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THE CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL, RADIOLOGICAL AND NUCLEAR (CBRN) RISK MITIGATION CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION: THE CASE OF MOROCCO

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I. INTRODUCTION – II. ORIGINS AND LEGAL BASIS OF THE CBRN CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION – III. THE CBRN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN MOROCCO – IV. CONCLUSION

ABSTRACT: The CBRN Risk Mitigation *Centres of Excellence* of the European Union are a European Commission initiative created to reinforce national and, therefore, regional, capacities regarding nuclear, chemical and biological security outside the European Union. They are made of a network of political and technical experts that mobilize resources in order to achieve a coherent CBRN policy through technical cooperation projects that have been tailored depending on the needs of each partner State. This paper focuses on the origin, legal basis and structure of the CoE taking the Centre of Excellence located in Rabat, Morocco, as a very illustrative example of the CoE functioning and potential. The case of Morocco is especially interesting as it hosts the Secretariat for the African Atlantic Façade, one of the eight regions where CoE can be found.

KEY WORDS: Centre of Excellence (CoE), CBRN risks, technical cooperation, Morocco, European Union

LES CENTRES D'EXCELLENCE POUR L'ATTÉNUATION DES RISQUES CHIMIQUES, BIOLOGIQUES, RADIOLOGIQUES ET NUCLEAIRES (CBRN) DE L'UNION EUROPÉENNE : LE CAS DU MAROC

RÉSUMÉ: Les Centres d'Excellence (CoE) pour l'atténuation des risques CBRN de l'Union Européenne sont une initiative de la Commission Européenne créé pour renforcer des capacités nationales et, par conséquent, régionales, en matière de la sécurité nucléaire, chimique et biologique en dehors de l'Union Européenne. Ils sont constitués d'un réseau d'experts politiques et techniques qui mobilisent des ressources afin de parvenir à une politique CBRN cohérente à travers des projets de coopération technique qui ont été adaptés en fonction des besoins de chaque Etat partenaire. Ce document met l'accent sur l'origine, la base juridique et la structure des Centres d'Excellence en prenant le Centre d'Excellence situé à Rabat, au Maroc, comme un exemple très illustratif du fonctionnement et le potentiel des CoE. Le cas du Maroc est particulièrement intéressant car elle héberge le Secrétariat pour la Façade Atlantique de l'Afrique, l'une des huit régions où les CoE peuvent être trouvés.

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MOTS-CLÉS : Centres d'Excellence (CoE), risques CBRN, coopération technique, Maroc, Union Européenne.

LOS CENTROS DE EXCELENCIA DE MITIGACIÓN DE RIESGOS QUÍMICOS, BIOLÓGICOS, RADIOLÓGICOS Y NUCLEARES (QBRN) DE LA UNIÓN EUROPEA: EL CASO DE MARRUECOS

RESUMEN: los Centros de Excelencia (CoE) de mitigación de riesgos QBRN de la Unión Europea son una iniciativa de la Comisión Europea creada para fortalecer las capacidades nacionales y, por ende, regionales, en materia de seguridad nuclear, química y biológica fuera de la Unión Europea.

Están formados por una red de expertos políticos y técnicos que movilizan recursos para lograr una política QBRN coherente a través de proyectos de cooperación técnica que han sido adaptados a las necesidades de cada país socio. Este documento se centra en el origen, fundamento jurídico y la estructura de los Centros de Excelencia tomando como caso de estudio el Centro ubicado en Rabat, Marruecos, como un ejemplo muy ilustrativo del funcionamiento y el potencial de los CoE. El caso de Marruecos es particularmente interesante ya que alberga la Secretaría de la Fachada Africana Atlántica, de las ocho regiones en las que se pueden encontrar Centros de Excelencia.

