



## EU COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

### *~FACTSHEET~*

## THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

Brussels, 2 October 2009

Terrorism poses a significant threat to the security of Europe, to the values of our democratic societies and to the rights and freedoms of European citizens. Acts of terrorism are criminal and unjustifiable under any circumstances.

Terrorism must be countered both at national and international level. Action by the European Union has intensified since 9/11, and in particular since the horrendous attacks in Madrid (2004) and London (2005). Following proposals by the Presidency and the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator the Council adopted the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which commits the Union to combat terrorism globally while respecting human rights, allowing its citizens to live in an area of freedom, security and justice. The EU's Counter-Terrorism Strategy covers four strands of work: Prevention, Protection, Pursuit and Response.

### **Prevent**

The first objective is to prevent people turning to terrorism by tackling the factors conducive to the spread of terrorism which can lead to radicalisation and recruitment, in Europe and internationally.

- To improve coordination between the Member States and the Union the Council has adopted a strategy and a detailed action plan to combat radicalisation and recruitment. Implementing measures include initiatives by Member States and Europol eg to address radicalisation in prisons, to counter violent radicalisation through the Internet ('Check the Web'), to train imams, to develop the capacities of local police in recognising and countering radicalisation, on the importance of pro-active communication to counter radical messages and how to disengage radicalised individuals from violent movements.
- Through its military and civilian crisis management operations under ESDP the EU contributes to improving the security environment which influences the conditions for violent radicalisation in third countries. Examples include the Rafah border monitoring mission (Gaza), and Eupol missions in Ramallah and Afghanistan. Additional civilian capabilities to prevent and counter terrorism under ESDP are being identified within the Civilian Headline Goal 2010.

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- EU aid projects to third countries in the field of good governance and the rule of law are addressing factors which can contribute to radicalisation and recruitment (Euromed, Western Balkans, ASEM, Afghanistan, Pakistan, cooperation with Algeria and Morocco).
- With the Euromed countries the EU has organised expert meetings to analyse and compare processes of radicalisation in the Mediterranean area. The Commission organised Euromed conferences on the role of the media in preventing incitement in 2007 and 2008.
- The European Network of Experts on Radicalisation created by the European Commission provides a platform of discussion by producing studies and organising seminars on radicalisation phenomenon in order to enhance coordination at EU and Member State levels on counter-terrorism and preventive approaches. Through the financing of studies and projects, the European Commission supports Member States to gather and critically assess knowledge and expertise of the subject.
- Prevention of terrorism requires effective coordination at the level of each Member State. To encourage such coordination a peer evaluation of national counter-terrorism arrangements has been initiated. Applying EU-wide best practices several Member States have strengthened their legislation and their operational or analytical counter-terrorism instruments. The first evaluation, which focused on counter-terrorism structures and coordination, was held from 2001 to 2007. The second evaluation, dealing with preparedness and response in case of a terrorist attack, was started in 2007 and is intended to be finalised by the beginning of 2010.

## Protect

The second objective of the EU strategy is to protect citizens and infrastructure and reduce our vulnerability to attack, including through improved security of borders, transport and critical infrastructure.

- Measures to improve the *protection of borders* include the Regulation on standards for security features and biometrics in passports and travel documents in EU passports (2009), the establishment of the FRONTEX agency (2005), and the modernisation of the Community Customs Code (2005). Political agreement on further steps toward the development of the SIS II System has been reached in the Council (2009). A Regulation on the Visa Information System has been approved by the Council and the Parliament (2009). The Council is currently discussing the need to set up a European Passenger Name Record system. Measures to improve the *security of transport* include the adoption of the Ports Security Directive (2005) and the initiatives to improve the security at European airports following the aborted attack on transatlantic aircraft in the UK (2006). A regulation on common rules on aviation security (revision of Regulation 2320/02) was approved by the Council in 2008. The Council and the Parliament also adopted six legislative acts, as part of the third maritime package, aiming to strengthen the security of maritime transport in Europe (2009).

