in each country of a Region under the EU CBRN CoE initiative.

Each project produces its own terms of reference. These are initially drafted by the Regional Secretariat, then discussed and endorsed by the NFPs, before being submitted to the EU for ap-



proval. This is where DEVCO comes in. It considers each project on its merits, ensures its consistency with the objectives of the initiative as well as its legal and financial feasibility. After this detailed consideration, DEVCO decides whether it is prepared to fund the project or not. Naturally, in the course of this process, UNICRI (United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute) and the JRC (Joint Research Centre), who are essential partners of the initiative, contribute their expertise and their support.

**The European:** *We can conclude therefore that projects have a regional vocation and are proposed jointly by the countries of the region in response to a common need. You referred to the funding, could you expand a little on that issue?*

**Mohamed Salami:** Generally speaking, the projects are funded by the EU under the Stability instrument and within the budget granted to the initiative by the European Commission. This being said, in the AAF region the Regional Secretariat has started to seek funding from other donors and there has been a promising start to the initiation and implementation of other projects, in particular with the USA.

**The European:** *Turning particularly to your region, can you say more about the projects that have been initiated, your objectives and your success stories?*

**Mohamed Salami:** So far, the AAF region has benefitted from several projects covering various areas, responding to different problems in respect of CBRNe risks. By way of example, there

## Mohamed Salami

is the Director of logistics and administrative affairs at the Moroccan Directorate-General of civil protection. Born in 1960 in Morocco, he is also the Director of the Regional Secretariat of the EU CBRN CoE Initiative, for the African Atlantic Façade. Additionally, he is the CBRN National Focal Point in Morocco.

are projects addressing the improvement of preparedness and intervention in the CBRNe area, the management of dangerous chemical and biological waste, risk management in high risk chemical facilities, strengthening the regional management of epidemics, boosting border checks on CBRNe substances, the transport of hazardous substances by road and rail, etc...

The vast majority of projects selected concern training courses and field exercises. Since 2013, there have been hundreds and even thousands of people who have participated in these courses and exercises.

**The European:** *There is no doubt then that the EU CBRN CoE initiative has created real momentum in all the countries of the region.*

**Mohamed Salami:** ...yes indeed, the results are palpable at national level, particularly in terms of working effectively together to analyse the risks, identify threats and sensitive areas, reflect on preventive and mitigating actions and of course on possible corrective action. This also true at the level of the AAF region, where we have definitely made great progress. The milestones for cooperation between the partner countries have been laid down, with the ultimate goal of unifying working methodologies, standardising procedures and ultimately, drafting agreements for bilateral and multilateral cooperation.

**The European:** *And internationally?*

**Mohamed Salami:** On the international level, the work with the EU and UNICRI, as well as with other Regional Secretariats, has started to produce tangible benefits in terms of exchanges on best practices, and above all, in increasing awareness of the importance of sharing the same values and approaches to common security, and of course, in developing a culture of risk prevention and mitigation.

**The European:** *In 2019, you launched a university project which is unique in its approach and could be used as an example on CBRNe for other regions: you have established at the International University of Rabat, with the support of the Moroccan government and the National Focal Points of the AAF region partner countries, an African Masters programme, taught in French, on the*



The African Atlantic Façade team receiving the “Centres of Excellence Award for the most innovative regional project” for the CBRNe Masters, La Hulpe, June 2019

photo: © DEVCO



*reduction of CBRNe risks. What is the thinking behind this new programme and what are the subjects taught?*

**Mohamed Salami:** Yes, indeed, the basic idea for this project goes back to 2017. It was the result of an insight but also the logical follow-up to all the training courses that have been organised in the region. As we reviewed the situation of different African countries on the Atlantic Façade, and considering their feedback, we realised that there is a lack of highly trained experts in the general area of CBRNe risks and a definite need for highly qualified resource persons in each country.

**The European:** *For whom is this new programme intended and what are the subjects taught?*

**Mohamed Salami:** The specialised CBRNe African Masters programme is aimed initially at French speaking countries in the region, to be extended later to English speaking countries. The curriculum will cover a wide range of issues concerning CBRNe risks and threats. These will include terrorism related threats (a “dirty” bomb, diversion of chemicals for terrorist purposes, their use ...) the management of industrial risks and accidents as well as the management of epidemics.

**“This specialised university course will help countries to have high level experts and strengthen capacity in these areas in every country.”**

**The European:** *Will your CBRN Masters also propose more specialised subjects?*

**Mohamed Salami:** Yes of course, we shall propose specialised courses, like for instance, “the biological versus the physiological impacts of biological agents”, “the sociology of crowds in degraded conditions” or “the toxicology of malicious acts”.

**The European:** *Will the course also include practical exercises?*

**Mohamed Salami:** Yes, the Masters programme will give students the opportunity to do table top exercises, like the CBRNe preparation for a summit of heads of state, as well as field exercises like decontamination in a radiologically contaminated environment.

**The European:** *Will you be cooperating with other universities on this programme?*

**Mohamed Salami:** The specialised CBRNe African Masters programme will be organised in collaboration with a French university (l’Université de Haute Alsace) which has been running this course in France for many years. The International University of Rabat will participate in the project as part of an international partnership that will enable it to take root on African soil. This is in line with a fundamental principle of the project which is to

give the African partners a feeling of ownership of their course. The eventual aim of course is to reduce the number of European teachers and have a majority of African teachers.

**The European:** *Will the diploma be recognised internationally?*

**Mohamed Salami:** The CBRNe Masters has been taught in France for many years and the diploma is recognised by the “conférence des grandes écoles”. This being the case, there is no reason in principle why the same course taught in Africa should not be recognised as well.

**The European:** *What is the overall length of the course? And has the teaching already begun?*

**Mohamed Salami:** The project is almost ready to launch and teaching should start this year. The course will comprise five periods of 15 consecutive days, within a maximum of 12 months. Four of the 15-day sessions will be taught in Morocco and one will take place in France, where the students will be able to train on a technical platform simulating real world conditions.

**The European:** *What are the selection criteria for candidates applying to the programme?*

**Mohamed Salami:** 25 candidates will be selected in a two-stage process. The National Focal Points will make an initial selection to ensure a balanced representation of the relevant departments and ministries. The NFPs will then

propose to the AAF Regional Secretariat a list of candidates who have completed five years of higher education or equivalent, whom they have selected on the basis of their student records. In the second stage, the Regional Secretariat will select candidates on the basis of their career history forwarded by the NFPs. The candidates proposed by the NFPs must hold an executive function and most of them must come from a government department. Exceptionally, some candidates may come from a private company or a Non-Governmental Organisation.

**The European:** *Will the Masters also be open to students from outside the AAF Region?*

**Mohamed Salami:** Yes, in principle, the CBRNe Masters could be opened up to other regions and there is no reason why candidates from countries that don’t have an Atlantic façade should not be able to benefit from it, as long as they comply with the selection criteria of course. That being said, I think ideally that we should conduct this first experimental session solely for the benefit of the countries of the African Atlantic Façade before opening it up to others.

**The European:** *This specialised Masters programme is therefore the first university course in Africa that will train highly*



### International University of Rabat

The International University of Rabat (UIR) was created as part of a partnership with the Moroccan

government in the field of higher education. UIR's multidisciplinary educational offering ranges from engineering, architecture, law and political science to business administration, management, actuarial studies and logistics, as well as dentistry. Since its creation in 2010, UIR has developed many partnerships with international universities outside Morocco.

→ **web:** <https://www.uir.ac.ma/>



*qualified professionals in the reduction of CBRNe risks. What role will the experts who have completed this training be able to play in their respective countries to advance the cause of reducing CBRNe risks?*

**Mohamed Salami:** This specialised university course will help countries to have high level experts and strengthen capacity in these areas in every country. These experts will be able to help governments to develop their national policies and strategies to reduce CBRNe risks and become a stimulus and a guiding light for their national authorities. As the first course of this kind in Africa, the CBRNe Masters is a pro-active way of anticipating developments on the African continent. The training of executives in these areas will also enable national governments to call on local expertise in devising their policies.

**The European:** *What benefits are you expecting in terms of regional cooperation from this high level training course and how will the specialised African Masters support the work of the National Focal Points and the projects of the EU CBRN CoE initiative?*

**Mohamed Salami:** Our project on the African Atlantic Façade aims to give ministerial advisers the keys to a better understanding of the issues on which they are called on to advise political decision makers. Giving these advisers the necessary knowledge in the area of CBRNe is a first step. A further objective is to encourage them to think about the necessary links between ministries on all CBRNe subjects and to put an end to the silo mentality. Indeed, CBRNe issues, whether we are talking about prevention, preparation, responses or rehabilitation, always require concerted action by a whole host of experts, administrations and other bodies.