PALABRAS CLAVE: Centros de Excelencia (CoE), riesgos QBRN, cooperación técnica, Marruecos, Unión Europea

I. INTRODUCTION

Today many of the threats a country has to face may have effects far beyond their own borders. When threats have a nuclear, biological or chemical nature, any fatality may have implications for an entire region within hours. The European Union is no stranger to this reality and that is why, as part of its external policy, the Maastricht Treaty states that the EU will strive to achieve a high degree of cooperation in all areas of international relations in order, *inter alia*, to strengthen international security.²

This paper focuses precisely on one of the ways in which EU foreign policy develops technical cooperation measures to prevent the potential risks of chemical, biological and nuclear assets in third countries: the European Union's CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative.

In the first part of this communication, the focus will be put on the origins and legal basis of this European Commission initiative. We will analyze the legal

² Treaty on European Union, article 21.2c) OJ C 326/01. 26.10.2012. *Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union* (2012/C 326/01). <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:12012M/TXT&from=EN>>.

framework as well as the objectives that all CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence aim to achieve.

In the second part, we will study a Centre of Excellence, specifically the one the European Union has located in Rabat. From all the countries where these Centres can be found, Morocco presented itself as a good example to show the relevance and potential of this initiative, as it is not only a neighboring country but also an extremely important one in terms of security cooperation, geostrategic bilateral policies and historical diplomatic relations with the European Union. After going through the functioning and structure of the Centre in Morocco, we will study two of the several technical cooperation projects that have been implemented so far: one that has already concluded (related to the transfer of best practice on biosafety and biosecurity management)³, and another one that is currently going on, that deals with the management of hazardous residues of chemical and biological waste.⁴

The last part of this work summarizes the final remarks that can be concluded from studying, even if superficially, the work developed by the CBRN Risk Mitigation Centre of Excellence of the European Union in Morocco. It is worth mentioning the importance that a proactive attitude of the third States has in terms of making the CoE initiative work. Counting on the complicity of partner countries, such as Morocco, to effectively fulfill the tasks assigned to each project has a major impact on the achievement of strategic objectives.

II. ORIGINS AND LEGAL BASIS OF THE CBRN CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Article 21 of the Treaty of the European Union establishes as targetable objectives, certain lines that must be observed when implementing its external action.⁵ The European Union carries out foreign cooperation projects with third countries, not exclusively neighbors, to reach such objectives: achievement of

³ CoE Reference no. Project 3. *Knowledge development and transfer of best practice on biosafety/biosecurity/biorisk management*: <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Projects/TabId/130/ArtMID/543/ArticleID/47/Knowledge-development-and-transfer-of-best-practice-on-biosafetybiosecuritybiorisk-management.aspx>.

⁴ CoE Reference no. Project 35. *Management of hazardous chemical and biological waste in North and West Africa*. <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Projects/TabId/130/ArtMID/543/ArticleID/71/Management-of-hazardous-chemical-and-biological-waste-in-North-and-West-Africa.aspx>.

⁵ Treaty on European Union, article 21.2c): Consolidated Versions of the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (2012/C 326/01), OJ C 326, 26.10.2012, pp. 28-29.

socio-political stability, solid recovery skills after a crisis, making development sustainable... As we have mentioned, chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (i.e. CBRN) incidents have the potential to cause crisis, disturb the environment, affect human health and create extreme instability in any region where they may occur. In order to prevent such risks, the European Union started to work on the idea of setting up a high-level framework for cooperation and coordination amongst institutions that, based on technical cooperation projects, would contribute to the stability and maintenance of international peace and security.

The Centres of Excellence (CoE) find their origin in the frame of the Instrument for Stability (IfS),⁶ which is an initiative of the European Commission that strived to maintain stability at the borders of the European Union. This instrument was substituted in 2014 by the Instrument contributing to the Peace and Stability (IfPS), adopted by the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union.⁷ Within the frame of the first Instrument (IfS), the Centres of Excellence were assigned a budget of 100 million Euros to be executed in a three year period (2010-2013), making them the most significant single measure of the long-term component of the Instrument for Stability.⁸ The resource allocation has continued since the new Instrument (IfSP) started to be implemented and the funding for CoE projects comes from it.⁹

The *raison d'être* of the CoE is strengthening the institutional capacities of countries outside the EU in terms of mitigation of chemical, biological and nuclear risks (also referred to as CBRN or CBN risks)¹⁰. They involve all interested parties since the very first stage in order to promote specialized knowledge and capacity

⁶ Regulation (EC) No. 1717/2006 of the European Parliament and the Council of 15 November 2006 establishing an Instrument for Stability. OJL 327/1 24.11.2006: <<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:52009PC0195&from=EN>>.

