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THE CIVIL DIMENSION OF SECURITY

Enhancing Euro-Atlantic

Counter-terrorism Capabilities and Cooperation

General Report

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# The challenge of terrorism – new trends

* + - 1. The threat posed by the terrorist organisation Daesh[[1]](#footnote-1) and its affiliates has reached a new level of severity in 2015-2016. Horrific attacks in Paris in January and November 2015, "Black Tuesday" in Brussels in March 2016, an attack in Nice on 14 July, a series of bombings in Turkey (particularly 29 June attack on the Ataturk airport in Istanbul), a number of attacks against "soft targets" in North Africa and the Gulf and the downing of the Russian airliner over Sinai indicate that Daesh has a much broader agenda that goes beyond establishing a caliphate in the Middle East. Whereas previously Daesh relied on self-radicalised "lone wolves" to carry out occasional strikes against Western societies, it now expends much more effort on training, equipping and coordinating professional terrorists who are then capable of conducting sophisticated attacks abroad. Daesh has taken over Al-Qaeda’s global agenda, while maintaining a more robust organisational pyramid, a more proficient online presence and a more solid financial base. Data from the Global Terrorism Database suggests that the number of deaths due to terrorist attacks in Western Europe has been on the wane for the last two decades, but the attacks in 2015-2016 seem to be changing this trend.
      2. Therefore, the possibility that Daesh-related groups will stage new, large-scale attacks abroad should be taken seriously. Such attacks would contribute to further boosting Daesh’s profile as the world’s leading terrorist organisation and to deterring new nations from joining the anti-Daesh coalition. In *Dabiq*, Daesh’s online magazine, the organisation made its strategic priorities clear, noting that it is “very important that attacks take place in every country that has entered into the alliance against the Islamic State, especially the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia, and Germany” (Barr & Moreng). The seriousness of these threats is corroborated by Europol’s director Rob Wainwright, who stated that militants had devised a new combat strategy to attack major European cities and that intelligence suggests that Daesh “has developed an external action command trained for special forces style attacks in the international environment” (Withnall).
      3. Terrorists with links to Daesh choose to target objects associated with the Western way of life, including concert halls, football stadiums, shops, restaurants, public areas where people celebrate events such as New Year’s Eve or national holidays such as the 14th of July firework display in Nice, hotels, museums and public transportation systems. Reportedly, Daesh was planning a series of attacks in the United States on 4 July 2015. The plot was thwarted, but it could have had a devastating impact on the nation's psyche (Barr & Moreng). The objective of Daesh terrorists is clearly to rob people of their sense of security as they go about their daily lives. Experts such as Gilles Kepel and Judge Marc Trévidic argue that Daesh is trying to spark civil strife in Europe by aggravating tensions between Muslims and non-Muslims, and thereby encouraging more European Muslims to join what Daesh calls Jihad.
      4. Some attacks are also taking place in various new places such as jails (violent aggression of two prison officers at the Osny jail in September 2016), churches (St. Etienne du Rouvray) and at home (Magnanville), aiming to create a sense of insecurity among various groups of people, including policemen, in their own private environment. Another new trend is a growing recruitment of women to carry our terrorist acts, as was the case with the failed attempt of an attack of a car explosion in September 2016 near Notre-Dame Cathedral in Paris, reportedly planned by three women. Many of female terrorists are underage.
      5. A sense of insecurity has indeed increased in democratic societies. For instance, the New Year’s Eve celebrations in Paris and Brussels at the end of 2015 were conducted without the usual fireworks, and more than 8,000 Jews left France for Israel in 2015. However, the terrorists failed to weaken the resolve of the Euro-Atlantic community to take stronger actions against Daesh. Following France’s appeal to other European nations, the German Parliament voted to send military support – Tornado reconnaissance jets, a naval frigate and 1,200 soldiers – to the coalition fighting militants in Syria. At the same time, British warplanes carried out the first air strikes on Daesh targets in Syria. Turkey has also stepped up its military training assistance to Iraqi troops near Mosul and, in August 2016, sent its armed forces against militant groups in northern Syria (BBC).