**The European:** *Yes, it is certainly true that CBRNe in general is the area that requires the most pluridisciplinarity....*

**Mohamed Salami:** ...yes, indeed, by training executive staff from different administrations (police, fire service, health service, defence....) and from different countries and cultures, the pluridisciplinary approach will not only be taught but will also become a reality among the trainees. This will be a source of enrichment for participants who will be able, during numerous discussions among themselves or with their teachers, to exchange views, technical knowledge and compare their respective approaches (cultural, social, professional...).

**The European:** *This means that the graduates will not only be useful to their countries but will also promote regional cooperation.*

**Mohamed Salami:** Yes of course, because it is far easier to bring about regional cooperation, when executives have been through the same training course, can speak the same language and form convergent views on matters of common interest. Finally, we should not forget the role that this type of training can play in the medium and long-term consolidation of the principles behind the initiative and its considerable influence on the development of a culture of collective security that we are all striving for.

**The European:** *Monsieur Salami, many thanks for this interview; we wish you every success in your future endeavours.*

*The Interview was led by Nannette Cazaubon in Rabat.*

Unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures

# Epidemic preparedness is an investment in our people, our economy, and the future

by Dr Rudi Pauwels, Serial biotech entrepreneur  
and Founder & President of the Praesens  
Foundation, Brussels

As an organisation devoted to epidemic preparedness, Praesens is committed to supporting the EU Coronavirus Global Response and the Security and Development Policy of the European Commission's Directorate General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO). Epidemics should be considered and treated as social, economic, and global security threats, causing major loss of life, social disorder, disrupting economies and trade, impeding sustainable development and jeopardising foreign relations. In this context, Praesens advocates for a quantum change in the world's approach, preparedness and response to pandemics, such as Covid-19, posing existential threats to society. The growing menace of future 'unseen' enemies requires the adoption of a fundamentally new mindset, one with a longer time frame, new technological tools, diagnostics and therapies all designed to better tackle these extraordinary challenges. Team Europe is currently mobilising efforts in Africa to tackle the effects of the pandemic. Unprecedented times call for unprecedented measures, and Praesens is honoured it can count on Europe's support in this war-like effort.

## Partnerships are key

Through a partnership with the European Commission and its longtime partner, the Institut Pasteur de Dakar, they are together committed to accelerate preparedness and response to Covid-19 in Africa but also implement an innovative approach to address unmet needs of diagnostics and health services through mobile laboratory platforms to detect, respond, control and prevent epidemics. It is vitally important to reinforce healthcare systems to monitor and contain possible outbreaks. Upon request of the Senegalese Ministry of Health, one of the existing Mobile Labs has been equipped with Covid-19 diagnostic testing capabilities on-board, is currently deployed in Touba, Senegal and has been actively testing patients for over three months as part of Senegal's national response. The Mobile Labs are all-terrain

truck-based, autonomous biosafety laboratories providing quality health programmes to patients. These state-of-the-art Mobile Labs bring together top-level European technologies and partners. Following the example of successful European cooperation agreements, such as the European Coal and Steel Community and AIRBUS, Praesens strongly believes in a European Alliance for Health Diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> century based on industrial and academic cooperation, with concrete, innovative and fit for purpose solutions to achieve impact in the field and, most importantly, for the patients.

## A decentralised approach

Locally embedded, the fleet of Mobile Labs will complement already existing capacities with a mobile platform. The Mobile Labs can be operated in regional hubs across Africa for personnel shifts, resupply and maintenance purposes. When suspect cases arise, they can be mobilised on a supranational level to the epicentre to help with testing, treatment and containment of the epidemic in the surrounding areas. Patients are screened in the hotzone, samples of suspected cases collected, tested and confirmed in the Mobile Lab as close as possible to the patients.

They can deliver medical (diagnostics, therapies, vaccination campaigns, etc) and non-medical (health promotion, social mobilisation) services at the peripheral level of the health system. The fleet will be operated by local healthcare workers, offering them good biosafety conditions. Beyond addressing the infrastructure and hardware needs, it will include a complete package of training, maintenance, and as such will contribute to real capacity building efforts in-country that will last beyond the Covid-19 crisis while also addressing other highly needed health programmes like HIV, TB and Malaria.



### Praesens Foundation

The Praesens Foundation aims to provide access to health programmes across the patient journey, from prevention to care, to communities in hard-to-reach regions and resource-limited settings.

→ [web www.praesensfoundation.org](http://www.praesensfoundation.org)



The Senegal team testing the Praesens Mobile Lab

photo: Praesens Foundation



# CBRN cooperation: experiences from the field

Joint training, exercises, and common projects among countries and regions demonstrate the significant progress of CBRN cooperation worldwide, initiated by the European Union 10 years ago. Trust and confidence building are the basis of this success, beyond national and regional borders.







# Cross border cooperation exercise “JEYRAN” completed in Uzbekistan

The European Union is a promising model of cooperation

by Otabek Kasimov, Head of Inspectorate on supervision of the implementation of the Convention on Prohibition of Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons, Tashkent

Alongside the reforms initiated by Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, the country has been actively working in the international arena, strengthening links with the European Union (EU). The implementation of the adopted Strategy of Actions in Five Priority Areas for the Development of Uzbekistan for 2017-2021 is seen with the EU being a promising model of cooperation.

In his speech to the 72<sup>nd</sup> session of the United Nations General Assembly, the Uzbek president emphasised the need to support the cooperation efforts of Central Asian states to ensure security and strengthen regional cooperation, achieving common readiness to respond to serious threats and risks.

## The EU's interest in the region

The EU has strengthened cooperation in the region to reduce the risks of exposure to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) materials. This was first reviewed and discussed on 11<sup>th</sup> March 2015 in Dushanbe, at the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the High-Level Dialogue on security issues between the EU and Central Asian countries (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan).

A memorandum on the establishment and operation of the Regional Secretariat of the Centres of Excellence on CBRN materials for Central Asia was signed in Brussels on 18<sup>th</sup> May 2015 between Uzbekistan and the UN Interregional Research Institute for Crime and Justice (UNICRI).

According to the corresponding decision of the Uzbek

government, the chair of the State Committee for Industrial Safety of Uzbekistan is the head of the Regional Secretariat who ensures the coordination of interactions of state organisations with the Regional Secretariat.

## CBRN threats – a realistic scenario

In a changing world, the global community undergoes both optimistic and negative changes. In this regard, the possibility of biological or chemical terrorism, especially in light of the events of recent decades, cannot be ignored.

With the EU's coordination and cooperation with UNICRI and other international organisations, the fight against CBRN related problems is being conducted in 61 countries, representing 8 regions and about one billion people. These are environmental issues, water, food, terrorism, and illegal traffic in hazardous materials, cybercrime, and much more.

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## Otabek Kasimov



Photo: State Committee on Industrial Safety

was nominated on 24 March 2020 as Head of the Inspectorate on supervision of implementation of the Convention on Prohibition of Chemical and Bacteriological Weapons, and on 20 April 2020 as National Focal Point for the EU CoE CBRN Initiative. He graduated in 2008 at the Tashkent State Institute of Law. From 2011-2020 he was an expert in the legal department of the State Committee on Industrial Safety. In 2019 he became the

assistant of the Head of the EU CBRN CoE Regional Secretariat for Central Asia. From 2013-2020 Mr Kasimov was also the assistant of the Head of the State Committee on Industrial Safety of Uzbekistan.

### Modern terrorism

Today, the urgency of the problem, especially terrorism, is dictated by our reality. Terrorism in any form has become one of the most dangerous issues by its scale, unpredictability and consequences. It is one of the biggest socio-political and moral problems with which humanity entered the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Modern terrorism is a powerful structure that is acquiring more and more diversified forms and threatening dimensions. Terrorist acts bring mass human casualties and entail the destruction of material and spiritual values, which are not always recoverable.