⁷ Regulation (EU) No. 230/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Stability. OJL 77/1 15.3.2014. <http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/documents/140311_icsp_reg_230_2014_en.pdf>.

⁸ PINXTEN, K. "Can the EU's centres of excellence initiative contribute effectively to mitigating chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks from outside the EU?", Interview by Rosmarie Carotti for *Special Report 17/2014*. February 2015. <www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADocuments/INTERVIEW_PINXTEN_2015/Interview_Pinxten_01_2015.pdf>.

⁹ <www.cbrn-coc.eu/1.html>.

¹⁰ The "R" in CBRN stands for "radiological". Although most of the times the materials discussed are either nuclear, chemical or biological, the official name of the CBRN Risk Mitigation CoE includes the "R" of radiological risks.

development of the potentially affected countries.¹¹

They build up a net of experts and partners that aim to reinforce regional security, always taking into account three main principles: local security control systems, knowledge management and long term sustainability.¹² In other words, they work towards the creation of partnerships with States outside the European Union to promote that local institutions are capable of controlling their CBRN policies, plans and project proposals.¹³

The CoE, due to their uniqueness, are a key instrument to reach a coherent system of capacity building, a correct development of regional policies and the strengthening of international cooperation among interested parties at both, national and regional levels.

Many agencies play a significant role within the CoE initiative.¹⁴ While it is coordinated by the European External Action Service (EEAS) and under the aegis of the European Commission's Directorate General for Development and Cooperation - Europe Aid (DG DEVCO), the initiative is executed by the Joint Research Centre and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI). There are groups of experts as well, coming from European NGO's that supply advice and that aim to obtaining institutional support.

The CoE have been created to protect the European Union and certain third States from the threats arising from the lack of nuclear control, proper treatment of chemicals, illegal trade of substances, etc.¹⁵ They are located in eight different regions of the world, and although the first Centres of Excellence were located in neighboring countries of the EU, (at the Caucasus and South East Europe, for instance), nowadays there are CoE in South East Asia, Central Asia, Western and Central Africa or the Middle East. Recently, in 2015, Qatar¹⁶ and the Kingdom of

¹¹ EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS, *Special Report. Can the EU's Centres of Excellence initiative contribute effectively to mitigating chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks from outside the EU?*, Luxembourg, Publications Office of the European Union, 2014. p. 5: <www.eca.europa.eu/Lists/ECADDocuments/SR14_17/SR14_17_EN.pdf>.

¹² <www.cbrn-coe.eu/1.html>.

¹³ The approach based on a top to bottom perspective is avoided, and a relationship of horizontal cooperation, with the association between parties as a guiding principle is promoted <www.cbrn-coe.eu/1.html>.

¹⁴ <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Contacts.aspx>.

¹⁵ PINXTEN, K.. "Can the EU's centres of excellence initiative contribute effectively to mitigating chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear risks from outside the EU?... *cit.*".

¹⁶ CBRN-CoE NEWS, "Qatar joins the CoE initiative", Doha, Qatar. 22 April 2015 <www.cbrn-coe.eu/News/TabId/123/ArtMID/519/ArticleID/37/Qatar-joins-the-CoE-initiative.aspx>.

Saudi Arabia¹⁷ have also joined the CoE initiative after negotiating the terms of entrance. They are both members of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries region, whose Secretariat is in Abu Dhabi, United Arab States.

Each one of the eight regions hosts a Secretariat from where projects are coordinated and implemented in all the involved countries. Each partner country has, in turn, a National Focal Point acting on behalf of them and creating a national team of experts in CBRN matters.