      6. It has to be noted that the “lone wolf” type of attacks have not disappeared, and, in fact, reached new levels of brutality in 2016. While “lone wolves” often pledge allegiance to Daesh, their real motives are not always clear. Self-proclaimed Daesh supporter Omar Mateen, an American of Afghan origin who killed 49 people at a gay club in the US city of Orlando, may have been motivated by his hatred towards homosexual people. Tunisian immigrant Mohamed Lahouaiej Bouhlel, who killed 84 people by driving a truck and purposely hitting crowds of people gathered in Nice to celebrate the French National Day, was reportedly unknown to intelligent services and apparently never embraced radical Islam. Nevertheless, Daesh labelled him as a Daesh “soldier” two days after the attack. The use of a civilian vehicle was suggested in the extremist *Inspire* magazine as early as 2010. A series of small-scale attacks in southern Germany in May and July 2016 seem to be linked with personal/psychological problems of the perpetrators rather than with their declared support for the Daesh’s cause. Clearly, Daesh has been successful in becoming a buzzword used by various individuals to provide a more “noble” justification for their destructive deeds. Some of these people are not even deeply ideological or religious (Fisher).
      7. The terrorists are changing their modus operandi and are increasingly relying on both firearms and explosives rather than on explosives alone. This is partly a response to certain precautionary measures that made the production and use of bombs more difficult, including security checks conducted on vehicles entering embassies or hotel areas and the modifications of commercial fertiliser formulas in order to make it more difficult to turn such fertilisers into explosives. Also, the surveillance of those who try to acquire a homemade explosive containing triacetone triperoxide (TATP) has been stepped up (ingredients for this and other types of explosives can still be acquired commercially, but the purchase of larger volumes now attracts attention). Assault weapons, on the other hand, are becoming easier to obtain, especially in the Middle East and North Africa, a region that is flooded with guns. The Brussels attackers reportedly used TATP, but two Kalashnikov assault rifles were also found in the airport lounge. The Ataturk airport attackers also used both explosives and firearms. New explosives are also developed, such as bombs hidden in toner cartridges in a flight leaving from Yemen for Chicago back in 2010. The French General Directorate for Internal Security (DGSI) is concerned that the use of explosives by Daesh‑linked terrorists on the French soil could increase in near future and that terrorist networks employ highly skilled specialists potentially capable of developing innovative, non-metallic explosives, undetectable by current airport security systems.
      8. Daesh-inspired gunmen also differ from more traditional terrorists in that they are less inclined to take hostages and are much more prepared to accept the probability of being killed during or in the wake of an attack (The Economist). These changing tactics present significant challenges for anti-terrorism units. Counter-terrorist strategies must indeed be able to not only thwart large-scale terrorist attacks performed by well-trained, well-equipped terrorists, but also prevent smaller attacks against more or less random targets that have more to do with a “shooting at a movie theatre” than with a highly technical operation (Mazzetti and al.).
      9. Terrorist ringleaders now have significant manpower resources at their disposal thanks to the "foreign fighters" phenomenon. According to the International Centre for the Study of Radicalisation and Political Violence, Daesh has attracted the highest number of foreign fighters since Afghanistan in the 1980s. The latest estimates put the total number of foreign recruits at around 30,000, with about 4,000 coming from Western countries. From Belgium alone, about 470 citizens are believed to have gone to the Middle East to fight, more than a hundred have returned and are either detained (about one third) or being monitored. A small number of the perpetrators of terrorist attacks in Europe came back from the Middle East posing as refugees. If the civil war in Syria loses its earlier intensity, the issue of returning foreign fighters will become extremely acute.