### How to protect ourselves

Each state individually and in interactions with others should be able to protect its people and region, adequately respond to incidents and prevent the possible consequences of attacks. Unfortunately, incidents and events show that terrorists have the knowledge and desire to use chemical and biological agents. Willingness to confront these threats is a difficult task; however, the consequences of unpreparedness can have unpredictable consequences. Undoubtedly, the reflection of the risk of a terrorist attack requires comprehensive and well-trained preparedness at the national, regional and global level, which includes the need for special exercises.

### Exercise Jeyran in Uzbekistan

Taking into account those threats and risks, the Security Council, under the President of Uzbekistan, was instructed to ensure a high-quality chemical-biological counter-terrorism field exercise, named “Jeyran”. It was a joint event with the EU, under Uzbekistan’s National Action Plan on the implementation

**“This exercise could serve as a blueprint for other regional exercises.”**

of international documents in the field of CBRN safety for 2018-2021 (approved by government decree N° 968 of 27<sup>th</sup> November 2018).

On 13-14<sup>th</sup> November 2019, at the Civil Protection Institute of the Ministry of Emergency Situations in the Tashkent region, many observed the exercise: Uzbekistan government officials, experts in the field of chemical and biological safety from partner countries of the Regional Secretariat (Kyrgyzstan, Afghanistan, Mongolia, Pakistan), representatives of other CoE Regional Secretariats, as well as observers from international organisations such as the EU, UNICRI, the Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure of Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO RATS), and others.

### Four realistic scenarios

A working group developed the “Jeyran” exercise scenarios with representatives of the European company ENCO (Poland). It consisted of four logically connected parts, which demonstrated the interconnected response and coordinated actions of state structures in the event of terrorist threats with the use of chemical and biological agents. All events were as close as possible to reality, where the available forces and means were used, including robotics and specially trained dogs. One specialist from Afghanistan, Mongolia and Kyrgyzstan participated as players in the exercise. A demonstration of special equipment, a contingent of forces and specialists, their equipment, as well as familiarisation with the Civil Protection Institute of the Ministry of Emergency Situations was organised during the exercises.

### Valuable results

The exercise was conducted by the Deputy Commander of the National Guard and coordinated by the acting chairman of the State Committee on Industrial Safety. It was unprecedented and the first in Central Asia, with a scenario in which an important element was the provision of chemical and biological safety by the joint coordinated efforts of the relevant ministries and departments. When foreign observers and the working group summarised the results, it was especially noted that this exercise improved the professionalism and practical skills of participants. Additionally, it improved the preparedness of forces and means of ministries and departments to have harmonious and coordinated action to combat chemical and biological threats of a terrorist nature. This exercise could serve as a blueprint for other regional exercises.



### The 4 scenarios of „Jeyran“

- **obtaining information** on the import of hazardous substances into the country, identifying dangerous goods at a border crossing and covert surveillance of them, identifying the place of their delivery (underground laboratory), with the simultaneous creation and organisation of operations of the operational headquarters;
- **capture, inspection and disinfection** of the laboratory, bottling of hazardous substances and their identification, disinfection of the distribution site of hazardous substances and people with their equipment;
- **the identification of other accomplices and intentions**, their capture in an attempt to carry out a terrorist attack in a densely populated area, the neutralisation of an improvised explosive device in the field;
- **suppression of a prepared terrorist attack** in the cinema of a large shopping and entertainment centre – organisation of a cordon and evacuation of people from the cinema hall and centre, the detection, processing, removal and disposal of improvised explosive devices.





# JEYRAN 2019 – a successful CBRN counter-terrorism exercise

A field report from Uzbekistan by Nannette Cazaubon

In November 2019, together with Editor-in-Chief Hartmut Bühl, I took a flight to the capital of Uzbekistan in Central Asia. We were invited to participate as observers – me as a journalist, Hartmut as an expert – in the CBRN counter-terrorism field exercise “Jeyran”. Curious to learn how such a large international exercise with 200 participants from Uzbekistan and partner countries, as well as international observers, would be organised and what its outcome would be, we accepted the invitation.

The three-day exercise was mounted within the framework of the dynamic European CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative (EU CBRN CoE), established ten years ago with the aim of fostering national, regional and interregional cooperation worldwide to better prevent CBRN incidents or disasters.

**(Tashkent, November 2019)** During the flight to Tashkent we have time to study the programme in more detail. It sounds promising: the participants will play a variety of roles – active players, observers and evaluators – in four realistic scenarios simulating the release of biological and chemical agents by terrorists.

We learn that almost a year of preparation has gone into combining the different scenarios of the “Jeyran” exercise organised by the European Commission’s DG DEVCO and the Government of Uzbekistan. There is no doubt that terrorists today have the knowledge and willingness to use chemical and

biological agents. A large joint field exercise such as “Jeyran”, with international participants and observers, is timely!

## First day

### Opening session

On the morning of the exercise’s first day, we are taken by bus, together with the other international participants and observers, from the city of Tashkent to the premises of the Institute of Civil Protection of the Ministry of Emergency Situations of Uzbekistan, near the capital. We are warmly welcomed by **Bakhtiyor Gulyamov**, acting Chairman of the State Committee of Industrial Safety of the Republic of Uzbekistan and Head of the Regional Secretariat for Central Asia of the EU CBRN CoE Initiative. Mr Gulyamov, who has coordinated the preparation and implementation of the field exercise, states that terrorism has become a global issue and that the organisation of joint exercises “*effectively promotes discipline, efficient time management and development of the necessary professional skills that will later help to correctly and efficiently respond to various CBRN threats*”.

The overall goal of planning for emergency preparedness and response is to ensure that adequate capabilities are in place and emergency response teams are sufficiently equipped and trained. This is highlighted by **Shavkat Samatov**, representative of the Cabinet of Ministers, who welcomes us in the name of



During the opening session photo: © Ministry of Emergency Situations/Uzbekistan

the Government of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Chargé d’Affaires of the EU Delegation to Uzbekistan, **Jussi Narvi**, says that “*holding the Jeyran field exercise in Uzbekistan is very timely and relevant*”, while the United Nations Resident Coordinator **Helena Fraser**, in her speech, underlines the importance of working together at a national, regional and international level to prevent CBRN incidents or attacks. She expresses her conviction that Jeyran “*will point us in the direction where we should further streamline our efforts.*”

#### SCENARIO 1 – detection of CBRN material

The Commander of the exercise – **Colonel H. Botyrov**, Deputy Commander of the National Guard – introduces us to the operational aspects of the exercise and the different scenarios. The first scenario is presented right away, by a video that is commented live: The Uzbek authorities have received intelligence that a terror group is trying to bring chemical and biological substances into Uzbekistan; dangerous goods have been discovered at the airport. State Customs Committee units have followed a suspicious truck, which eventually leads them to a clandestine biological-chemical laboratory operated by terrorists. In the meantime, an operational headquarters has been set up, involving all relevant agencies and a joint task force is preparing to intervene.

Just as I am wondering what such a joint headquarters might look like, we are invited to visit it next door, in the Institute of Civil Protection! The headquarters is equipped with computers, screens, phone lines and maps. This is where all the information on the terrorists is collected and where the decisions are taken.

#### Demonstration of equipment

In the afternoon, we witness an impressive open-air demonstration of the resources and equipment used during the exercise: weapons, special equipment, protective suits, medical care equipment, robots, specially trained dogs to detect the explosives, etc. are shown. Everything is explained in Russian and English, and Hartmut and I can ask a lot of questions. We appreciate the lively mixture of presentations, videos, and visits. I am amazed to hear that after we have seen all the material, we will even be able to attend the simulation of an earthquake with a magnitude of nearly 7!

#### Earthquake simulation

The simulation takes place in the Institute of Civil Protection’s earthquake simulation centre, which is the first of its kind in Central Asia. The state-of-the-art equipment, financed with the support of the European Commission, is available otherwise only in Japan. It serves as a platform to build public awareness of Uzbekistan’s vulnerability to seismic events and educate the public in the best ways of preparing for and behaving during an earthquake.

