

Moldova's Progressive Engagement with the EU CBRN CoE Initiative



Moldova stands out as a proactive partner country within the South East Europe and Eastern Europe (SEEE) region in its collaboration with the European Union's Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) Centres of Excellence (CoE) Initiative. Since 2017, Moldova has made significant strides in enhancing its national preparedness by developing its own National CBRN Risk Mitigation Strategy and Action Plan (NAP) in alignment with the methodologies of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). In light of evolving risks and geopolitical challenges, Moldova's National Team has taken proactive measures to review and update its CBRN NAP.

The National Agency for the Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities (NARNRA) of Moldova was tasked by the government to coordinate this crucial review and development process. This initiative, undertaken in close collaboration with relevant stakeholders across various government bodies, underscores Moldova's commitment to strengthening its CBRN resilience. Notably, Mr. Veaceslav Iatco, Head of NATO and Political-Military Cooperation Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration of Moldova, has extended a cordial request to the SEEE Regional Secretariat to engage international subject matter experts in reviewing Moldova's updated NAP.

In pursuit of this goal, Moldova convened a pivotal CBRN National Team meeting* on April 4, 2024, facilitated by the SEEE Regional Secretariat and On-Site Technical Assistance (OSA). Attended by thirty-five government officials and national stakeholders representing key ministries and agencies, including Defense, Health, Environment, Agriculture, Education, and Security Services, the meeting provided a comprehensive overview of the EU CBRN CoE Initiative. Participants were briefed on the EU JRC's methodology, the Needs Assessment Questionnaire (NAQ) process, and regional priorities essential for crafting new projects.

Following deliberations, Moldova's CBRN National Team resolved to hold a review meeting for its National Action Plan towards the end of the third quarter, extending an invitation to the Regional Secretariat and JRC to provide support and facilitate the process. An additional milestone achieved during the meeting was the commitment of the General Inspectorates for Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs to host a regional field exercise under the EU CBRN CoE Initiative. This exercise, focusing on "Biosafety and Biosecurity at Border Crossing Points," will engage stakeholders from across the SEEE region, leveraging knowledge and expertise garnered through EU support and international partnerships.

The ongoing regional projects focused on biosecurity and biosafety for front-line officers will synergise with this regional exercise, enhancing its effectiveness and impact.



Moreover, in a separate engagement, representatives from the Regional Secretariat collaborated with the General Prosecutor's Office of Moldova and the National Institute of Justice to introduce a series of manuals for prosecutors titled "From the CBRN Crime Scene to the Courtroom." Developed by UNICRI with EU funding, these guidebooks aim to enhance the capabilities of partner countries in prosecuting and adjudicating CBRN crimes. Moldova, expressing keen interest, volunteered to be a pilot country for implementing this project in the SEE region. As part of its commitment to sustainability, Moldova plans to integrate these manuals and corresponding training courses into its national training curriculum.

Moldova's proactive engagement with the EU CBRN CoE Initiative not only underscores its commitment to bolstering its own preparedness but also signifies its dedication to regional cooperation and security in combating CBRN threats effectively.

** The thirty-five members of Moldova's CBRN National Team that participated in this workshop represent the following government bodies: Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalization, Ministry of Environment, Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry, Ministry of Education and Research, General Prosecutor's Office, Intelligence and Security Service, National Agency for the Regulation of Nuclear and Radiological Activities, Customs Service, National Agency for Public Health, National Agency for Food Safety, General Inspectorate for Emergency Situations of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Inspectorate for Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, General Inspectorates for Border Police of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Academy of Science of Moldova.*

Background information:

The [EU CBRN CoE Initiative](#) is a global Initiative funded and implemented by the European Union as part of its goal to promote peace, stability and conflict prevention.

The aim of the Initiative is to mitigate risks and strengthen an all-hazards security governance in Partner Countries of the EU following a voluntary and demand-driven approach. The EU support is provided to implement a wide range of CBRN risk mitigation activities including needs and risk assessments, national and regional action plans, capacity building activities, legal framework reviews, tabletop and real-time (including cross-border) field exercises, inter-regional exchange of best practices and lessons learnt.

Funded and implemented through the [Neighbourhood, Development and International Cooperation Instrument \(NDICI\)](#) – Global Europe, the Initiative is led by the European Commission's [Service for Foreign Policy Instruments \(FPi\)](#), in close coordination with the [European External Action Service \(EEAS\)](#). The European

Commission's [Joint Research Centre \(JRC\)](#) provides technical support to Partner Countries, while the [United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute \(UNICRI\)](#) ensures a coherent and effective national, regional and international cooperation. Other relevant international and regional organisations and experts also contribute to the Initiative, which, involves 64 countries in 8 regions of the world, represents the EU's largest civilian external security programme.