All the projects implemented at all eight regions deal with the prevention, preparation and response to any kind of nuclear, biological or chemical (NBC) crisis, regardless of the geographical area or the type of risk. There are three categories of risks, all of them foreseen in article 5 of the Regulation establishing the Instrument contributing to Peace and Stability (IcPS): accidental, natural and intentional. Through technical cooperation, the CoE aim to prevent any kind of incident.¹⁸

The European Commission works directly with partner States taking into account the specific needs of the country in particular and the region as a whole. Analyses regarding CBRN issues are carried out in order to identify the requirements of each project so that they provide a real benefit for the region.

There are currently more than 40 projects in 52 partner countries and projects differ greatly from each other due to the different contexts in which they are implemented. These may go from improving gaps in national legislation regarding CBRN issues, to combating illicit trafficking of hazardous materials, to planning recovery measures after a crisis.¹⁹

To translate the general provisions of the Centers of Excellence into a particular case, we have chosen the example of Morocco, for its geographical, strategic and historical relationship with the European Union.

III. THE CBRN CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE IN MOROCCO

Morocco joined the CBRN Risk Mitigation Centre of Excellence initiative in

¹⁷ CBRN-CoE NEWS, “The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia joins the CoE initiative”, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. 30th January 2015 <www.cbrn-coe.eu/News/TabId/123/ArtMID/519/ArticleID/34/The-Kingdom-of-Saudi-Arabia-joins-the-CoE-initiative.aspx>.

¹⁸ Regulation (EU) No. 230/2014 of the European Parliament and the Council of 11 March 2014 establishing an Instrument for Stability. OJ L 77/1 15.3.2014.<http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/documents/140311_icsp_reg_230_2014_en.pdf>.

¹⁹ To see the ongoing and concluded projects: <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Projects.aspx>.

2009 and since then, it has been a member of two of the eight regions where the CoE initiative takes place. From the aforementioned regions, Morocco is part of the African Atlantic Façade and the North Africa regions. Actually it hosts the Secretariat for the African Atlantic Façade, acting as the focal point for all the other member countries of the region. Together with Morocco, there are currently seven other States involved in CoE projects developed at the African Atlantic Façade, those being: Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Liberia, Mauritania, Senegal and Togo.²⁰

Regarding the North African region, whose Secretariat is located in Algeria, together with Morocco we find: Algeria, Libya, Niger and Tunisia.²¹

This dichotomy, which makes of Morocco the only country member of two different regions, implies that, depending on the project, Morocco will be partnering a different list of States every time. It also proves up to what point Morocco is an important partner for the European Union, which also answers any possible queries about the reason to select the country for the elaboration of this note.

Hosting a Regional Secretariat means hosting the implementing entities of the Centre of Excellence in the region one represents. In the case of Morocco, on March the 19th of 2013, representatives of the Moroccan Government, the European Union and the United Nations agreed on choosing Rabat as the city to host the Secretariat for the African Atlantic Façade region. This decision was formalized by the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by the representatives of the Government of Morocco and UNICRI.²²

Aiming to see in more detail how a Centre of Excellence -that happens to be as well a Regional Secretariat- works, we will now proceed to study the functioning and structure of the Centre of Rabat (part A), as well as two of the implemented projects in the frame of the CoE initiative (part B).

1. FUNCTIONING AND STRUCTURE

States decide voluntarily to become members of the CoE initiative, and therefore, the way these Centres work is based on a comprehensive and cooperative system among all the participant countries.

²⁰ EUROPEAN COURT OF AUDITORS, *Special Report... cit.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² UNICRI NEWS, "Opening Regional Secretariat for the African Atlantic Façade", Rabat. 19th March 2013. <www.unicri.it/news/article/Opening_Regional_Secretariat>.