Now the simulation starts! We are shown into a space with a living room-like scene installed on a mobile platform. They ask



#### JEYRAN 2019

The chemical-biological counter-terrorism field exercise Jeyran took place from 13<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> November 2019. It was organised in the framework of the European Union CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative (EU CBRN CoE) that is funded by the European Union and is jointly implemented by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC). The European External Action Service (EEAS) is also supporting the initiative that involves 61 countries in 8 regions of the world. Uzbekistan is part of the Central Asia region together with Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Pakistan, and Tajikistan. Jeyran was approved by the authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan and implemented by the relevant national ministries and agencies: the National Guard; the Ministry of Emergency Situations; the Ministry of Interior; the Ministry of Health; the State Customs Committee; the Ministry of Defence; and the State Security Service. Participants and observers of the exercise included the Heads of the Regional Secretariats of the EU CBRN CoE Initiative, the National Focal Points of the partner countries of Central Asia, as well as representatives of international organisations, diplomatic missions and independent experts.

for volunteers to sit down in the living room. Hartmut cannot resist the temptation to do so, while I prefer to observe the scene. Good decision, the demonstration is impressive! Books fall off the shelves and the furniture trembles violently. Luckily, the volunteers have been told how to react by hiding under the table or squatting in a corner and protecting their heads with a pillow. Nobody is injured!

At the end of this intense first day, we enjoy the generous Uzbek hospitality during dinner with the other participants.

#### Second day

##### SCENARIO 2 – seizure of a clandestine laboratory

Scenario 2 takes place on the second day at the same location. It’s cold this morning, and we are wearing our warm coats and scarves as we arrive at an extensive outdoor area, in front of a scruffy building – the terrorists’ “clandestine laboratory”, according to the scenario.

We take our seats opposite the building. I am observing some snipers on the roof while the Commander is explaining the situation to us: he reminds us that the day before (Scenario 1) the location of the terrorists’ clandestine laboratory was identified. He tells us that we will now be able to observe how the different specialised teams will proceed to neutralise and capture the terrorists.

##### Neutralisation of the terrorists

As a first step, the area is cordoned off to prevent the terrorists escaping. A medical team is on stand-by in case people get injured. A CBRN decontamination team is on-hold nearby.





Then it starts! Suddenly, several people with rock-climbing equipment go abseiling from the roof with amazing speed. They remain stuck in the middle of the wall, motionless and head down. At that moment, the intervention team arrives from the right along the wall. They duck under the windows of the building, and I wonder what the parcel is they have with them. I understand it right away, when the parcel is thrown against one of the windows: a loud bang fills the air, together with the sound of gunfire – the parcel was obviously a bomb allowing the special team to enter the building.

Like me, the other observers are impressed, but some are a little critical. The specialists from Afghanistan next to me are discussing among themselves and I ask them for their impressions. They say that there may be alternative and less risky methods than explosives to enter a building where terrorists are hiding with chemical agents and explosives. A point that I find interesting, and that will be discussed later during the debriefing. This brings home to me that the open exchange of experience is key in this exercise.

The action moves on: the intervention team enters the building together with a negotiator who will try to convince the terrorists to give themselves up. **Lieutenant-Colonel R. Yunuskhodjayev** is updating us on the situation: three terrorists have been killed and four captured. With a black hood over their heads, they are taken outside the building.

#### The operation of the special teams

Now it's the turn of the heavily equipped anti-explosive team to enter the building. The way the scenario plays out is really gripping, and I appreciate being able to follow, via two big screens, how the team is proceeding inside the building.

Once the area has been declared free of explosives, the CBRN team starts its work inside the “laboratory” to collect samples. I leave my seat and join Tristan Simonart, DG DEVCO's dynamic coordinator for the CBRN CoE Initiative, who invested considerable time and effort in preparing the exercise together with the Uzbek authorities. He tells me that participants from other countries of the Central Asia region, from Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, and Afghanistan, are part of the specialised CBRN team. The members of all the different teams leaving the building

must go through the decontamination station that has been set up outside. Finally, the investigation team arrives. Their work will last several hours, sometimes days, to collect further information on the terrorist group.

After three hours of observation outdoors, we are happy to go back inside for a cup of coffee and to discuss the morning's events with the other participants.

#### SCENARIO 3 – tracking terrorists to prevent an attack

The afternoon is no less gripping. Scenario 3 is presented to us: Thanks to the information obtained from the captured terrorists and a map found, the authorities become aware that accomplices of the terrorists are planning an attack in Tashkent and its region. The terrorists' car is detected and tracked by the deployed special groups. In order to protect the population, artificial traffic jams are created, and the terrorists are guided to an empty road outside Tashkent. When the car is blocked from both sides of the road, the terrorists start shooting and snipers from the special groups respond. A box with a clock mechanism is found in the car, possibly a bomb which is destroyed by bomb disposal experts.

#### SCENARIO 4 – neutralisation of a bomb in a cinema

A bomb will also be involved in the last scenario of the exercise, and the same goes for the observers! We are told that we are supposed to be moviegoers in a cinema located in a shopping mall in Tashkent. According to the scenario, in five hours, the concert of a famous singer will take place in a concert hall of the big mall with 1000 spectators expected. The authorities receive the information that a bomb is hidden somewhere in the mall, and they decide to evacuate everybody inside, including us. We leave the “cinema” quietly and the way we are told. Then we can observe how the special task force proceeds in the search for the bomb. They arrive in impressive protective suits with their special equipment and trained dogs. A suspicious parcel found under a seat is checked with an X-Ray scanner. We are told that the parcel contains a clock mechanism, a detonator and an energy source – so it's a “dirty bomb” made by the terrorist group. The commander of the operation decides to destroy the bomb outside. This is where a tracked robot comes





in. I remember that I saw it at the demonstration of material on the first day, and it's interesting to see how it now works! The bomb is cordoned off with a protection ring, and the small, remote-controlled robot clanks over to it. A few seconds later the parcel explodes with a loud bang!

#### Observers' opinions

During the debriefing, **Tristan Simonart** takes the floor to congratulate the Uzbek organisers and all the players *"for this extremely well-performed exercise"*. He highlights the good coordination between the different agencies and teams and says that in the future it would be interesting to organise a regional cross-border exercise, involving neighbouring countries. *"We from the European Union will certainly be interested to participate within the frame of the EU CBRN CoE programme"*, he concludes.

As we wait for the bus to take us back to Tashkent city, Hartmut and I ask a few of the participants about their impressions. The experienced observers from Afghanistan have appreciated the well performed exercise, focused on the prevention of a terrorist attack. A follow-up exercise, they say, might cover the response in case an attack with biological-chemical agents actually occurs. They underline that the Uzbek organisers have shown with this exercise that terrorism should be managed like a natural disaster, demanding a multisectoral response with well-defined roles responsibilities of the different actors.

We also ask **Emmanuel Gravier**, who is the counter-terrorism and security advisor to the European Delegation to Kyrgyzstan in Bishkek, for his view. He makes an interesting point regarding the support of the EU for counter-terrorism exercises like Jeyran: *"the purpose of incorporating security issues into the European Union's new strategy for Central Asia is ultimately to prevent terrorist attacks on the territory of the Member States of the European Union. As the threat is global, the response has to be global too"*.

### Third day

#### Evaluation of the exercise

The morning of the third day is dedicated to the debriefing and evaluation of the exercise. The overall feedback from the

observers is very positive. They are impressed by the perfect organisation of the Jeyran exercise. Indeed, a lot of effort has been deployed to make the scenarios easily comprehensible for the observers. It was highlighted that the strong point of the exercise was the professionalism and the cooperation of the different agencies.

Jeyran raised awareness among observers and strengthened interregional networking, which is an objective of the EU CBRN CoE Initiative. Several observers suggest that in the future, an interregional exercise involving several countries would be a good idea, even if everybody is aware that the preparation of such an exercise involving several countries is complex and would need time.

**Dr Faheem Tahir**, Chief of the Public Health Laboratories Division at the National Institute of Health in Pakistan and the National Focal Point for the EU CBRN CoE Initiative, hits the nail on the head: *"the name of the exercise – Jeyran – was well chosen"*, he says, *"because a Jeyran is a well-known animal in Pakistan and also in Afghanistan, that eats snakes. And terrorists are the snakes."*

Hartmut and I had an extremely interesting time in Uzbekistan, learning a lot about international and regional cooperation in CBRN risk and threat mitigation. We also learned a lot about the way the European Union, and in particular DG DEVCO, is supporting CBRN cooperation and risk prevention around the world. Both of us were deeply impressed by the spirit of cooperation among the participating countries and the openness of their discussions. And we felt that the EU CBRN CoE Initiative is really on the right track!



