

Fact Sheet: EC-US 2016 Counter Nuclear Smuggling Workshop

April 01, 2016

US-EC Cooperation to Strengthen International Capacities to Counter Nuclear Smuggling

The European Commission and the United States of America are cooperating to prevent terrorists, criminals, or other unauthorized actors from acquiring nuclear or other radioactive materials. Despite significant international achievement in strengthening the security of these materials at facilities of origin, seizures of weapons-grade nuclear material in Moldova (2011) and Georgia (2003, 2006, 2010) suggest these materials continue to be trafficked by transnational criminals. Furthermore, analysis produced by the International Atomic Energy Agency's (IAEA) Incident and Trafficking Database (ITDB) show that nuclear and radioactive materials continue to be encountered out of regulatory control in all regions of the world.

Recognizing the need for strengthened international cooperation to counter nuclear smuggling, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the United States Department of State co-hosted the "2016 Counter Nuclear Smuggling (CNS) Workshop" at the JRC Institute for Transuranium Elements, in Karlsruhe, Germany. Eighty experts from 30 countries and international organizations, including the IAEA, INTERPOL, and the United Nations, shared best practices and lessons learned in leveraging investigative and technical capabilities to counter smuggling of nuclear and other radioactive material. The workshop advanced the commitments made at the 2010, 2012, and 2014 Nuclear Security Summits and included demonstrations of CNS capabilities outlined in the 2012, 2014 and 2016 'Statements of Activity and Cooperation to Counter Nuclear Smuggling.'

Through a series of informational presentations as well as exercises and demonstrations, the workshop addressed state of the art approaches and technical challenges associated with detection, response, nuclear forensic analysis and law enforcement investigation of nuclear smuggling incidents. Workshop participants concluded that close inter-agency cooperation at the national level and international information sharing enable an optimized use of investigative and technical capabilities to effectively counter nuclear smuggling acts, detect nuclear and radioactive material out of regulatory control, and analyze seized material to understand its origin and history as well as potential linkages with other seizures.

The March 2016 CNS Workshop marked a significant step in collaborative efforts to strengthen international capabilities to prevent nuclear and radioactive materials from falling into the hands of terrorists and other malicious actors.