



The European Union and its Fight against International Terrorism

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Abstract

After the devastating terror attacks in Madrid on 11th March 2004, where 191 persons were killed and 1,800 wounded and in London on 7th July 2005, where 56 persons were killed and around 700 wounded, it became clear that Islamist terrorism had reached Europe.

In 2010, 249 terrorist attacks were reported in nine EU member states, while 611 individuals were arrested for terrorism-related offences. The majority of these attacks were in France (84) and Spain (90).

Last year, Islamist terrorists carried out only three attacks on EU territory (two in Sweden and one in Denmark). Separatist groups, on the other hand, were responsible for 160 attacks, while left-wing and anarchist groups were responsible for 45 attacks. One single-issue attack was reported from Greece.

Furthermore, we can see a variety of recruiting activities of Islamist networks as well as efforts in financing terrorism. The internet is currently a crucial facilitating factor for both terrorists and extremists.

The EU's Counter-Terrorism Strategy covers four strands of work: Prevention, Protection, Pursuit and Response.

After the terror attacks in Oslo and on the island of Utøya on 22 July 2011 by Anders Behring Breivik, the European Union will take stronger actions against "Lone Wolf Terrorism". In this scenario Europol will play a leading role.

In the European Union the following persons/institutions are engaged in counter-terrorism activities: Gilles de Kerchove in his function as EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, the Joint Situation Centre (SitCen), The European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC), the European Police Office (Europol), the European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit (EUROJUST), the European Network and Information Security Agency (ENISA), the European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS), the Financial Intelligence Units (FIU) of the member states – only to name a few.

Recommendations for decision makers in the EU member states will finalise this lecture.

Despite many successes of the European Union in its fight against international terrorism the threat from terrorism remains high. NATO's motto "Vigilance is the Price of Freedom" applies to counter terrorism in equal measure.



About ISPSW

The Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW) is a private institute for research and consultancy. The ISPSW is objective and task oriented and is above party politics.

In an ever more complex international environment of globalized economic processes and worldwide political, ecological, social and cultural change, bringing major opportunities but also risks, decision-makers in enterprises and politics depend more than ever before on the advice of highly qualified experts.

ISPSW offers a range of services, including strategic analyses, security consultancy, executive coaching and intercultural competency. ISPSW publications examine a wide range of topics connected with politics, economy, international relations, and security/ defense. ISPSW network experts have worked – in some cases for decades– in executive positions and possess a wide range of experience in their respective specialist areas.

ANALYSIS

Chairman,
Distinguished colleagues,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It's a great pleasure for me that our Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy ISPSW again could assist the Konrad Adenauer Foundation in preparing this conference in Hongkong. It is a great honour to be here.

In my presentation *The European Union and its Fight against International Terrorism* I will focus on four major points:

1. The terrorist threat in the European Union
2. The EU strategy to counter international terrorism
3. The EU institutions engaged in countering international terrorism
4. Recommendations for decision-makers in the European Union

The Threat

Terrorism is not a new phenomenon for us Europeans. Terror attacks by local groups such as the Irish Republican Army (IRA), the Basque Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA) or the German Red Army Faction (RAF) forced member states of the European Union to cooperate in combating terrorism since the early 70ies. The terror attacks by these groups were politically motivated. In 1976 twelve EU member states founded the so-called TREVI-Group – TREVI stands for Terrorism, Radicalism, Extremism and Violence International – to support the informal cooperation between national police, the intelligence services and other relevant organisations.



After the devastating attacks in Madrid on 11th March 2004, where 191 persons were killed and 1,800 wounded and in London on 7th July 2005, where 56 persons were killed and around 700 wounded, it became clear that Islamist terrorism had reached Europe.

If we have a look at the *EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2011 (TE-SAT 2011)* published by Europol, the European Police Office, based on solid knowledge from EU member states in the year 2010, the following conclusions can be made:

In 2010, 249 terrorist attacks were reported in nine EU member states, while 611 individuals were arrested for terrorism-related offences. The majority of these attacks were in France (84) and Spain (90). Last year, Islamist terrorists carried out only three attacks on EU territory (two in Sweden and one in Denmark).

The high number of threat statements to the EU (46) posted by Islamist terrorist organisations or their media fronts indicates terrorist groups' clear intent to target the European Union. 307 individuals were charged for terrorism offences.

In 2010, 179 individuals were arrested for Islamist terrorist offences, 89 individuals were arrested for the preparation of attacks in the EU. Separatist groups, on the other hand, were responsible for 160 attacks, while left-wing and anarchist groups were responsible for 45 attacks. One single-issue attack was reported from Greece.

