



## EU COUNCIL SECRETARIAT

### *~FACTSHEET~*

## THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE FIGHT AGAINST TERRORISM

Brussels, 9 March 2007

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 or root causes 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 (2005). Implementing measures include initiatives by Member States and Europol to address radicalisation in prisons and to counter violent radicalisation through the Internet ('Check the Web'). Work has started to prepare a European strategy on community policing.

# P R E S S

- 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 Aceh operation (2006), the Rafah border monitoring mission (Gaza), and the planned police support mission in Afghanistan (2007). Additional civilian capabilities to prevent and counter terrorism under ESDP are being identified within the Civilian Headline Goal 2008.
- 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, 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 will organise a Euromed conference on the role of the media in preventing incitement in 2007.
- In July 2006 the Council approved guidelines to combat radicalisation and recruitment through media communication in the Union. An expanded version is to be approved under the German Presidency.
- An expert group on violent radicalisation has been created by the Commission in 2006. Several cross-border studies on radicalisation have been commissioned under the 6th and 7th EU Research Framework Programme (2006 and 2007).
- 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 was initiated. Applying EU-wide best practices several Member States have strengthened their legislation and their operational or analytical counter-terrorism instruments.

## **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 Directive to include biometric features in EU passports (2005), the establishment of the FRONTEX agency (2005), and the modernisation of the Community Customs Code (2005). Political agreement on the SIS II System has been reached in the Council (2006). A Regulation on the Visa Information System is under negotiation in the Council and the Parliament. The Commission is currently undertaking an impact assessment of the need to set up a European Passenger Name Record system. European customs and border protection services have organised joint exercises to prevent the smuggling of radiological material which could be used to fabricate a 'dirty bomb'.

- 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). Measures to reinforce European standards on aviation security (revision of Regulation 2320/02) are in the process of codecision with the European Parliament.
- At the request of the European Council wide-ranging measures to improve the *protection of critical infrastructure* have been proposed by the Commission in December 2006. A Directive establishing a procedure for the identification and designation of European Critical Infrastructure has been put forward. A European rapid alert system to respond to emergencies is being prepared (Critical Infrastructure Warning Information System).
- A monitoring regime to control the manufacturing of substances used in the production of explosives is being prepared by the Commission and is a priority of the German Presidency.
- For the first time *security-related research and development* will figure prominently in the EU's research programme. The 7th Research Framework Programme (2007-2013) has earmarked € 1.4 billion for this purpose. Research to improve the protection of 'soft' and 'hard' targets against terrorism ranks high among the priorities.

## 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*, which has so far led to the extradition of more than 2000 criminal suspects, is increasingly being employed as a tool against terrorism and other forms of major crime. Building on this experience the Council has reached political agreement on a proposal to create a *European Evidence Warrant* (2006). The Council also adopted a Framework Decision to allow mutual recognition of *confiscation orders* (2006).
- Recent 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.

- Several measures aim at *strengthening information exchange* in the fight against terrorism. 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. A proposal to improve the exchange of information on criminal convictions is under discussion in the Council and the Parliament. Seven Member States signed the Treaty of Prüm (2005) which allows national law enforcement authorities access to data bases in other Member States (including of fingerprints and DNA), and which facilitates cross-border police cooperation. Efforts to integrate the Prüm Treaty into the European Union are under discussion in the Council.
- Cooperation among *security and intelligence agencies* has been enhanced through the modernisation and expansion of the EU Situation Centre (2005), 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 around 20 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 proposal to strengthen Europol, including through a change in its legal base, is before the Council. The European Police College (*CEPOL*) has initiated counter-terrorism training programmes for senior police officials.
- 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).

## **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.
- 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 (2006: Bulgaria, Denmark/Sweden; 2007: Luxembourg). 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 (indicative annual budget: € 25 million).
- A pilot project has 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.
- 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). A follow-up exercise will take place in 2007.

### **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.

- 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.
- Between 2004-2006 annual high-level political dialogues on counter-terrorism have been initiated between the EU and the USA, Russia, India, Pakistan, Australia and Japan. Egypt has requested the EU to open a similar dialogue. In the framework of the Asia-Europe Meetings (ASEM) the EU has co-hosted two regional conferences on inter-faith dialogue (Bali, 2005; Cyprus, 2006). A follow-up meeting will be held in Beijing in 2007. 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.
- 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 new Stability Fund (2007-2013) will enable the Union to significantly increase its counter-terrorism capacity-building assistance to third countries. In 2007 the first CFSP Joint Action on terrorism will be launched. This will consist of financial aid to the African Union's Centre for Counter-Terrorism (Algiers).
- 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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