



Introductory Remarks Falcon Exercise  
Inter-Arab Nuclear Detection and Response Exercise  
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Your Excellency (General Saif Abdullah Al Sha'far)  
Your Highness (Al Sharif Nasser bin Nasser), Head of the CoE Middle East Secretariat,  
Dr Cindy Smith, Director of UNICRI,  
Dear partners and participants,  
Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

It is my pleasure to be with you today, as the European Union *chargé d'affaires*, at the opening of this first Inter-Arab Nuclear Detection and Response exercise FALCON. This exercise was been put together within the framework of the EU CBRN Centre of Excellence with the support of the United Arab Emirates, UNICRI, the GICNT, and the European Union.

I would like to thank the United Arab Emirates for hosting this important Exercise on CBRN risk mitigation and for taking on the challenging task of hosting the EU CBRN Centre of Excellence Regional Secretariat for the GCC here in Abu Dhabi.

It is a shared understanding of the need to promote a security and safety culture in the region and worldwide, that made the UAE and the EU develop such an initiative here, as it has been developed in 7 other regions in the world.

And I would like, if you allow me, to say a few words about it.

As we all know, the use of chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (ie CBRN) materials and related technologies carries a great responsibility. This is even more relevant today as we face a volatile security environment, coupled with rapid technological developments.

We have to ensure a secure and peaceful use of such materials, for the safety of our citizens, our neighbouring countries and for the international community as a whole.

A key to overcome these challenges is regional cooperation and coordination in mitigating CBRN risks, and this is the core objective of the Centres of Excellence Initiative.

It follows an "all hazards approach", recognizing that whether they are of criminal, accidental or of natural origins, risks can be effectively addressed through:

- a coherent policy,
- coordination and preparedness (*at national and regional levels*),
- and a comprehensive approach (*legal, scientific, on enforcement and technical issues*).



In all this, sustainability is key and requires our long term cooperation and commitment. The establishment of Regional Centres of Excellence is precisely trying to achieve this. They are meant to build and consolidate regional and international networks and partnership, maximize national and regional capacities and ensure a tailor-made approach as regional needs may differ.

At operational level, the Regional Secretariats support partner countries with the identification of needs, the development of national action plans, the formulation of regional project proposals, and with the implementation of these projects.

The Initiative is a platform where countries and international organizations can exchange their expertise and best practices. Where the network of experts, coordination and cooperation are the basis upon which is built the peace and security of our societies.

The more limited the national resources are to manage CBRN risks, the more important it is to unite capacities and efforts. What will make the difference is the joint efforts of the regional Secretariat, the National Focal Points and the National Teams in each country.

Allow me to stress as well that, in parallel to efforts in supporting this regional initiative, the EU has been engaged in outreach activities related to non-proliferation. A specific EU(-P2P) Export Control Programme was set up to enhance the effectiveness of export control systems of dual-use items and related materials, equipment and technologies. It is currently in its 4<sup>th</sup> phase with our partner, the United Arab Emirates Executive Office.

We intend on strengthening our relationship with the UAE and with GCC countries by offering training, best practices and know how on the EU list of dual use goods, which becomes a global reference for export control. And we shall do so bearing in mind the possible blossoming of criminal or terrorist activities. In this regard, the existing programmes, mechanisms and tools should be further evaluated to fight terrorist activities, such as nuclear smuggling. The EU has increased dialogues with partner countries to discuss support measures interlinked to challenges between export control, counter nuclear smuggling and counter terrorism.

But I don't want to take too much of your time, so let me again, on behalf of all my colleagues in the European Union, congratulate all the partners involved in bringing this initiative to life and ensuring its sustainability.

And my special thank you goes to the United Arab Emirates and the Abu Dhabi Police which accepted the challenge of hosting the Centers of Excellence Regional Secretariat, becoming the regional champion of the CBRN risk mitigation initiative.

I wish to all participants fruitful debates and an excellent Falcon exercise.

And let me wish good luck to our Regional Secretariat.