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- As regards the *protection of critical infrastructure* a Directive establishing a procedure for the identification and designation of European Critical Infrastructure was adopted by the Council (2008). In October 2008 the Commission presented a proposal for a Council Decision on Critical Infrastructure Warning Information Network (CIWIN) that establishes a European platform for the exchange of information on critical infrastructure protection.
- A wide range of measures on the *security of explosives* have been undertaken in the past years. A Commission-initiated EU Action Plan on Enhancing the Security of Explosives has been adopted by the Council (2008). The creation of the European Explosive Ordnance Disposal Network (EEODN) is one of the achievements. A Directive on identification and traceability of explosives for civil use was adopted by the Commission in 2008. The Early Warning System (EWS) is currently being developed by Spain in partnership with Europol. The European Bomb Data System (EBDS) is expected to be operational by the end of 2010.
- In June 2009 the Commission adopted a policy package on CBRN security with the aim of strengthening the protection of EU citizens from CBRN threats.
- The past number of years has seen increasing EU focus on and investment in the area of security research and development, culminating in its inclusion as a dedicated 'theme' under the Commission's Framework Programme 7. This theme comprises a fund of € 1.3 billion for the 2007-2013 period with the objective of harnessing science and technology know-how to respond to the security challenges posed by terrorist activities and threats. Building on the findings of the *European Security Research & Innovation Forum* the Commission will continue to more closely align law enforcement and civil security needs with industry and research community capabilities.
- In the 7th Research Framework Programme (2007-2013) significant funding will be devoted to enhancing the *protection against conventional explosives and against non-conventional terrorist attacks* (chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear).

## Pursue

The third objective of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy is to pursue and investigate terrorists across our borders and globally; to impede planning, travel, and communications; to disrupt support networks; to cut off funding and access to attack materials, and to bring terrorists to justice.

- The *European Arrest Warrant*, is frequently being employed as a tool against terrorism and other forms of major crime. Building on this experience the Council adopted a framework decision to create a *European Evidence Warrant* ( 2008). The Council also adopted a Framework Decision to allow mutual recognition of *confiscation orders* (2006).

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- Initiatives to *combat the financing of terrorism* include the Third Money Laundering Directive (2005), the Regulation on cash couriers requiring disclosure of cash or equivalent in excess of € 10000 (2005), and the Regulation on funds transfers (2006). A draft Regulation on alternative remittance systems (payments services) is currently before the Council. The Council adopted a Decision authorising the signature on laundering, search, seizure and confiscation of the proceeds from crime and on the financing of terrorism.
- Several measures aim at *strengthening information exchange* in the fight against terrorism. Member States will proceed to DNA, fingerprinting and vehicle data exchange following the "Prüm" Council Decisions (2008), which also provide for supply of information in order to prevent terrorist offences even without request. A Common Position to improve information sharing on lost and stolen passports, including with Interpol, was adopted in 2005. A Directive on the retention of data was adopted in 2006, as was a Framework Decision on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement agencies. The Council also adopted a Decision to allow law enforcement access to the Visa Information System (VIS) for the prevention, detection and investigation of terrorist offences and of other serious criminal offences. Further developments have taken place in the area of information exchange and judicial cooperation. To ensure a high level of protection for the basic rights and freedoms, in particular the privacy of individuals, the Council adopted a Framework Decision on the protection of personal data processed in the framework of police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters, (2008). Framework Decision on improving the exchange of information on criminal convictions handed down against nationals of the Member States was adopted by the Council, (2008). Cooperation among *security and intelligence agencies* has been enhanced through the modernisation and expansion of the EU Situation Centre , which has been providing frequent and high-level assessments of the terrorist threat to the Member States and the Commission.
- *Europol and Eurojust* are each involved in ongoing terrorism-related investigations in Europe. Transatlantic cooperation has been enhanced by the stationing of US liaison officers at Europol and Eurojust. An agreement strengthening information exchange between Eurojust and the US Department of Justice was agreed in 2006. A decision to strengthen Europol was adopted in 2009. The European Police College (*CEPOL*) has initiated counter-terrorism training programmes for senior police officials. To enhance the training of senior police officers, a Cooperation Agreement between the European Police College (CEPOL) and Interpol was approved by the Council, (2009). Moreover, the cooperation agreement between Europol and Eurojust was updated and enhanced (2009).

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## Respond

The fourth objective of the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy is to prepare ourselves, in the spirit of solidarity, to manage and minimise the consequences of a terrorist attack, by improving capabilities to deal with the aftermath, the coordination of the response, and the needs of victims.