Each region has a Regional Secretariat that acts as a focal point for the rest of member countries of the area. In the case of the African Atlantic Region, the Secretariat is located in Rabat and, its main tasks is supplying assistance at the identification of country needs, preparing regional proposals and implementing specific national action plans. The Secretariat is located at the Headquarters of the Moroccan Civil Protection Office in Rabat.²³

The Regional Secretariats, apart from being the implementing entities of the CoE initiative, are also the link between the region and the EU member States and CBRN Experts and Facilities. They must coordinate the projects and ensure that a fluid cooperation takes place among partner States. The way they vehicle this relationship is through the CBRN CoE National Focal Points.²⁴

National Focal Points are the representatives of the partner countries. Each country nominates a spokesperson that will defend their interests and assume the commitments in name of the country. The National Focal Point also must establish a National Team of experts on CBRN issues that will be responsible for assessing the countries' specific needs.²⁵ The National Team may be composed of experts from different ministries and agencies dealing with CBRN risks. The National Teams are considered to be the key player of the CoE initiative, as they allow the projects to be tailored for each partner country.²⁶

After the needs have been identified, by the assessment process, National Teams develop unique National Action Plans that pursue an integrated and effective CBRN policy that is coherent with internationally agreed standards. Actually, International Organizations also play a role in the CoE initiative, as some of them deal with some of the issues that the risk mitigation Centres address. Among these organizations the IAEA, OPCW, UNOCA BWC-ISU, UN SC 1540 Committee or EUROPOL stand out.

Among the tasks it has to fulfill, the Regional Secretariat in Rabat must organize round-tables every six months to follow up the projects, exchange opinions and coordinate future activities. For that reason, all National Points in the region

²³ DE BRUIJN, M., *Status of implementation of the CoE Regional Secretariats*, UNICRI. <www.clingendael.nl/sites/default/files/Status%20of%20implementation%20of%20the%20CoE%20Regional%20Secretariats%20-%20Marian%20De%20Bruijn.pdf>.

²⁴ <www.unicri.it/topics/cbrn/coe/>.

²⁵ <www.cbrn-coe.eu/1.html>.

²⁶ <www.unicri.it/topics/cbrn/coe/>.

must take part in the biannual round-tables.²⁷ The first round-table of the African Atlantic Façade took place on December the 13th of 2011.²⁸

All these simultaneous communications and relationships must be very well coordinated, to build proper synergies and minimize duplication. Regional Secretariats and National Teams of Experts are, therefore, key players in the CoE initiative.

2. EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED IN THE CoE OF MOROCCO

In order to illustrate how a CoE Project works, two different projects implemented in Morocco have been selected. The first one is CoE Project number 35, “Management of hazardous chemical and biological waste in North and West Africa”,²⁹ the second one is CoE Project number 3, “Knowledge development and transfer of best practice on biosafety/biosecurity/biorisk management”.³⁰

They differ from each other in the following aspects: whereas the first of them is still on-going, the second one is already concluded. While the previous one is addressed to the African Atlantic Façade (so the Moroccan CoE acts as a Secretariat), the latter is addressed to several regions (so Morocco acts as one more ordinary party State in the project); finally, another difference is that while on the first example the project implementer is an Italian University, in the second example, the implementer is an Spanish Institution.

These differences underscore the versatility of the CoE of Rabat. However, they also show the difficulties the EU might have to face if it wanted to install consistently such centers throughout the world.

It is interesting bearing in mind that, as long as an initiative is implemented by an International Regional Organization, its own interest and geographical priorities are going to impose themselves, even if it does not necessarily mean acting for the so-called “universal interest” in a specific matter.

Under the Reference number 35, the Regional Secretariat located in Morocco,

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ CBRN CoE Newsletter, Volume 2 – January 2012. p. 8.

²⁹ CoE Reference no. Project 35. *Management of hazardous chemical and biological waste in North and West Africa*. <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Projects/TabId/130/ArtMID/543/ArticleID/71/Management-of-hazardous-chemical-and-biological-waste-in-North-and-West-Africa.aspx>.

