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International Network Workshop

of

*EU CBRN CoE Project 18
International Network of Universities and Institutes
for Raising Awareness on Dual-use Concerns
in Biotechnology*

26-27 November 2014

Centro di Cultura Scientifica "Alessandro Volta"
Villa del Grumello
Como, Italy

Press Release



Landau Network - Centro Volta (LNCV)

In the framework of the European Union (EU) Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear (CBRN) Centre of Excellence (CoE) Risk Mitigation Initiative
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Within the framework of the European Union Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear Risk Mitigation Centres of Excellence Initiative (EU CBRN CoE), the Landau Network – Centro Volta hosted the final workshop of the project “International Network of universities and institutes for raising awareness on dual-use concerns in biotechnology” on 26 – 27 of November in Como, Italy.

The two-day event, attended by representatives from 18 different universities and institutes involved in the project Consortium, the Landau Network – Centro Volta, and the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) – represented an important opportunity to review the activities carried out in the past two years and to identify the main strengths and weaknesses encountered.

Started in January 2013, the project primarily aimed at raising awareness on dual use concerns in biotechnology and at fostering the exchange of information and experiences among academics, scientists, researchers, technicians and students. It has paved the way for the development of a network of universities and research institutes at national and regional level in Africa, Asia and Europe.

Students and young scientists in particular, being the next generation of scientists, were the main target of the project activities and as of October 2014, 11 seminars had been specifically organized for 553 students of the local universities involved in the project. In line with local practices and preferences, different teaching methodologies were applied, such as traditional classroom lectures, interactive learning activities and group discussions. In 2013, in order to further appeal to its target group, a web-page and web learning platform were launched to facilitate the dissemination of the educational materials among the students and the development of the network. To date the platform has around 250 users, who will be able to continue to avail of the platform even after the end of the project, in promotion of the sustainability of the project’s results and deliverables.

As part of the project, a survey was carried out collecting the views of 376 professors and faculty members from 10 different countries on the current educational opportunities and on the perceived level of awareness on dual-use issues in their institutes. Furthermore, over the course of the project, 4 Regional working meetings were organized by the local partners and attended by a total of 90 experts, who discussed the opportunities and the challenges related to raising awareness on dual-use concerns in biotechnology at regional level.

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Starting with a review of the project activities, the Final meeting in Como – an International Network Workshop – aimed at understanding the aspects of the project which had been particularly successful along with aspects which could be improved upon, with a view to developing similar initiatives in the future.

In this respect, the first day of the meeting was devoted to analyzing past experiences, while the second day focused on the sustainability of the results achieved within the project, as well as looking at new opportunities for the Consortium in the field of dual-use and biosecurity education.

The following institutes participated in the final meeting:

- Landau Network – Centro Volta, Como, Italy;
- Royal Scientific Society of Jordan, Amman, Jordan;
- National Council for Scientific Research, Beirut, Lebanon;
- Agrarian University of Georgia, Tbilisi, Georgia;
- University of Coimbra, Coimbra, Portugal;
- “Luigi Sacco” University Hospital, University of Milan, Italy;
- University of Turin, Italy;
- Faculty of Sciences, Abdelmalek Essaadi University, Tetuan, Morocco;
- University Mohammed V - Agdal, Rabat, Morocco;
- National Centre of Public Health, Chisinau, Moldova;
- Hashemite University, Zarqa, Jordan;
- Research Group for Biological Arms Control, University of Hamburg, Germany;
- Saint Joseph University, Faculty of Science, Beirut, Lebanon;
- Palladin Institute of Biochemistry, Kyiv, Ukraine;
- Biology Education Centre, Uppsala University, Sweden;
- College of Medicine at University of the Philippines Manila, The Philippines;
- Al Akhawayn University, Ifrane, Morocco;
- Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad, Pakistan;
- Delft University of Technology, Delft, the Netherlands.
- United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, Turin, Italy;

The EU CBRN CoE Initiative is funded by the European Commission and implemented in cooperation with the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) and the European Commission Joint Research Centre (JRC). The European External Action Service is also involved in the follow-up of the initiative. The initiative is developed with the technical support of relevant international and regional organisations, the EU Member States and other stakeholders, through coherent and effective cooperation at the national, regional and international level. The initiative involves 48 countries in 8 regions of the world.

For more information:

- CBRN Centres of Excellence website: www.cbrn-coe.eu

- European Commission, Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace website:

http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/fpi/what-we-do/instrument_contributing_to_stability_and_peace_en.htm

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