- Military assets and capabilities have been identified which could support coordinated EU disaster response efforts. They include strategic transport (air/sea), tactical transport (helicopters), medical units, field hospitals and logistics. Procedures have been finalised for matching transport needs and available military owned or chartered transportation facilities from Member States.
- Several initiatives have been taken to improve consular protection of EU citizens in case of terrorist attacks or natural disasters in third countries. Additional proposals have recently been tabled by the Commission. The Council adopted Conclusions calling for civil protection capabilities to be enhanced by a European mutual assistance system building on the civil protection modular approach, (2008).
- Multinational exercises to test the readiness of Member States to assist each other in case of man-made or natural disasters continue to be held each year. Lessons learned include the need to improve communication facilities between national capitals and the European Commission. To improve crisis communication among its own services the Commission has set up the ARGUS network.
- A Financial Instrument for Community Action in the field of civil protection (2007-2013) has been created. This will enable the Union to support prevention, preparedness and response to man-made and natural disasters both inside and outside the Union. For immediate humanitarian relief activities, a budget of € 1,5 billion for 2007-2013, with a separate Emergency Aid Reserve. A pilot project and further grant actions financed by the European Commission have been launched to help victims of terrorism and their families. Additional funds for support to victims have been set aside under the Programme for the prevention of and fight against crime 2007-2013. In addition, the Commission finances a European Network on Associations of Victims of Terrorism with a budget of 200.000€, aimed at stimulating trans-national co-operation between associations of victims of terrorism and enhance the representation of victims' interests at EU-level.
- At the proposal of the Presidency and the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator proposals have been adopted to establish EU Emergency and Crisis Coordination Arrangements (2005). Operating procedures and a manual for crisis coordination arrangements in the Council were agreed (2006) and tested in an exercise involving Permanent Representatives, the Commission, and the Council Secretariat (2006). Follow-up exercises have been taking place since 2007.

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## International cooperation

The fight against terrorism plays a significant and growing part in the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Union and in its wider international relations.

- The EU continues to engage with other international and regional organisations in global counter-terrorism measures.
- The Commission has developed its first comprehensive counter-terrorism programme to support 3<sup>rd</sup> countries in their prevention and fight against terrorism, covering the following priority areas:
  - South Asia region, in particular Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, Bangladesh
  - Sahel (Mauretania, Mali, Niger) and Morocco, Algeria
  - Yemen
  - Implementation of the UN standards on counter-terrorism

The main financial instrument to support 3<sup>rd</sup> countries in their efforts to tackle counter-terrorism is the **Instrument for Stability (IfS)**. **While the short-term IfS addresses a specific crisis situation, the long-term IfS focus mainly on transregional threats.** COM is supporting a transregional approach in combating terrorism and organised crime. Under the 2009-2011 Indicative Programme for the long-term IfS, key priorities are to support the implementation UN counter-terrorism standards and to promote regional measures addressing counter-terrorism in South Asia especially Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Sahel region and Yemen.

- In 2008 an initiative of sharing best practices according to the model of EU counter-terrorism peer evaluation was started with six Western Balkan countries aiming to carry out an analysis of their counter-terrorism structures and issue recommendations for adjustments.
- With strong backing from the Union the United Nations is increasing its role in combating terrorism. Examples include the adoption of the Convention against Nuclear Terrorism (2005) and the adoption of the UN Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2006). The EU continues to push for a comprehensive UN convention against terrorism. In its relations with third countries the EU consistently urges the ratification and implementation of the existing 16 UN conventions and protocols against terrorism.
- High-level political dialogues on counter-terrorism have been initiated between the EU and the USA, Russia, India, Pakistan, Australia, Japan and Egypt. Since 2004 the EU has co-organised an annual dialogue to combat terrorist financing with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council. Cooperation against terrorism is being mainstreamed into the Union's external agreements. Examples include the Revised Cotonou Agreement, the Euro-Mediterranean Code of Conduct Against Terrorism (both 2005) and the draft agreement on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation with Pakistan. Cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism has also been included in the 11 Action Plans under the EU's Neighbourhood Policy.

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- Since 2004 the EU has initiated counter-terrorism capacity-building initiatives with Algeria, Indonesia and Morocco, bringing together aid projects financed by Member States and the Commission. In addition the Commission supports a range of CT-related projects, notably in the fields of border protection and countering of terrorist financing, in regions ranging from the Balkans to South-East Asia.
- The Commission has supported a series of meetings under EuroMed auspices on the relationship between Media and Terrorism most recently in Canada (2008).
- The EU and its Member States wish to work with the US to combat terrorism, in a manner that comports with the rule of law, respects our common values, and complies with our respective obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, refugee law, and humanitarian law. In this context, in June 2009 the EU finalised the creation of a political framework that will help those member states who wish to do so, to receive certain detain former Guantanamo detainees. We are working on other initiatives to increase our cooperation with the US.
- In the framework of the G8 the Commission and several Member States support global efforts to reduce the risk of terrorists obtaining weapons of mass destruction. The Union, for example, supports Russia's efforts to reduce its surplus stocks of nuclear and chemical weapons. EU Joint Actions are being implemented to support the non-proliferation activities of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The Union also lends strong support to efforts to prevent the spreading of biological weapons.

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