

- Dear
 - Mr. Peter Wagner, Director – Service for Foreign Policy Instruments
 - Mr. Maciej Stadejek, Director - Security and Defence Policy, EEAS
 - Ms. Bettina Tucci Bartsiotas, Member of the UNICRI Board of Trustees
 - Mr. James Chumba, Head of Secretariat for Eastern and Central Africa of the EU CBRN CoE
- Dear EU CBRN CoE partner countries representatives, dear EU MS delegates and invited authorities, dear colleagues:
- Warm welcome to the Annual National Focal Point conference of the EU CBRN COE.
- I am very happy to address you at this 10th annual meeting which is equally an anniversary moment of the 15 years of this initiative, to which the European Commission's Joint Research Centre has been contributing almost from the beginning.
- It is rewarding to see that the 63 partner countries that are part of this network, and who have been gradually taking steps to strengthen their national capabilities and to mitigate CBRN risks together.
- The JRC contribution to the initiative is based on our strong research programme, using our own state of the art research infrastructure. In addition to R&D, other key aspects of our contribution include our expertise in nuclear education and training, chemical and biological safety and security and sharing of EU best practices and capacity building synergies with partners across the world.

- Since we joined this initiative, the JRC have been providing technical assistance and scientific support to the majority of the partner countries. Up to now, more than 35 countries benefitted from our technical support to carry out their gap analysis and needs assessment and to develop a CBRN national action plan. Only during this last year, the JRC facilitated technical workshops with 7 countries – Armenia, Zambia, Tunisia, the Kyrgyz Republic, Benin, Seychelles, Mongolia - to take a step further in preparing their national action plans. We will continue to provide this and other crucial support.
- As part of our endeavour to promote peaceful use of nuclear science and to prevent illicit trafficking of radiological and nuclear material, we contributed to the development of the Prosecutor's Guide to Radiological and Nuclear Crimes and the training programme released by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI) for the benefit of the CoE community.
- Not very long ago, our capabilities were heavily tested by COVID 19 and it is still painful to look back at the pandemic. Europe – and the whole world – were heavily affected by this virus. Unfortunately, many people lost their lives while some other experienced severe disease, anxiety and stress symptoms. This was definitely not the way we wanted to test our societal resilience! And that's why the JRC stepped up efforts for the EU to be better prepared to prevent and to respond to similar events, and to increase our social resilience.
- Consequently, the JRC has been focusing on monitoring and surveillance of vector-borne diseases, and we have increased efforts to advance our research on biosecurity and biotechnology

and to roll out more capacity building activities to mitigate spread of bioagents to and from other countries.

- We have reached excellent results on the development of methods for the detection of biological threats in Europe. The COVID crisis showed us that biological threats could become easily global, and so we want to collaborate more with public health authorities and laboratories around the world to ensure early detection of viruses in communities and travel hubs.
- I am glad that this year we come together to celebrate the EU CBRN CoE's 15th anniversary. Our cooperation is vital to develop a worldwide long-lasting cooperation legacy in the mitigation of CBRN risks and reinforce the security culture worldwide and to promote more awareness on CBRN risks, more innovative technologies, and more solidarity among research and expert communities.
- Thank you all, and congratulations on the achievements to the EU CBRN Centres of excellence and on the commitment to continuing to deliver them!