* + - 1. The international community has so far been unable to significantly disrupt the financing flows funding Daesh and Al-Qaeda-linked terrorism. During a recent Committee visit to Saudi Arabia, the NATO PA delegation learned that Saudi Arabia has enacted the region’s strictest and most effective financial rules, making it extremely difficult to fund terrorism from within the Kingdom. However, in addition to resources that Daesh is able to raise in the territories under its control, terrorist groups receive funding from individuals and certain "charities" in the Middle East. According to a June 2015 report from the US State Department, "Bulk cash smuggling and money transfers from individual donors and Saudi-based charities have reportedly been a significant source of financing for extremist and terrorist groups over the past 25 years." The fact that Daesh is not financially dependent on certain governments allows them to have a global rather than merely regional agenda (Peek).
      2. Response to the latest threats has varied across the Euro-Atlantic community. The general trend has been the granting of additional powers to law enforcement agencies, reinforcing border controls, stepping up electronic surveillance and increasing military assistance to and military action within the relevant African and Asian countries. The United States considers “kinetic” operations by Special Forces and drone strikes overseas, to be a critical element of its counter‑terrorism strategy. France is a leading European country in terms of deploying forces in anti-terrorist operations overseas. In addition, following the Paris attacks, the country deployed 10,000 additional troops to patrol landmarks and government buildings. In the wake of the July 14 attack, French lawmakers voted to extend the state of emergency for another six months. In 2017, EUR60 million will be added for the security of French buildings abroad (embassies, schools, cultural institutes). France also stepped up its preventive capabilities aimed at identifying potential terrorists – including women and youngsters – before they commit any crimes. At the end of August 2016, the German government also introduced a broad range of measures to bolster security and combat terrorism, most of which are likely to get legislative approval. The package covers the following matters, among others: hiring of additional police officers, increased sharing of intelligence data with other European states, closer monitoring of the web, and closer scrutiny of migrants (Smale). Overall, Berlin plans to spend an extra EUR2 billion on internal security between 2017 and 2020 and to deploy additional 3,000 police officers (The Economist). Belgium designated half a billion euros for additional patrolling, reinforcing borders and apprehending returning fighters (Alderman). It was also recently announced that Belgian nuclear power stations would soon have their own fast response team specifically trained to deal with terrorist attacks (Belga).
      3. Most visibly, the recent attacks have revealed gaping holes in European security and intelligence cooperation. While terrorist activities are clearly multinational (it has been confirmed, for instance, that the attacks in Paris and Brussels had been coordinated and that there was a plan to launch a simultaneous attack in Amsterdam) and Europe’s internal borders have essentially disappeared, the security institutions still mostly operate within their national jurisdiction with limited cross-border coordination and information exchange. For instance, Abdelhamid Abaaoud, the ringleader of the November Paris plot, had been known to Belgian police due to his connections with the Verviers terrorist cell in Belgium. Having fought in Syria, Abaaoud returned to Europe, but no EU nation signalled his entry into its territory. Abaaoud’s accomplice, Salah Abdeslam, the man who escaped from Paris and evaded police until his arrest in Brussels in March 2016, was stopped at the Belgian border by the police several hours after the attacks but was allowed to continue his journey (Simcox). Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan claimed that Ibrahim El Bakraoui, one of the Brussels attackers, was expelled from Turkey and that Belgian and Dutch authorities were specifically warned about him. Authorities failed to seize him despite the warning.
      4. This report will explore problems of counter-terrorism cooperation in the Euro-Atlantic area. While this report mainly focuses on the threat posed by Daesh, Al-Qaeda and their affiliates, it has to be noted that NATO Allies have also witnessed an increase of terrorist violence from other terrorist organisations such as PKK. PKK continues to target, mainly through suicide attacks, civilians and security personnel in Turkey.