³⁰ CoE Reference no. Project 3. *Knowledge development and transfer of best practice on biosafety/biosecurity/biorisk management*. <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Projects/TabId/130/ArtMID/543/ArticleID/47/Knowledge-of-development-and-transfer-of-best-practice-on-biosafetybiosecuritybiorisk-management.aspx>.

coordinates the project “Management of hazardous chemical and biological waste in North and West Africa” for all the members of the African Atlantic Façade and Tunisia. This project, that started to be implemented on January the 1st of 2014, is organized in two different phases: a first one, of one year of duration, focused on gathering all international guidelines and requirements regarding the secure management of hazardous materials as well as the compilation of inventories per country of their stockpiles; and a second one, a year and a half long, addressed to supply technical training and awareness among professional staff and laboratories personnel.³¹

For this 42 months long project (expected to finish on July the 1st 2017), the European Commission has allocated a budget of 3.871.800€. ³²

The main objectives of the on-going project 35 are enhancing best practices in hazardous chemicals and biological waste management in partner countries; building capacities for laboratory employees that deal with hazardous waste materials; raising awareness on the importance of a correct handling of such assets and training the local experts to promote an indigenous training system of capacity building and knowledge management.³³

The main agency in charge of the implementation is the Spanish “Fundación Internacional para Iberoamérica de Administración y Políticas Públicas” (FIAPP), although the project has other collaborators, such as UNITAR, l’Institut Africain de Gestion Urbaine or Weepnet.³⁴

As we are currently mid-way of the project period, it is still difficult to assess whether the estimated results are going to be positive or, rather, not so satisfying. For that reason, we decided to take a second example, this time with an already concluded project.

Project number 3, “Knowledge development and transfer of best practice on biosafety/biosecurity/biorisk management” had an expected duration of 2 years and, again, a wide range of ambitious objectives.³⁵ This project was implemented

³¹ CBRN CoE 35 NEWS. “A propos du P35” <www.cbrncoe35.eu/a-propos-du-p35>.

³² <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Projects/TabId/130/ArtMID/543/ArticleID/71/Management-of-hazardous-chemical-and-biological-waste-in-North-and-West-Africa.aspx>.

³³ CBRN CoE Newsletter, Volume 9 – August 2014. p. 19: <www.fiiapp.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/union-europea-nrbq-en.pdf>.

³⁴ <www.cbrncoe35.eu/ressources>.

³⁵ CoE Reference no. Project 3. *Knowledge development and transfer of best practice on biosafety/biosecurity/biorisk management*. <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Projects/TabId/130/ArtMID/543/ArticleID/47/Knowledge-

in four different regions, precisely the two in which Morocco takes part (African Atlantic Façade and North Africa), together with South East Asia and South East Europe and the Caucasus regions. The budget assigned for the project almost reached the two million euros (1.920.000€) and had the Italian University of Insubria as its implementer.³⁶

Starting on January the 1st 2013 and concluding exactly two years later, CoE project 3, followed the standard cycle of activities that has to take place in order to reach the objectives of the CBRN risk mitigation CoE initiative, which are: the assessment of national needs by the National Team -together with UNICRI-; collection of regional needs by the Regional Secretariat, the European Commission and UNICRI; prioritizing of needs and analysis of requests (at this point, the European Commission allocates the resources and determines which is the appropriate budget); project implementation by the National Teams and the Regional Secretariats; and review and impact assessment by the European Commission together with the Secretariat and the National Teams.³⁷

This ambitious project was divided in what we could call three different phases: at a first stage, European Union experts trained selected National Experts on biorisk management systems, biosecurity techniques and biosafety skills. Together with this know-how, they would also train local staff on capacity building methodologies, as knowledge management is how lessons learned get expanded. Consequently, qualified national experts will be expected to continue with the training further on, becoming local trainers for future experts. The next “generation” of staff trained by the first round of National Experts are called National Participants, until they reach the level of being trainers themselves as well.³⁸

At a final stage, National Experts and National Participants were provided with a virtual platform that offered them e-learning materials to strengthen their abilities once the project period was over.

development-and-transfer-of-best-practice-on-biosafetybiosecuritybiorisk-management.aspx>.