Furthermore, we can see a variety of recruiting activities of Islamist networks as well as efforts in financing terrorism. The internet is currently a crucial facilitating factor for both terrorists and extremists. Of course, the internet is also a major tool in combating terrorism. The more terrorists use the internet, the more likely it is that they will be discovered by the authorities.

As we can see from the 2010 annual report of the German Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution, there is information about 220 persons with an Islamist terrorist background and of relevance to Germany. Such persons have received or intend to receive a paramilitary training. For 70 of these 220 persons there are clear indications that they have received training.

During the course of 2010 there were clear indications of Islamist terrorists travelling from Germany to either Afghanistan or Pakistan. Such persons usually travel via Turkey and Iran and also via the Balkan or North Africa. Further training camps are probably also to be found on the Horn of Africa and in Yemen.

On the 4th of March 2010 the Superior Court of Dusseldorf sentenced the four members of the so-called "Sauerland-Group" to imprisonment for five and twelve years. The court accepted the accusation that three of the accused were members of the terrorist group "Islamic Jihad Union" between mid 2006 up until their arrest in September 2007. The court, furthermore, saw it as proven that this group had planned to set off bombs in Germany. The four accused were trained in camps in Pakistan in 2006. known as the "Dusseldorf-Cell", had planned attacks on public buildings, events and even bus stops. The arrest of 89 persons within the European Union during 2010, accused of planning terrorist attacks, further underlines the continued threat from Islamist terrorists

The seriousness of the threat situation in Germany is born out by the arrest of three alleged al-Qaida members in April 2011. This group, known as the "Dusseldorf-Cell", had planned attacks on public buildings, events and



even bus stops. The arrest of 89 persons within the European Union during 2010, accused of planning terrorist attacks, further underlines the continued threat from Islamist terrorists.

The attack on a U.S. Army bus at Frankfurt airport on 2nd of March 2011 is considered to be a successful attack from the viewpoint of the terrorists. The radical Islamist Arid Uka, a native of the Kosovo, attacked the U.S. soldiers with a pistol and killed two soldiers. A further two were seriously wounded. The death toll would have been higher had Uka's pistol not jammed. The attack was instigated by Jihadist propaganda, there appears to be no link to other terrorist networks.

The events in Oslo and on the island of Utøya, Norway on 22nd of July 2011 are well known. In the course of the attacks 77 innocent people were killed. In this instance, we are dealing with a "Lone-Wolf" attack, much as we did in Frankfurt in March 2011. The significant difference between the two attacks is that the perpetrator in Oslo, Anders Behring Breivik, was a Islam hater.

Following these attacks Europe needs to prepare itself for similar "Lone-Wolf" attacks. Europol, the European Police Agency, must play a significant role in this fight. "Lone-Wolf-Terrorism" represents a special challenge for the authorities as such persons prepare their attacks in secret and do not use communications which can be intercepted by the authorities.

The arrest of two suspects in Berlin in September 2011 also point to a potential, but foiled, "Lone-Wolf" attack. The two arrested, a 24 year old German with a Lebanese background and a 28 year old stateless Palestinian had planned a bomb attack and had already purchased the necessary chemicals.

In conclusion, the threat situation in the European Union caused by international terrorism can be described as such:

- The threat situation will remain high and covers a wide spectrum.
- Reduction of externally organised terrorist activities and an increase in "Lone-Wolf" attacks by EU citizens and/or residents.
- The return of Jihadists from conflict areas to Europe is and remains a security threat.
- The developments in North Africa and potential waves of migration to Europe need to be carefully monitored by the security services
- Organised crime continues to cooperate with terrorist organisations. Improved FININT (Financial Intelligence) is clearly needed.
- The intensive use of the internet for propaganda and recruitment services is likely to increase further.

The EU Counter-Terrorist Strategy

The EU strategy focuses on four major goals:

1. Prevent of terrorist attacks
2. Protect from terrorist attacks
3. Pursue and investigate attacks
4. Response to terrorist attacks



Prevent of Terrorist Attacks

The first objective is to prevent persons from turning to terrorism. It is important to analyse the causes for terror attacks and to develop effective counter strategies. The EU has adopted an action plan which includes a number of initiatives, for example, the training of Imams and the improvement of capabilities of local police in recognising and countering radicalisation.

The EU Commission furthermore supports contacts between academic and policy experts on the subject of radicalisation.

Protect from Terrorist Attacks

The second objective to the EU strategy is to protect citizens and infrastructure in the member states of the EU and thus to reduce the vulnerability to attack.