# International counter-terrorism cooperation

1. Cross-border counter-terrorism cooperation does take place in the Euro-Atlantic area and there are many success stories in this field. However, senior officials agree that the current level of cooperation is unsatisfactory and needs to be stepped up. After the Paris attacks, the French government called on other European countries to increase information exchange among police forces and judicial authorities, to do more to prevent arms trafficking and terrorist financing, and to reinforce border controls both within the Schengen Area and on its external borders. This call was broadly supported across the Euro-Atlantic community, particularly in the wake of the bombings in Brussels. Initiatives to strengthen bilateral cooperation have also been announced: the leaders of Belgium and France in particular have declared their resolve to deepen their intelligence cooperation in order to be able to better identify and eradicate cross-border terrorist networks. However, since these networks usually operate across the territories of several countries, the bilateral format of counter-terrorism cooperation needs to be complemented by a broader multinational dimension.

## NATO’s contribution

1. Since the early 2000s, NATO has notably improved its role as a platform for counter‑terrorism information sharing. In 2003, a NATO Terrorist Threat Intelligence Unit (TTIU), consisting of officers from civilian and military intelligence agencies, was set up with a mandate to conduct assessments of the terrorist challenges, risks and threats to NATO and its member nations. To that end, the TTIU developed an efficient liaison mechanism with Allied intelligence services. In addition, special units were created in NATO headquarters in Brussels and in Mons to share some of the terrorism-related information with partner nations. Following a reform in 2010-2011, NATO’s counter-terrorism capabilities were further enhanced by creating an Intelligence Unit, which also took over the functions of TTIU. The current mechanism has enhanced cooperation among the NATO civilian and military intelligence components, and preserved the previously developed mechanisms to cooperate with partners. At the NATO Summit in Warsaw, the creation of a new Joint Intelligence and Security Division was announced. It is expected that the new division, which will possibly be located in Poland, will allow for a better management of intelligence provided by the Allies. At the Summit, the Allied leaders also announced plans to enhance support for partners in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, notably by training additional Iraqi officers in Jordan and Iraq.
2. It must be noted, however, that NATO generates limited intelligence of its own – only during operations as well as through capabilities such as AWACS fleet[[2]](#footnote-2) and the newly created Alliance Ground Surveillance (AGS). It relies on the information that member states decide to provide and share with other Allies. There is no mechanism to force a member state to share sensitive information. In essence, NATO provides a useful platform for cooperation, but it is up to nations to decide to what extent they are willing to use it. Reportedly, this platform is not being used to its full extent: nations are often reluctant to disclose sensitive information when they are concerned about possible leaks. Ultimately, the question of the effectiveness of counter-terrorism intelligence‑sharing within NATO boils down to the fundamental issue of trust among the Allies, something that cannot be improved overnight.
3. Apart from information sharing, NATO contributes to the fight against terrorism in a number of ways. Through its Science for Peace and Security (SPS) Programme, “Defence Against Terrorism” Programme of Work, as well as its Research and Technology Organization, NATO contributes to applying existing technologies to asymmetric requirements as well as developing new, cutting-edge technologies to protect troops and civilians against terrorist attacks; it invests in capabilities such as sensors to detect suicide bombers in public places. Some of these projects, especially within the framework of the SPS, involve partner countries. NATO has also developed expertise in the protection of critical infrastructure and of other vulnerable targets. Moreover, NATO has conducted a number of projects, especially in the Balkans and North Africa, designed to secure surplus weapons and ammunitions that could otherwise fall into the hands of terrorists. The Alliance also launched, back in 2001, the maritime operation Active Endeavour with a clear anti‑terrorist mandate to deter, detect and, if necessary, disrupt terrorist threats in the Mediterranean Sea (the operation’s scope and mandate has evolved and now turned into a broader non-Article 5 Maritime Security Operation named Operation Sea Guardian). The NATO Centre of Excellence for Defence Against Terrorism in Ankara, Turkey, serves both as a location for meetings and a catalyst for international dialogue and discussion on counter‑terrorism. The Alliance’s Advisory Support Teams can be sent to assist countries that have come under terrorist attack, including attacks with Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear weapons. The Alliance’s Rapid Reaction Teams could be deployed to assist member states in the event of a cyber-attack of national significance.
4. Nevertheless, senior officials of the Alliance have emphasised that NATO does not see itself taking on a leading role in regards to counter-terrorism. Yet, NATO has some particular strengths and areas of expertise that can complement the efforts of the UN, the EU and other international frameworks.