³⁶ Insubria Center on International Security, The University of Insubria, Italy. <<http://icis-uninsubria.eu/>>.

³⁷ <www.unicri.it/topics/cbrn/coe/>.

³⁸ ICIS – “Insubria Center on International Security » of the University of Insubria, Italy. *Project Knowledge development and transfer of best practice on bio-safety/ bio-security/ bio-risk management*, 8th of November 2013. <http://icis-uninsubria.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Summary-EU-CBRN-CoE-Pr-3_EN_08.10.2013.pdf>.

At the end of the mentioned Cycle of Activities, at the review and quality control phase, project 3 had a positive impact assessment, as it had achieved its main strategic goals: harmonizing international standards among the participant countries of the four regions where it was implemented, reinsure international cooperation and networking, and, most importantly, “training the trainers” in terms of best practice regarding biosafety, biosecurity and biorisk management.³⁹

IV. CONCLUSION

The Centres of Excellence were created as a preventive answer to any potential nuclear, biological and chemical crisis that may arise from the lack of coordination and preparedness in terms of CBRN risks at a national level. The segmentation of responsibilities and the absence of sound technical knowledge on how to prepare and prevent those risks could involve dramatic consequences within a region. With that in mind, the European Union decided to set up a framework for technical cooperation amongst all levels of government and international partners.

The Instrument contributing to the Stability and Peace is the European Union’s main instrument supporting peace-building activities and security initiatives in partner countries. It came to substitute the previous Instrument for Stability and continued with the same line of action regarding the chemical, biological and nuclear risks (CBRN risks). The Centres of Excellence are an illustrative example of the weight long-term measures are given in the European Union. Allocating resources in two or three year-long projects that aim at building capacities and spreading technical or political knowledge, underline the kind of cooperation that the current EU is investing in.

The main goal of the CBRN CoE has always been to promote regional cooperation to enhance CBRN capabilities at a national level always taking into account the specific needs of the country and its region. Therefore, technical cooperation projects are tailored on an individually considered base. The case of the Rabat Centre of Excellence has proved how the CoE Initiative actually works, acting at the same time as Secretariat of the African Atlantic Façade region and as an ordinary member of the North African Region.

The CoE, also the one in Morocco, aims to ensure the stability of the

³⁹ <www.cbrn-coe.eu/Projects/TabId/130/ArtMID/543/ArticleID/47/Knowledge-development-and-transfer-of-best-practice-on-biosafetybiosecuritybiorisk-management.aspx>.

country where they implement a project and strive for balance between security and economic interests of the region. As the projects studied as examples show, knowledge management and international cooperation are two key elements of the capacity building system that actually have positive effects in the development of the countries where the projects are implemented.

These positive consequences, prevention of risks, preparedness against intentional, natural or accidental incidents, or capacity to recover after a crisis, are also felt in all the other countries of the region and therefore, contribute as well to the international security and stability. However, an initiative such as the CBRN Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence of the European Union would fail if it did not count on the solid participation of the partner countries.

In the case of Morocco, its involvement and commitment to the initiative has been constantly shown, and in words of Mr. Mohammed Salami, Head of the CoE African Atlantic Façade, “The regional and participatory approach of the EU CoE to define and then implement projects truly constitutes a model for our region”.⁴⁰

To that effect, it would be convenient that all third States actually perceived that the partnership built to prevent CBRN risks is not a condition for other types of cooperation (that they may also need), but rather an end in itself.

As part of the tasks delivered by the representatives of the European Union within the Centres of Excellence, it could be advisable including activities that raised a deeper awareness among partner countries of the fact that the budget allocated by International Organizations for such initiatives is framed in very wide capacity building programmes that aspire to strengthen State structures that will guarantee the rule of Law in those third countries while offering them an instrument of control against any breaches that may arise, also in the field of CBRN risks.

⁴⁰ UNICRI NEWS, “53 countries share common strategies and strengthen coordination for enhanced CBRN risk mitigation”, Ispra, 13th June 2014. <www.unicri.it/news/article/Ispra_coordination_CBRN_risk_mitigation>.

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