These include measures to improve the protection of borders and the security of transport, including security at European ports and airports. Furthermore, critical infrastructure has been identified and appropriate protective measures for critical infrastructure have been developed.

The creation of the European Explosive Ordinance Disposal Network (EEODN) is a key achievement of the EU Action Plan on Enhancing the Security of Explosives, together with a directive on the investigation and traceability of explosives for civil use. Furthermore, the data basis of the police is being continuously improved. This also applies to chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear security.

The arrest of the two suspects in Berlin in September of this year is an example of how effective EEODN is in identifying perpetrators prior to them being able to mount an attack. In this case companies which had received orders for chemicals suitable for bomb making alerted the security forces. The police were then able to observe the suspects and subsequently arrest them.

Pursue and Investigate Attacks

The third objective of the counter terrorism strategy is to pursue and investigate terrorists across the EU borders and globally, to impede planning and communications, to disrupt support networks, to cut off funding and access to critical materials and to bring terrorists to justice.

The European Arrest Warrant is being more and more frequently used as a tool against terrorism and other forms of major crime. One of the high profile cases was the rapid arrest and return from Italy to the UK of the suspects in the attempted bombings in London on 21st July 2005.

Response to Terrorist Attacks

The fourth objective of the EU counter terrorism strategy is to develop well coordinated measures following terrorist attacks in order to minimise the consequences. Military assets and capabilities have been identified that could be used in a crisis situation. This includes the use of military transport aircraft and chartering of civil airplanes.



The victims must be at the centre of attention. Therefore the European Commission has been active in helping victims of terrorism and their families by financing a network aimed at supporting them across the EU in the event of a terrorist attack.

The EU has arranged appropriate assistance in the event of a terrorist attack or natural disasters affecting EU citizens in non-EU countries. Furthermore, the EU holds annual multi-national exercises to test the readiness of the member states to assist each other in case of man-made or natural disasters.

The International Dimension

At this point let me say a few words regarding the international dimensions of fighting terrorism. As terrorism is an international phenomenon it can only be fought on a global scale. Therefore, the EU holds high-ranking political talks regarding threats and counter terrorism activities. For example, there are discussions with the United States, Russia, India, Pakistan, Australia, Japan and Egypt. Once a year there are discussions with the Gulf Cooperation Council to combat terrorist financing.

An effective financial instrument for direct support to other countries in their efforts to tackle counter terrorism is the „Instrument for Stability“ (IfS). Via IfS the EU can provide short-term support in specific crisis situations, while the long-term IfS focuses mainly on trans-regional threats.

Key priorities are the implementation of UN counter terrorism standards and the promotion of regional measures, for example in South Asia, especially in Pakistan and Afghanistan, the Sahel region and Yemen. In Algeria, Indonesia and Morocco, the EU supports counter-terrorism capacity-building initiatives.

In addition, the European Commission supports projects in the field of border security and countering of terrorist financing in regions reaching from the Balkans to South East Asia.

In the framework of its Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) the EU has the intention to play its part in stabilising crisis regions on a global scale. EUPOL missions in Afghanistan and Ramallah are good examples. An improved security structure can contribute to deny potential terrorists their breeding ground.

The Institutions

I would like to introduce you to some of the institutions of the European Union which focus on terrorism. Firstly, I want to mention the function of the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator. Gilles de Kerchove was appointed on 19th of September 2007 by the EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) at that time, Javier Solana. In this function he coordinates the work of the EU Council in the field of combating terrorism. He supervises the implementation of appropriate measures within the EU member states. He is also responsible for an active role of the EU in its fight against international terrorism.

What does this mean in practice? Gilles de Kerchove ensures that the work of the various EU institutions is co-ordinated. Let us take the financing of terrorism as an example. Three different bodies in the EU are responsible for this subject:



- The ministers of finance, when they define directives regarding the prevention of money laundering;
- The ministers of justice and the interior, when they create conditions for the cooperation between police and justice in order to combat the financing of terrorism;
- The foreign ministers, when they cooperate with countries suspected of being involved in the financing of terrorism.

In spite of these EU measures you should be reminded that it is the member countries themselves who are primarily responsible for combating terrorism. The EU measures should be seen as supportive measures only.

Generally speaking, the EU has set itself the target of improving the security situation both within the Union and in non-Union countries in order to reduce the radicalisation and recruitment of potential terrorists. As this focuses also on weak states outside the Union, the Foreign and Security Policy as well as the international relations of the EU play a major role. Examples are the EU missions in Aceh (Indonesia in 2006) and the current activities in Gaza and Afghanistan. Furthermore, the EU also supports measures which improve the security situation with the aim of combating terrorism in such countries as Algeria, Indonesia and Morocco.