## The fight against terrorism at the EU level

1. In 2001, following the attacks against the United States, NATO Allies invoked Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. Conversely, in the wake of the Paris attacks in November 2015, President Hollande turned towards the European Union, referring to Article 42.7 of the Treaty of the European Union. Article 42.7 requires EU countries to assist if a member state becomes a "victim of armed aggression on its territory." While it not entirely clear what the invocation of this article entails in practice, it demonstrates that at least some Western countries view the EU as the main forum for addressing the threat of terrorism.
2. Cooperative counter-terrorism efforts at the European level can be traced back to the 1970s, when intergovernmental cooperation between national officials from the ministries of justice and the interior started, evolving into the so-called Third Pillar of the EU. However, it was only after the 9/11 attacks in the United States and the bombings in London and Madrid in the mid-2000s that the EU began to take on a more concrete role in combatting terrorism. A series of measures were put into place including the introduction of a common definition of terrorism, the adoption of the EU Counter-terrorism Strategy, the European Arrest Warrant and "anti-laundering package"; and the reaching of an agreement with the United States on a Terrorism Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP).
3. In terms of information sharing on counter-terrorism, the EU has developed an impressive line-up of platforms and institutions, including the second-generation Schengen Information System (SIS II), the largest real time data exchange platform among the relevant national border control, law enforcement and judicial authorities; the Prüm Decision, which lays down provisions under which the EU Member States provide each other access to their automated DNA and fingerprint identification files and the European Criminal Records Information System (ECRIS), which enables national judicial authorities to receive information on previous criminal convictions in other European states. The EU has also established the position of EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator, whose mandate includes not only presenting policy recommendations to the Council, but also improving communication between the EU and third countries. The EU has also created Europol, which works closely with national law enforcement agencies to share intelligence to track criminal and terrorist networks in Europe; Eurojust, which focuses on improving cooperation among national investigators and prosecutors; and Frontex, which was set up to reinforce and streamline cooperation between national border authorities.
4. However, despite the seeming abundance of counter-terrorism cooperation mechanisms at the EU level, the practical effectiveness of these tools has been questioned. The movement of the Paris attackers between EU countries and Syria has demonstrated that there are loopholes in the information-sharing system within the EU. EU-level tools exist, but they are often under-resourced and under-used. For instance, the number of EU citizens checked against SIS II database remains low (as of November 2015, between 1.5 and 17%). The provisions of the Prüm Decision were supposed to be implemented by August 2011; however, as of November 2015, several member states had not yet implemented provisions relating to DNA data exchange, the fingerprint identification systems and vehicle registration data.
5. By the end of 2015, EU member states as well as third parties registered the names of a total of 1,527 foreign terrorist fighters into Europol’s database, a number that is clearly lower than the estimated total number of foreign fighters coming from EU member states. So far, Europol admits it is not yet in a position to provide thorough, in-depth analysis of all operational foreign fighter cases across the EU, given that to date, 50% of all data contributions have originated from five member states and one third-party country.
6. In general, Europol admits that the potential for the full and proper use of Europol’s information management capabilities has not yet been achieved in the area of counter-terrorism across all EU member states (contrary to significant achievements in the area of organised crime). Europol representatives complain that the available information is not shared adequately (in terms of quantity or quality) with or through Europol. This prevents all involved counter-terrorism actors from having an enhanced information picture and therefore cross-checking between various EU‑wide databases also needs to be improved. Sharing intelligence information with Europol is de facto voluntary. Difficulties of sharing terrorism-related information are also caused by the fact that in some countries counter-terrorism is the responsibility of police, while in others it is intelligence agencies that have different approaches to handling information (Bureš).
7. Following the Paris attacks, the EU decided to take further steps in the counter-terrorism domain. At an emergency meeting in Brussels in November 2015, EU interior ministers called for a provision that would require all EU citizens entering and leaving the Schengen area to undergo systematic screening against an EU-wide database. In January 2016, the Commission proposed to upgrade ECRIS so that national authorities could have easier access to information on the past criminal convictions of non-EU citizens. At a June 2016 meeting of the Justice and Home Affairs Council, Ministers also endorsed a roadmap to “enhance information exchange and information management including interoperability solutions in the Justice and Home Affairs area”. The Commission has therefore started working on a more specific legislative proposal.