Nannette Cazaubon is Deputy Editor-in-Chief of *The European – Security and Defence Union*.

photo: © ESDU



# CBRN Medical Emergency Response Training in the Gulf region

A project tailored to the region

by Brigadier General Engineer

Hussein Ahmed al Harthi, Head of the  
GCC Regional Secretariat, EU CBRN CoE,  
Abu Dhabi

The EU CBRN Centres of Excellence (EU CBRN CoE) initiative in the Gulf region was initiated in 2014 in the spirit of international unity and cooperation to strengthen regional and international readiness towards CBRN threats and risks. The EU represented a success story for unity between states that went beyond economic cooperation and trade, to serve as a model for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) region itself to further strengthen both safety and security. In the beginning, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) offered to host the Regional Secretariat in Abu Dhabi and included both Saudi Arabia and Qatar as partner countries. Today, we are happy to also include our brothers and sisters in Kuwait and Bahrain, also hoping that Oman will join us in our unity very soon to complete the circle.

## From radiological and nuclear readiness ...

During the many meetings with our regional partners, we have had many discussions on where to put our efforts on strengthening readiness for crises emerging from chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear threats, whether natural or caused by man. The lowest hanging fruit initially was to focus on radiological and nuclear readiness, as the UAE is taking the lead in the region on civilian nuclear power. Large efforts have been made to plan for and train our first responders for any events that may emerge from this. In 2016, we started with a regional tabletop exercise with over 200 participants named “Exercise

Falcon”. It was a great success in examining the management of radiological terrorism and prohibition of nuclear materials with the support of the European Union, UNICRI, the US State Department and our partner countries in the Gulf.

## ... to chemical and biological preparedness

However, we recognised the need to look more at our weaker areas; chemical and biological readiness. More resources have been invested in the radiological and nuclear areas in the previous years, in partnership with important organisations such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We also established our Federal Authority for Nuclear Regulation (FANR). During a regional round-table meeting in Kuwait in October 2018, we decided to focus on biological preparedness and response. In further discussions with our regional partners and our European colleagues, we became

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### Brigadier General Eng. Hussein Ahmed Al Harthi



Photo: Ministry of Interior, UAE

is the Director General of Smart Services and Digital Security in the Ministry of Interior, United Arab Emirates. He is also Regional Head of the EU CBRN CoE for the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.



**“The Gulf Cooperation Council countries are very well equipped and staffed for managing CBRN medical emergencies. (...) Harmonising the training will also enhance regional cooperation and make assistance effective.”**

interested in Project 54 (P54) which focused on establishing sustainable training systems for CBRN medical response in Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq. The project aimed at establishing well-equipped centers for the purpose of providing training to first (paramedic) and second (doctors and nurses) line responders to manage mass casualty events. This includes the need for personal protective equipment (PPE) to avoid contamination, use of decontamination infrastructure and systems for triage while also enhancing the knowledge on CBRN medicine among the medical professionals. As a result, Project 82 (P82) was developed, building on P54 but tailored to the region and through the pooling of resources from the GCC with the support of experts from the EU.

### Launch of Project 82

The regional training project for CBRN medical emergencies (P82) was officially launched in Brussels in June 2019 with a road map detailing the first phase of implementation for 12 months that would include a review of existing structures and training in all GCC partner countries by international experts, and end with a regional two-week train-the-trainers conference in April 2020.

### Regional training facilities

The UAE, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain designated training facilities in November 2019. A national training coordinator for each country was responsible for establishing the national training framework with the support of the EU, UNICRI and their experts. On 4<sup>th</sup> November we held a final planning and coordination meeting in Kuwait City, hosted by the GCC Emergency Management Centre. This was followed up by a three-day pre-training course for 60 medical professionals as a primer on CBRN Emergency Medicine, which was very well received by both our experts and our attendees.

### Adapted for interregional cooperation

Our next regional activities were to visit our partner countries with our experts. We met the stakeholders and viewed the training facilities to gain a better understanding of what is already in place and what the individual priorities are. The GCC countries are very well equipped and staffed for managing CBRN medical emergencies. Additionally, the infrastructure to easily integrate a national training framework and curricula

for CBRN medical response and interventions already exists, as more training is always needed. Harmonising the training will also enhance regional cooperation and make assistance effective if the need arises during a future crisis, even beyond the region. Also, this project marks cooperation on an interregional level as we welcome the support and assistance of our colleagues in Jordan, Iraq and Lebanon to provide the training to our future trainers together with our European experts.

### Covid-19 – lessons to learn

Unfortunately, the Covid-19 outbreak in China and the subsequent global spread of the disease in January lead to the postponement of the training as travel restrictions were put in place in all countries. However, it serves as a heavy reminder that the prioritisation of biological threats was correct. Currently, all countries dealing with the crisis are taking their own unique approach based on their existing structures and available resources. We were all taken by surprise at the velocity of the global spread of this novel coronavirus. There will be many lessons learned following this pandemic and opportunities to share experiences will help us prepare for future outbreaks which are a certainty. Hopefully by then, a more unified approach will be in place and I believe the EU CBRN CoE initiative will be important to help us all achieve this.



### Project 82

The new Project 82 (P82) for the GCC region is built on Project 54 (P54, Middle East Region) with an innovative approach for the Schools of Excellence: a joint venture was set up between the European Union, GCC countries, and the GCC Emergency Management Centre, supported by UNICRI and the OSA experts of the GCC and the Middle East.

P82 capitalised on both the training materials and the expertise developed through P54. The new project was launched in November 2019, when the delegations from the five GCC Partner Countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE) gathered in Kuwait City to attend the first technical workshop of the new project.



A high level of practical training to counter radiological and nuclear threats

# The Regional Radiation Detection Training Centre in Jordan

by Al-Sharif Nasser bin Nasser, Managing Director of the Middle East Scientific Institute for Security (MESIS) and Head of the EU CBRN CoE Middle East Regional Secretariat, Amman

The Regional Radiation Detection Training Centre (RDTTC) in Amman, Jordan, is the first facility of its kind in the Middle East. The Centre is a public-private partnership between the Middle East Scientific Institute for Security (MESIS), the host of the Middle East Regional Secretariat of the EU Centres of Excellence initiative, and Jordan's Energy and Minerals Regulatory Commission (EMRC), the country's nuclear regulator. It was designed with the primary objective of providing the technical knowledge and practical skills necessary for stakeholders from across the region to counter the threat posed by radiological and nuclear materials.

## The Centre's importance in the region

The Centre is uniquely situated to further the region's capability to identify and counter nuclear and radiological material outside of regulatory control, given the ongoing conflict in a number of countries in the border-dense region, the loss of radiological material due to the conflict, and the presence of non-state actors (criminal and terrorist) who have depended on trafficking activities for financial or malicious purposes. The International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) 2018-2021 Nuclear Security Plan has identified the nuclear security of materials outside of regulatory control as a stated pri-

ority interest of Member States. In particular, nuclear security detection and response architecture was cited as a requirement in order to "establish and sustain [States'] capabilities to detect criminal or intentional unauthorised acts involving nuclear and other radioactive material out of regulatory control and respond to nuclear security events." Aside from the deliberate instances of radiological and nuclear trafficking, the region has also been subject to the accidental trade in irradiated materials that pose public health risks, including but not limited to irradiated scrap metal and construction materials. It is in pursuit of these objectives, and in this regional context, that the Centre is operating.

Experts from Middle Eastern countries continue to be sponsored for radiation detection training at various facilities across the US and Europe but have never received this level of practical training at a dedicated facility in the region. The only available alternative for hands-on training on this kind of

equipment is at sites (ports, border crossings, etc.) where such equipment is already deployed. Jordan was among the first countries in the Middle East to install such portals and establish a comprehensive radiation detection architecture. It developed a marginal expertise that could subsequently be used to support other countries in the region. The Radiation Detection Training Centre, as such, presents a novel opportunity for countries of the Middle East to sustain their nuclear security capacity building activities from a regional resource.

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## Al-Sharif Nasser bin Nasser



Photo: private

is the Managing Director of the Middle East Scientific Institute for Security (MESIS) in Amman, Jordan. He is also the head of the Middle East Regional Secretariat, the first of eight secretariats

to be established globally under the European Union's Centres of Excellence initiative on CBRN issues. In 2018, he became a non-resident scholar of the Washington-based Middle East Institute.



## A model for future capacity building

From a system's design perspective, there are a number of reasons why the Centre is a success story and a potential model for future capacity building endeavors:

### 1. Language and context

Research has proved that training offered in the trainees' native language can be more effective than training in other languages, translated through simultaneous interpretation. Likewise, countries of the same region face similar administrative, technical and environmental conditions and challenges which makes the design of training material, and the discussion with regional trainers, more closely aligned to the local context of the trainee. In acknowledgment of the role of cultural awareness in capacity building en-

deavors, and of the value of delivering training material in the local language, the curricula on offer at the Centre is developed and delivered by local instructors in the Arabic language.

