



PRESS RELEASE

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European Union funded Nuclear Forensics Programme at STCU

Project 9901-9902: Establishing a Regional Nuclear Forensics Network

In the last decade, the threat that non-state actors may acquire chemical, biological, radioactive or nuclear (CBRN) weapons has become an increasing concern for the international community. This was particularly expressed in resolutions of the UN Security Council and leading to the establishment of a co-operation among countries and international organizations, such as IAEA, Europol, OSCE, Interpol, European Commission, SECI etc.

In recent years it is increasing the numbers of incidents, involving the illicit traffic of nuclear and radioactive materials (NRM), in the East European and Central Asia countries, namely, countries of the former Soviet Union. The geographical location of those countries together with economical instability makes these regions highly attractive to criminals and terrorists for both the possibility of obtaining NRMs and setting up transit routes for their smuggling.

Therefore, the main problem that the proposed project is intended to address will be strengthening the non-proliferation regime and counteraction against terrorism threats by improving nuclear forensic capabilities and extending international co-operation in combating illicit trafficking of NRMs in GUAM, that include Georgia, Ukraine, Azerbaijan and Moldova. In the first place this covers the national laboratories, which are recognized by the governments as expert organizations that perform nuclear forensic characterization of NRMs, seized from illicit trafficking.

The ultimate goal of a nuclear forensics investigation is the determination of origin, place of diversion and potential use of a seized nuclear material. Obtaining of such valuable information is possible by performing in-depth characterization of nuclear material with regard to the content of major and minor isotopes, the impurity content; microstructure material properties: porosity, grain and crystalline structures etc. Such studies can be conducted only in scientific expert analytical centers as they require highly proficient staff, modern super-sensitive, accurate and costly equipment.

The project aims on the creation of the network for nuclear forensic laboratories in GUAM region, that includes development of the informational capabilities in nuclear forensics in each of the countries and creation of a basis for co-operation in this field.

In the frame of Project 9901, Regional Nuclear Forensic Laboratory (RNFL) has been established on the base of the advanced technical capabilities and available staff of experts in Institute for Nuclear Research of NAS of Ukraine, which is the national nuclear forensic expert organization in Ukraine. As a result of project fulfilment the technical means of this RNFL have been improved and its possibilities and experience have become more available to the partner laboratories, which will be incorporated to the nuclear forensic network.

The specific project activities include:


1. The further enhancement of the analytical and technical capabilities of the RNFL for in-depth characterization of NRM.
2. The accreditation of the RNFL according to the international analytical QA standard ISO/IEC 17025 that will provide an official recognition of the RNFL's measurement results across the nuclear forensics network.
3. The creation of communication-informational portals for providing quick information and data exchange, efficient co-ordination of joint nuclear forensic studies, consultations etc.
4. The analytical training of the laboratory staff on the use of provided equipment.



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In the frame of 9902, the core technical capabilities of nuclear forensic laboratories in Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan have been revised and essentially upgraded to allow categorization and basic characterization of intercepted nuclear and radioactive materials. The nuclear forensic laboratories will provide reach-back capabilities for first responders and field experts in their countries, as well as expert support to law-enforcement authorities and other national organizations and agencies involved into the counteraction to illicit trafficking and nuclear smuggling.

For more information, see www.stcu.int/ or please contact Elena Taberko, tel.: +38044 490 71 50; email: elena.taberko@stcu.int



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The STCU is an intergovernmental organisation that is funded by the European Union and the US Government and aims to advance global peace and prosperity through cooperative Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) risk mitigation by supporting civilian science and technology partnerships and collaboration that address global security threats and advance non-proliferation in Ukraine, Georgia, Moldova and Azerbaijan.