8. The EU has also launched two new institutions under the auspices of Europol, the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) and the EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU). The ECTC is expected to serve as an intelligence-sharing and operational management platform, focusing on foreign terrorist fighters, the illicit trafficking of firearms, a reinforced application of border controls, and terrorist financing. The ECTC’s instruments also include the EU IRU, which is tasked with combatting online terrorist propaganda. Europol representatives indicate, however, that member states should send more staff to the ECTC, while the IRU requires increased resources from the EU budget.
9. The EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) issue was once again brought back into the spotlight after years of dispute over the balance between protecting people’s privacy and protecting the public against terrorism. The new EU PNR directive, adopted in April 2016, obliges airlines to hand over to EU countries the data provided by passengers and collected by commercial and charter flights during reservation and check-in procedures. The records will be used by the police and other law enforcement authorities to screen passengers before departure to identify potential terrorist suspects and track their movements. This would address a current gap in SIS II, since it is not able to identify high risk travellers that are previously “unknown” to law enforcement authorities in the way that an analysis of PNR data does. The EU has already concluded airline passenger data sharing agreements with the United States and Australia and is negotiating a new one with Canada with the aim of identifying and apprehending terrorist fighters.
10. The Commission has also put forward a set of measures aimed at securing the EU’s borders. Apart from non-EU nationals, EU nationals would be subject to systematic controls, including the verification of biometrics information against relevant databases. The proposal still needs to be endorsed by national governments at the European Council and by the European Parliament. Europe already has the framework to coordinate border management through its Frontex agency. The package would reinforce Frontex’s capabilities by providing it with a European border and coast guard.
11. Tracking financial operations can be central to identifying terrorist networks, as terrorists rely on finance for travel, training and equipment. In addition to the already existing EU-US TFTP, which allows EU states to request a search of financial data when there is a reasonable suspicion of terrorist activity, a new anti-money laundering package was adopted by the EU in May 2015. It is expected to contribute to the fight against terrorist financing by: 1) strengthening the cooperation between Financial Intelligence Units of individual states to identify and follow suspicious transfers of money and facilitate the exchange of information; 2) establishing a coordinated European policy towards non-EU countries that do not have efficient anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing regimes; and 3) ensuring full traceability of fund transfers within as well as to and from the EU. Further actions are being explored, including proposals such as freezing the assets of suspected militants, curbing the illicit trade in cultural goods which are acquired and sold by terrorists, and the application of strict regulations on the use of prepaid payment cards.
12. The atrocities in Paris demonstrated that terrorist networks are accessing weapons and explosives through organised crime networks and the black market. In this field, the EU has recently adopted an Action Plan on how to better target the illicit trafficking of firearms and explosives in the EU. Additional measures adopted in November 2015 are aimed at making it more difficult to acquire firearms and at better tracking the legal possession of firearms. The new amendment also tightens controls on the transfer of firearms from one EU country to another and introduces minimum standards for decommissioning weapons such as Kalashnikovs. In addition, the plan envisages improving cooperation with countries outside of the EU, in particular the Western Balkans. The EU is also currently discussing a directive on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons. The rationale behind this revised directive is to tackle some of the legislative shortcomings that have been identified in the wake of the most recent terrorist attacks in Europe. The amendments deal with issues pertaining to the traceability of firearms and to the exchange of relevant information between EU member states, among others.
13. The EU is also targeting radicalisation by addressing its root causes. In 2011, the EU created the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) to facilitate the exchange of expertise and best practices among social workers, local authorities and other actors that are in direct contact with the population in order to prevent violent radicalisation. To reinforce the activity of RAN, the Commission launched a RAN Centre of Excellence, which involves non-EU partners as well, in October 2015.
14. Recognising the challenges posed by new technology, the Commission has also launched an EU Internet Forum that includes the participation of high-level technology company officials and ministers, which focuses on deploying the best tools to counter online terrorist propaganda. In 2015, the EU has launched the Syria strategic communication advisory team (SSCAT), whose aim is to exchange best practices in the area of national and local communication with a view to preventing and countering radicalisation and discouraging citizens from travelling to Syria or other conflict zones. The feedback on SSCAT received from EU Member States has been positive (EP). Finally, in recent months the European Commission announced a series of additional measures to support Member States in preventing violent radicalisation leading to terrorism. The initiatives include the provision of additional funding to help counter radicalisation in prisons, the development of a toolkit to help detect violent radicalisation among young people and the improvement and expansion of research networks on radicalisation.