### 2. Logistics and Economies of Scale

Travelling short distances to attend training with little to no visa requirements allows for shorter advance preparation time and shorter training time. In the case of the Centre, it is consid-

erably easier and more efficient to have regional experts travel short distances to Amman for training, than travelling further to European or US destinations, where radiation detection training is on offer but preparation would need to start months in advance. Likewise, it is more conceivable that a regional expert can come to Amman for a one-day training event following a two-hour flight, while the time and effort of having the same expert travel to a European or US destination makes the possibility of such a short event less likely.

### 3. Public-Private Partnerships

Partnerships of this sort can leverage the unique capabilities of public institutions and private enterprises. In the case of the Centre, the public-private partnership between EMRC and MESIS is unique because it leverages the technical capacities and expertise of a nuclear regulator dealing with radiation threats on daily basis and the expertise of a non-governmental, non-profit training provider that can offer innovative training services using Learning Sciences methods. To drive this point further, the Centre is currently in the process of receiving its ISO certification, possibly making it the only ISO certified training centre in the region (ISO-2993 for Learning Services Outside Formal Education).

### 4. Multiple international partners

Having more partners in the establishment of new training facilities maximises synergies, decreases costs, avoids duplication, and increases the chances of sustainability. The Centre is funded through generous contributions by the European Union and the governments of the United States and Canada and will likely be used by each of them.



## The Regional Radiation Detection Training Centre (RDTC)

The Centre hosts a variety of detection equipment including vehicle and pedestrian radiation portal monitors (RPMs) and hand-held equipment. Realistic training props also include two 20-foot shipping containers that are intended for use during practical exercises related to secondary inspection tasks. Indoors, the classroom is fully equipped with workstations and all technical resources required for comprehensive training delivery including access to two associated software monitoring systems (Rapiscan, Schneider). Since both systems are used at fixed portals throughout the region, this has the added benefit of allowing participants to use what they are familiar with. The Centre's menu of services that is of possible interest for the region includes the following:

- Frontline officer training;
- Train-the-trainers training;
- Operation and maintenance training including the establishment of routine preventative and corrective maintenance management plans and equipment readiness programmes and;
- Technical support and consultancy services for maintenance, parts calculator, vendor parts identification and replacement and failure analysis.

## A unique model for training

In the ongoing quest of all stakeholders to consider sustainable approaches to training, the RDTC stands out as a unique model for the effective transition and embedding of training capabilities to partner countries. This disrupts the existing and traditional model of training programmes, which are costly, inefficient, and do not use local and regional expertise.

Most importantly, such an approach also allows for the development of collaboration and dialogue on common threats in a region characterised by division and a chronic lack of cooperation. This could allow for the sharing and possible harmonisation of best practices in an apolitical context, as well as the development of long-term relationships on the expert-to-expert level.



# Kuwait's experience in crisis management

We believe in team work

by Major Abdullah M. AlSaleem,  
Kuwait Fire Service Directorate, Kuwait City

Based on science and knowledge, organisations strive to achieve the necessary progress that serves societies and provides them with the necessary security and protection. Along with the rapid technological progress we are experiencing nowadays, countries all over the world become small villages, connected and either positively or negatively affected by each other, depending on events. In this context, the role of the various organisations and bodies emerge. They maintain safety and afford protection as well as providing a dignified life. Despite their different specialisations, be it regional or international organisations, government bodies, public beneficiary organisations, or even individuals, all these collaborators constitute parts of the chain of protection and societal progress (according to the chain theory). Yet, here in Kuwait, we believe

in teamwork and that individual building comes first through scientific and cognitive armament, working within the team, with humanitarian goals, for the sake of the common interest. Thus, we continue to have all forms of joint practices, and research to reduce various crises and disasters in the early stages. We make sure that we coordinate and exchange information, and then apply this on the ground. We also conduct studies to find out the pros and cons of the application, define the procedures and regularly update them.

## Holistic exercises

The annual meeting, held in the State of Kuwait, was a holistic exercise in which more than 31 governmental and private agencies participated in planning and unifying procedures and the joint field response to disasters. This meeting constituted of a series of holistic exercises (2015: disasters due to thick fog, 2016: torrents and floods, 2017: aircrafts and airports accidents, 2018: oil installations and CBRN incidents, 2019: earthquakes and natural disasters, 2020: joint command ) under the supervision of national and international monitoring bodies (such as the United Nations, the European Union initiative for Centres of Excellence, the International Civil Defence Organisation, and NATO...).

## Leadership training

In our last exercise in 2020, national teams of lower levels (second part of the middle Command) were prepared and assigned to carry out more senior tasks such as leadership, based on a joint command system and round table decision-making,

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## Major Abdullah M. AlSaleem



Photo: private

is the head of International Affairs and protocols of the Kuwait Fire Service Directorate. He was born in 1985, graduated from the University of Lancashire in fire and safety engineering and he specialised in crisis management, planning support and petrochemicals safety. He was the head of governmental media and awareness and is now engaged as Kuwait's political focal point with the

United Nations for emergency response and as National Focal Point for the EU CBRN CoE initiative.



**“Here in Kuwait, we believe in teamwork and that individual building comes first through scientific and cognitive armament, working within the team, with humanitarian goals, for the sake of the common interest.”**

and under the supervision and follow-up of their specialised leadership. This exercise aims at qualifying leaders for the coming years and generations, which is one of the most important goals of the comprehensive national exercises series that we evaluate, to prepare them for the latest updates on the threats and risks identified,

like possible biological, nuclear, radiological and chemical disasters. A general framework was set for this matter, along with an internal evaluation, identification of needs, providing the national CBRN team with the human capabilities and the necessary equipment, machinery, and technology. After that, they develop plans and hypotheses for accidents, subsequently applying them on the ground to determine the extent to which teams are ready, address gaps, and raise capabilities. In my opinion, these exercises, whether in an office or operational planning, represent the real test of the readiness of organisations and bodies. Yet, coordination and planning between agencies alone does not guarantee their effectiveness, but the application of crisis management processes and quality testing

does. (“Knowledge needs action”, as wrote Ali Ibn AbiTalib, 4<sup>th</sup> Calif of the Rashidun Caliphate).

### **Planning, coordination, and implementation**

Our experience in the State of Kuwait of managing crises and biological disasters is based on three main pillars, namely planning, coordination, and implementation. In light of the challenges we are currently witnessing and the risks we face (CBRN), we are making efforts at various levels to reduce them, mitigate their damage or even attempt to stop them according to the fundamentals of crises and disasters, which are usually caused by two reasons and are either natural or man-made disasters. With terrorist threats, sabotage and cross-border human errors, we as agencies and organisations must join all our capabilities and efforts to support coordination and the exchange of information locally, regionally and internationally, and act as one system facing a common destiny. Today, as a Focal Point of the European Union initiative and through what we have done with the members and other Focal Points, we have contributed to the progress of the national teams. I am convinced that all of us have to intensify our coordination efforts and work in the European Union Centres of Excellence initiative to grow and move forward.



*Holistic exercises for disaster response or the prevention and mitigation of CBRN incidents are regularly held in the State of Kuwait*

*photo: © provided by NFP/Kuwait*

# Strengthening capacities for border detection and management of CBRN substances

## Project 55: capacity building in the North African and Sahel region

by El Hadj Lamine, Head of the EU CBRN CoE Regional Secretariat for North Africa and Sahel (NAS), Algiers

Nowadays, the world is a small village thanks to the unprecedented development of transportation and communication, making free trade and human mobility easier. National security management is an environment which, while taking advantage of such exceptional developments, is a major challenge for each and every country around the globe.

### Security being one and indivisible

Trafficking of CBRN substances in general is one of the areas that needs close monitoring, given their dangerousness and potential dual use. Indeed, international illicit trafficking poses a serious threat since it usually involves several parties, including non-state actors. International and regional cooperation is crucial to tackle this common threat and should be improved so as to prevent, deter and eventually crack down on it. The geographic proximity of North Africa and the Sahel (NAS) region to Europe and the Mediterranean basin – a very dynamic area in terms of trade and a sensitive zone, taking into account a number of local conflicts – makes it critical to work closely

with other Euro-Mediterranean partners to secure common borders. Security being one and indivisible, the adherence of all concerned parties in both rims (north and south) is a prerequisite for the success of the collective effort.