The Joint Situation Centre (SitCen) plays a major role in the fight against terrorism. At SitCen around 100 staff evaluate and observe developments on a 24-hour basis. Their focus is on potential crisis regions, on terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. SitCen also supports Baroness Ashton, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy. Baroness Ashton is also responsible for the European External Action Service.

SitCen is staffed by members of European security and foreign intelligence services. Their task is to evaluate both HUMINT and OSINT sources which they largely receive from national intelligence sources. The resulting analyses are then made available to decision makers in the member states.

The advantages of SitCen are as follows:

- Information from a range of EU domestic and foreign intelligence services – with varying degrees of competence – are bundled;
- The overall level of information is improved;
- The security threat is jointly monitored;
- A common working standard and political decision making is supported.

SitCen has close contacts to the European Union Satellite Centre (EUSC) in Torrejón near Madrid. EUSC has been an agency of the EU since January 2010 and provides satellite images which help the EU to analyse developments in conflict regions in order to provide humanitarian aid. Such images are obviously a welcome input to the work conducted by SitCen.

SitCen also cooperates with Europol in The Hague. Europol's task is the support of national police forces within the Union in combating transnational crime and to support the exchange of information between the



European police forces. Europol also supports the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking, combating terrorism, illegal trade with weapons, child pornography and money laundering.

A further European organisation, also in The Hague, is EUROJUST. The European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit is also a partner in the fight against terrorism by coordinating trans-border prosecution within the Union.

A further agency concerned with protecting the European Union from terrorist cyber attacks on EU institutions and critical infrastructure is ENISA, The European Network and Information Security Agency in Crete. The importance of this agency is growing due to the increase of cyber attacks on EU institutions and companies.

SitCen also has contacts to the Paris based Institute for Security Studies (EUISS). EUISS is a independent agency of the EU which provides decision makers within the EU with strategic analysis and a range of security related conferences.

SitCen also maintains close contacts to the foreign ministries of the EU nations and can draw on the expertise of Special Representatives covering a wide range of countries and subjects.

Finally I would like to draw your attention to article 21 of the EU Directive relating to anti-money laundering. The EU member states are required to build up a "Financial Intelligence Unit" (FIU) in order to combat both the financing of terrorism and money laundering.

Recommendations for Decision Makers

In conclusion, I would like to leave you with some of the recommendations intended for decision makers in the European Union:

- In spite of numerous successes the security and intelligence services must continue to increase the pressure on potential Islamist groupings.
- As the majority of terror attacks in the EU have come from non-Islamic groupings, the security and intelligence services will need to monitor developments closely using the full range of HUMINT, SIGINT, OSINT and FININT.
- The trend to radicalised „Lone-Wolf“ attacks will continue to grow. This will require new defence strategies.
- All member states should have a National Security Council in order to improve coordination at a ministerial level.
- The role of the Armed Forces, both at a national and a EU level, needs to be defined in the event of a massive terrorist attack.
- The communication between authorities and the population in the event of potential terrorist attacks needs to be carefully considered. "Crying Wolf" too often is not the correct message and can lead to alerts being ignored.
- Academia can play a major role in providing the security and intelligence services with qualified analysis on terrorist groupings and separatist organisations. The role of academia in the fight against terrorism should be appreciated by the authorities.



- Companies should realise that terrorist groupings and “Lone-Wolf” attacks can significantly affect their businesses and profitability. They should also know that the state is not able (and willing) to provide comprehensive all-round security for companies. Business leaders will need in future to increase their dependency on private security organisations for risk assessments and business protection.

Remarks: *Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.*

Lecture given by ISPSW President Dr. Peter Roell on September 29, 2011 at the workshop “European and Asian Perspectives on International Security Policies in South and South East Asia”, organised by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation Hong Kong.

About the Author of this Issue

Since January 2006 Dr. Peter Roell is president of the Institute for Strategic, Political, Security and Economic Consultancy (ISPSW) in Berlin. Before, he served as senior advisor for foreign and security policy at the Permanent Representation of the Federal Republic of Germany to the EU in Brussels. In Germany, Dr. Roell served also as director of the Asia-Pacific, Latin America and Africa (Sub-Sahara) branch and at German embassies in the Near and Middle East and in Asia.

Dr. Roell studied sinology and political sciences at the universities of Bonn, Taipei and Heidelberg and holds a Ph.D. from the Ruprecht-Karls-University in Heidelberg.

Dr. Roell is an ancien of the NATO Defense College in Rome and the Federal College for Security Policy Studies (BAKS) in Berlin.



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