

Mediterranean Region - Competent Authorities Cooperation for the Oversight of the Transport of Radioactive Material

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In October 2025, the Mediterranean Network of competent authorities (CAs) for the transport of radioactive material (MedNet) marked its 10th anniversary since its official establishment even though activities had started since late 2013. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has been continuously supporting MedNet with both financial and technical resources. It is pertinent to mention that the initial financial support came from the European Commission (EC).

During these years, several achievements have been reached, starting from the buildup of confidence and sharing of regulatory and operational experience. Other achievements include establishment of working links for sharing information, development of common guidance material, training activities, several meetings both in person and virtual, and recently development of train the trainer material.

Achievements and actions were communicated at international level in conferences such as PATRAM 2016, 2023 and 2025, RAMTRANS 2018 and 2024, IAEA's International Conference on the Safe and Secure Transport of Nuclear and Radioactive Materials, 2021 and now 2026.

MedNet also held joint meetings with the European Association of Competent Authorities for the safe transport of radioactive material (EACA) in 2019, 2024 and 2025. It is also pertinent to mention that in 2022, a cooperation agreement was signed between the two groups. EACA has always been seen as a model for MedNet given the long-term cooperation experience among CAs in Europe and the advanced infrastructure in EACA member states. During these meetings MedNet member states not normally exposed to the whole Transport phases of radioactive or nuclear material, became aware of how complex issues are faced by experienced colleagues. MedNet members also intent to enhance their experience in transport security and the management of safety-security interface and it is hoped that future co-operation with EACA, international organizations and experienced regulators in other regions will be beneficial.

Significant examples of operational experience build up are the joint inspections conducted in Belgium in 2023 and in United Kingdom in 2024; the two EACA countries hosted several representatives of MedNet members. Key themes included collaborative strategies for information

sharing, harmonization of inspection procedures, development of protocols for effective communication between regulatory authorities and stakeholders. Based on the information gained, training material for a train the trainer program was developed and a course already took place to ensure that all MedNet MS get the same exposure as was received during the visits to the two EACA Member States.

Most of the mentioned activities have been made possible through the IAEA TC Interregional Project INT9184.

This is in line with MedNet's long term goal of achieving harmonization in the Mediterranean region and ensuring that the next generation of transport experts is well-prepared to address and resolve challenges that may impact transport safety and security.

This paper presents the outcomes and the progress achieved by MedNet in the last years, as well as, the challenges ahead, including transportable nuclear power plants, small modular reactors and climate change effects, and the way forward. It also aims to address the significance of exchanging information through its established contact channels for e.g. shipments being detected as contaminated in a MedNET Member State going to in another MedNet Member State.”