In addition to the multilateral commitments of the partner countries of the NAS region<sup>1</sup> (within the UN and African framework), through the various instruments<sup>2</sup> relating to the fight for the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, the offer of cooperation made by the European Union (EU) through the CBRN Centers of Excellence Initiative is a singular welcomed step for all involved states, thanks to its distinctive “country-driven” approach.

### Capacity building in border security

It is in this spirit that Project 55, entitled “Strengthening capacities for border detection and management of CBRN substances”, has been launched with the aim of developing capacity building in the NAS region for better CBRN border security. Signed in October 2016, the project is funded by the European Union and implemented by the “Expertise France” consortium in six<sup>3</sup> partner countries: Algeria, Burkina Faso, Mali, Morocco, Niger and Tunisia. The Regional Secretariat for the NAS region, located in Algiers, facilitates the coordination of project-related activities in the various beneficiary countries.

A perfect illustration of the strengthening of regional cooperation in CBRN risk mitigation, the project is aligned with the objectives of the Centres of Excellence. In the long term, the objective of the project is to strengthen capacities relating to CBRN security at borders in accordance with international conventions and to durably improve the security and safety conditions related to the control of CBRN substances. Beyond regional cooperation, the project focuses on the coherence of actions undertaken by the partner countries, often sharing more than one common border.

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### El Hadj Lamine



Photo: DEVCO

is the Head of the Regional Secretariat for North Africa and the Sahel, part of the EU CoE CBRN Initiative. He is currently the deputy director for security and disarmament affairs at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Algeria. He served as legal adviser at the Algerian Permanent Mission to the United Nations (2005) and as deputy chief of mission at the Algerian Embassy to the Russian Federation (2012).

He holds a diploma from the Algiers Ecole Nationale d'Administration (1990) and a Masters in Finance and Development (1993).

# detection es



photo: ©kazar, stock.adobe.com

## Our objectives with Project 55

Specifically, the project covers several areas: the legal framework, prevention, detection and response to CBRN risks.

- **Harmonising the national legal arsenal:** it is essential to support the efforts of partner countries in strengthening and harmonising the national legal arsenal relating to border security in accordance with international instruments to mitigate CBRN risks, taking into account the low level of domestication of these instruments in many African countries.
- **Raising awareness of CBRN risks** and strengthening the capacities of actors relating to the mitigation of CBRN risks at borders by organising training of trainers according to the specific needs of the partner countries.
- **Strengthening the inter-service synergy** is a fundamental element of the project. It is the inter-service synergy (customs, police, gendarmerie and fire brigade) that covers the chain of command in a context of detection of CBRN substances on import or export, but also responds to chronic or accidental events related to border controls. Land, air and sea border controls (depending on the needs expressed by each partner country) are the subject of multiple training courses within the project.
- **Training courses** focus in particular on the detection and identification of fraudulent entries of chemical, biological and radiological products, the control of documents relating to CBRN materials, as well as the detection of CBRN substances and sampling through the customs services, the scientific police, and all other relevant national institutions. A joint training seminar in Slovakia implemented by the International Security and Emergency Management Institute (ISEMi) is offered to partner countries at the end of the implementation of the project.

## A new realistic orientation in the project

After the implementation of the first activities, the project was put on hold in July 2018 so as to redefine its terms of reference, mainly with the aim of limiting the scope of the project to exclusively border-crossings (land, sea and air). The project



*Training in El Oued (Algeria) organised by the NAS Regional Secretariat in November 2018*

photo: © CoE NAS

restarted its activities in October 2019 during the last regional meeting of the National Focal Points of the NAS region, held in Tunisia. To date, the activities related to legal capacity building have been launched (March 2020) and will be carried out by teams of international experts, taking into account the disparities among NAS partner countries.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, project activities are being re-modeled. In consultation with the Algiers Regional Secretariat, the consortium in charge of the implementation of the project is currently considering several methods in addition to e-learning techniques, including the possibility of bringing in local technical expertise in each of the six partner countries. In conclusion, it is essential to highlight the importance of Project 55's expected contributions and outcomes for the improvement of local capacities. A regional field exercise involving all NAS concerned stakeholders should be a tremendous input to enhance the regional coordination in facing the challenge of illicit trafficking of CBRN substances, particularly in terms of their detection and manipulation. Moreover, the delivery of pledged sophisticated equipment will be of great added value to all services of the NAS partner countries, which are at the forefront of the difficult battle to ensure security at national borders.

- 1 The States of the region are parties to almost all of the international instruments on the WMD non-proliferation.
- 2 Relevant International legal Instruments as well as UN Security Council resolutions adopted under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, mainly 1540 resolution.
- 3 Given its specific situation, Libya is not concerned by this project.



An example for concrete progress made

# Enhancing nuclear security in Eastern and Central Africa

by Joseph Maina, Head of the EU CBRN CoE Regional Secretariat for Eastern and Central Africa (ECA), Nairobi

The African continent is now, more than ever before, mobilized to find common strategies to combat and mitigate threats posed by CBRN materials. The Covid-19 pandemic is a grim reality. Globally, countries have been alerted about the risk if they do not tackle the problem (CBRN threats) head on. This notwithstanding, a region's collective response will only be as good as the commitment of governments, experts and national stakeholders to decisively and consciously mitigate the threats and challenges.

The Covid-19 pandemic not only complicates the existing peace and security challenges in many countries but also constitutes an additional security problem – especially for countries already dealing with security emergencies and re-emerging threats. In this fight no country or region can afford to wait for salvation to come from abroad: regional partnerships remain key enablers to global security, peace and stability.

## The Project on nuclear security (P60)

The Eastern and Central Africa region (ECA) has two current active projects. One is focusing on medicine security (P66 – Combating falsified medicines in Eastern and Central Africa/MEDISAFE), which is good work in progress at present.

The other project is focusing on nuclear security (P60 – Support to the EU CBRN Eastern and Central Africa Centre of Excellence in Nuclear Security). The overall long-term objective of P60 is to strengthen and harmonize the nuclear regulatory frameworks in the participating countries, to enhance their national nuclear safety and nuclear security regimes in support of the fulfilment of national obligations under international instruments.

At the very beginning of P60, a Steering Committee was established which reviewed and provisionally agreed on a detailed

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### Joseph Maina



Photo: private

is the Secretary of the Kenyan Radiation Protection Board in Nairobi. He has been in charge of the Regional Secretariat of the European Union's CBRN Centre of Excellence Initiative since 2018.

project work plan and logical regional implementation matrix. P60 Participating Countries (PC) created firstly a steering committee and the project implementers have utilized regional and international subject matter events to engage National Focal Points (NFPs) and subject matter experts on project progress and direction. On the margins of the IAEA General conference in Vienna, Austria, in September 2019 a side event provided an opportunity for the Steering committee to meet with all kind of experts, (On-Site technical Assistance/OSA, NFPs, local and regional experts for high-level policy and professional interaction and EU) to exchange on EU CBRN partnerships in Africa discussing P60 challenges. The project implementer established working contacts with the IAEA Technical Cooperation Department for Africa, to harmonize and synergize efforts of parallel IAEA programmes/projects for complementarity purposes and avoidance of duplicity.

The P60 Steering Committee is continuously reviewing progress by committing to a roadmap on next activities. The positive impacts of P60 have been boosted by an OSA team, with a regional professional key expert in the field, connected well with NFPs and local experts thus enhancing project ownership, making contributions focused, project outputs relevant and the impacts as desired and enduring.



## Status review in ECA Participating Countries

Provision of a CBRN questionnaire to PCs and the initial assessment of the responses by project implementers formed the basis of expert missions in the responsive PCs. They had to collect information and assess the status in the areas of interest and scope for the CoE project P6o.

This project includes respective national legal and regulatory frameworks, the safe and secure management of radioactive sources including disused and orphan sources, radioactive source inventory, source accountancy and control, search-identify-recover-secure, national response plans in case of radiological emergencies, equipment needs for detection and identification of radioactive sources as well as safety and security of radioactive sources/radioactive waste in transport or storage. National Laws, draft legislations, Standing Operation Procedures (SOPs) and guidelines served as legal basis with collaboration and coordination, as well as the roles and responsibilities, of different institutions reviewed to ensure clarity and avoidance of overlapping jurisdictions.

## Tangible impacts

### • CBRN and RN emergency plans

After a regional workshop on the emergency preparedness and response in 2018, the NFPs and experts from the Regulatory Authorities drafted CBRN and RN emergency preparedness and response plans for respective countries. This impacted the PCs positively as it enhanced and updated draft RN response plans for PCs that had already drafted such plans and gave a kick-start for those PCs who had not yet developed these plans. It is important, and urged by the ECA Regional Secretariat, that the project implementor, NFPs and experts continue to engage and to exchange towards finalization of the process and to ensure that the CBRN/RN emergency plans are incorporated into the respective omnibus national disaster response/management plans – an enduring impact for each PC.

### • Successful exercises

With four field exercises on search, identify, recover and secure having been successfully conducted, observation is that a number of PCs – notably Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda – indicated that they had considerably improved their capabilities for the same. This translates to a significant impact on

### • Identification of nuclear security gap

P6o has also resulted in identification of a notable nuclear security gap in the control of and accounting for radioactive sources in cross-border movement where border controls have been relaxed in the spirit of ‘ease of doing business’ within regional economic blocks. The project steering committee acknowledged this and identified and set the stage for all stakeholders to engage and provide informed direction to address this challenge.

### • Inventory of radioactive resources

P6o has made regulatory authorities in PCs more aware of the need for an exhaustive inventory of radioactive sources in enhancing radiation protection, nuclear safety and nuclear security. PCs have re-evaluated own status and have acknowledged that much more needs to be done to complete their respective national inventories.

### • Training on orphan sources

Table top exercises and field exercises in search, identification, recovery and secure of orphan sources provided a good opportunity for many local PC experts to train and participate in practical exercises and drills with sometimes with live agents in real life situations.

## Enhancing national regulatory regimes in the region

Other positive impacts and improvements already observed in PCs include: drafting or review of legislations, RN emergency response plans; improvement of security of storage facilities; enhanced capacity in PCs’ (trained and drilled officers in nuclear security – two specialists per PC trained as table top exercises). P6o’s most notable impact is its contribution in empowering national radiological and nuclear regulators of PCs in the ECA region in enhancing their respective national regulatory regimes for nuclear safety and security towards good standing in the global safety and security network. As an example, Kenya has promulgated a new law that has enhanced the national nuclear regulatory framework and incorporated nuclear security in the regulatory scope.

Finally, the project implementor has already created a web-based platform for regional contacts and this platform is very useful for all those involved in the project. Brief summary reports of all missions and other activities conducted within this project are uploaded this platform.

ECA PCs, through the CBRN CoE Secretariat, express appreciation to EU DEVCO for the technical support in strengthening nuclear safety and security in the region.



## Last but not least

### Medical response project in the SEEE region

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic, National Focal Points and designated experts from the South East and Eastern Europe (SEEE) region of the CBRN CoE initiative have completed the preparation phase for a medical response project entitled “Strengthening of CBRN Medical Preparedness and Response Capabilities in SEEE countries”.

The draft terms of reference for this future project were submitted to the European Commission in February 2020. The project will primarily focus on chemical and biological medical response components.

### SEA region: Report on biosecurity risk assessment

A recent report on biosecurity risk assessment written by Emily Valentin Castricones and Viji Vijayan, and based on information from bio-experts representing six countries in South East Asia (SEA) is now available online.

The report highlights the importance of collaborative strategies to address biosecurity risks and the value of inclusive awareness programmes that reach not only laboratory practitioners, but also border security personnel, pandemic response managers, and other key stakeholders.

→ **Web Report:** <https://bit.ly/3917R9T>

### New CBRN CoE Newsletter



The May 2020 edition of the CBRN Newsletter giving an overview of recent developments and projects in the EU CBRN CoE regions and Partner Countries is available online.

→ **Web** <https://bit.ly/3fogoG7>

## How the EU CBRN CoE regions are responding to the Covid-19 crisis

The EU CBRN Centres of Excellence are actively responding to the current situation where Covid-19 is rapidly spreading worldwide. Several webinars to share data and common awareness about the pandemic, and to increase the support within the whole network have been organised by EU CBRN CoE regions, supported by local authorities, National Focal Points, On-site Assistance (OSA) experts, projects implementers and European Union staff present in EU Delegations. During these meetings participants discussed regional needs, priorities, best practices, and lessons learned in the fight against the pandemic. The close cooperation with Partner Countries is clearly helping to improve the mutual preparedness and response to this worldwide threat.



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### MediPIET@HOME

Over the last few months, a series of webinars dedicated to sharing accurate and verified information by leading experts during the Covid-19 pandemic has been organised by the “Mediterranean and Black Sea Field Epidemiology Training Programme Network” (MediPIET).

MediPIET is a regional training programme network in field epidemiology (FETP) funded by the European Union (DG DEVCO) under the Instrument for Stability and Peace. It is linked to the EU CBRN Centres of Excellence network. The project has a regional perspective with the aim of contributing to the overall objective of enhancing health security in the Mediterranean and Black Sea region. The project supports capacity building for prevention and control of biological, natural or man-made health threats by a sustainable training programme in intervention epidemiology.

Early detection of and response to a changing picture of diseases is a key element of Human and Animal Health Strategy – One Health approach – to ensure disease awareness & preparedness. This is the reason why the three interconnected projects (MediLabSecure, MediPIET and STRONGLABS) have been oriented towards taking into account the effects of climate change on infectious diseases, the migration of potential vectors and the alert capacity of laboratories and Public health institutions in charge of field epidemiology to prevent epidemics of new types. These three projects also prepare scientists to analyze the major risks accordingly. Thus, this cluster of 3 projects, that is a global approach for biosafety and biosecurity in a broad sense, has clearly contribute to prepare the partner countries to face the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, and has been easily and immediately reoriented towards a new action concrete plan allowing countries to fight against COVID-19.

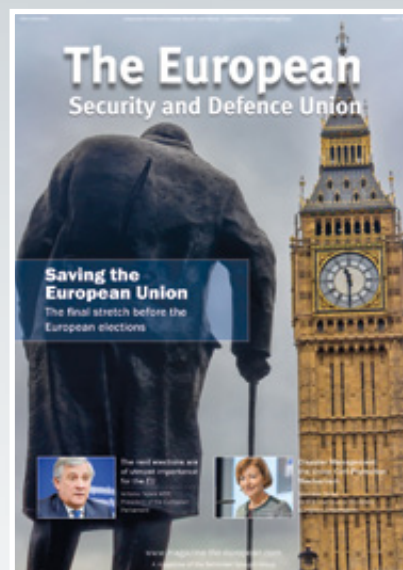
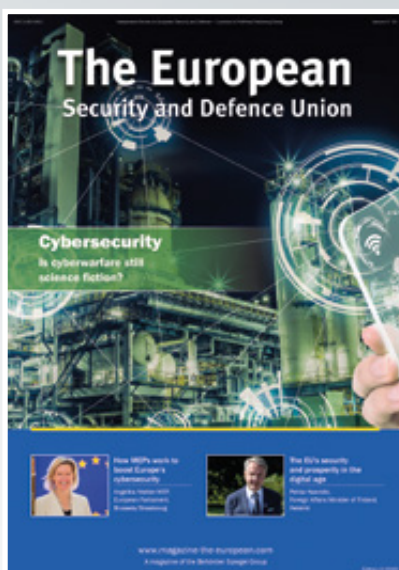
The three projects are running in five CoE regions (African Atlantic Façade, Middle East, North Africa and Sahel, South East and Eastern Europe, and Central Asia), with close to 30 Partner Countries.

→ **Web** <https://medi Piet.org/>

[www.medilabsecure.com](http://www.medilabsecure.com)



# The leading magazine for Europe's security and defence community



The magazine is the first winner of the CIDAN European Award for "Citizenship, Security and Defence", organised in 2011 under the patronage of Mr Herman Van Rompuy, President of the European Council, in order to reward outstanding efforts towards promoting European citizenship and European security and defence awareness.

On 26 November 2019, the magazine was awarded from the same organisation with the CIDAN Special Jury Prize for its outstanding quality and efforts in promoting European citizenship, security and defence.

MEDIA AND CONTENT SALES

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Wherever data and IT infrastructures need protection against cyber attack, secunet is ready to help. As IT security partner to the German federal government, we offer agencies, authorities and companies expert advice and super-secure solutions for protecting data and communications.

[secunet.com](https://secunet.com) protecting digital infrastructures.

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