## Other international frameworks

1. The United Nations has developed 14 conventions as well as other legal acts and instruments in the field of counter-terrorism. In the past several years notable UN initiatives include the adoption in September 2014 of the UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2178 on foreign terrorist fighters. This resolution requests that all UN member states increase border security, screen for and even arrest foreign terrorist fighters travelling to or returning from conflict areas and criminalises the facilitation (including acts of recruitment) of the travel of individuals to participate in terrorist activities. UNSCR 2178 identifies Interpol as the “global law enforcement information sharing platform” to interdict the movements of foreign fighters. Interpol’s efforts include information sharing via its 24/7 secure communications network, global databases and a system of international notices. Interpol’s database on foreign terrorist fighters currently contains the details of some 6,000 individuals flagged by more than 50 nations. Interpol’s success stories include the case of three individuals wanted in Spain on terrorism-related charges who were arrested in Bulgaria in December 2014 at a border checkpoint with Turkey just hours after Interpol issued an alert. They were believed to be heading to join insurgents in Syria.
2. In December 2015, the UN Security Council announced a new initiative to suppress terrorism financing by adopting Resolution 2253, which stresses the obligation of member states to ensure that their citizens and other persons in their territory do not provide economic resources to Daesh or any related actors. Specific measures include asset freezing, travel bans, arms embargos and prohibiting oil trade with Daesh, both directly and indirectly.
3. In January 2016, the UN Secretary General also introduced a Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism that urges states to focus more on prevention, through the analysis of underlying conditions that drive individuals to radicalise and join violent extremist groups. Recent terrorist attacks were taken into account when conducting a regular (every two years) revision of the UN 2006 Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. In May 2016, the UN Security Council asked its Counter-Terrorism Committee to come up with a proposal for a comprehensive international framework to effectively terrorist propaganda.
4. In terms of tools, the UN also established a Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force (CTITF) in 2005. The CTITF has a United Nations Counter-Terrorism Centre (UNCCT) that unites a wide range of entities, providing observers from key UN agencies as well as working groups on key issues. The CTITF also works with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and other organisations in addressing the financing of terrorism.
5. That said, the implementation of relevant UN resolutions and the use of UN-based counter‑terrorism cooperation platforms remains patchy. The Security Council is concerned about the lack of implementation of resolutions regarding sanctions against Al-Qaeda, the Taliban and Daesh as well as of resolution 2199, which relates to several financial measures to fight terrorism, mainly due to insufficient reporting by member states.
6. As a result of the limitations of the UN system, new international initiatives have emerged to re-invigorate international counter-terrorism cooperation. In particular, the 29-country-plus-the-EU Global Counter Terrorism Forum (GCTF), which was initiated by Turkey and the United States in 2011, serves a very important function in the fight against terrorism. It is an informal forum of policymakers and officials designed to focus on practical deliverables that puts more general issues, such as the definition of extremism, on the back burner. The GCTF’s six working groups seek to identify relevant civilian counter-terrorism challenges and capacity gaps, and mobilise political will, financial resources and expertise to address these challenges. An example of one of the GCTF projects includes a series of training courses to exchange good practices among interested countries on how to deal with kidnappings for ransom by terrorists. Another example is a project focused on the role of the judiciary in effectively handling counter-terrorism cases as well as on how intelligence can be used as evidence in such trials.
7. In the field of tracking and interception of funds intended for terrorist organisations, important work is being conducted by the G7 Financial Action Task Force (FATF). FATF has released 40 recommendations to set standards in combatting money laundering and terrorist financing. In order to encourage the implementation of these recommendations, FATF publicly named countries that failed to take action, thus deterring foreign investment in these countries[[3]](#footnote-3). According to Je‑Yoon Shin, President of FATF, money is Daesh’s biggest vulnerability. A central part of Daesh’s strategy is to provide the usual state services to the people within the territory it controls. It therefore needs more money than other terrorist organisations, and disrupting financial flows must be at the centre of any strategy to defeat Daesh (UN). Task Force members also agreed to enhance cooperation within the private sector by identifying and sharing “red flags” suggestive of terrorist financing activities, to help the private sector detect and report suspicious activity.
8. In terms of intelligence information sharing, the most intensive cooperation takes place among countries that are politically and historically close. The Five Eyes is an extensive intelligence alliance between Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The member countries are bound by the multilateral 1947 UKUSA Agreement, a treaty for cooperation in signals intelligence (SIGINT). The details of this agreement are secret, but, reportedly, each Five Eyes member country is responsible for intelligence collection and analysis for a targeted part of the globe and shares the results with the other four countries. It is also assumed that members of the Five Eyes do not spy on each other’s citizens. The Five Eyes cooperate with third parties in at least two other groups: the Nine Eyes (the Five Eyes plus Denmark, France, the Netherlands and Norway) and the 14 Eyes (the Nine Eyes plus Belgium, Germany, Italy, Spain and Sweden). Reportedly, the question of including new members into the Five Eyes format is occasionally brought up.
9. Counter-terrorism is a major theme on the agenda of the OSCE. The organisation has developed a strategy entitled the "OSCE Consolidated Framework for the Fight against Terrorism", which highlights operational principles and identifies the strategic focus of future OSCE counter‑terrorism activities. OSCE’s Transnational Threats Department’s Action against Terrorism Unit supports member states in areas such as the implementation of the international legal framework against terrorism, strengthening travel document security, countering violent extremism, countering the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes and protecting critical energy infrastructures. The OSCE has also launched important projects in the field of border security, such as the Border College in Dushanbe, which the Committee visited in 2015.
10. The use of civilian aircraft as a weapon on 11 September 2001 led to efforts to enhance international cooperation in aviation security. Relevant organisations such as EUROCONTROL, the International Civil Aviation Organization, major national aviation and security authorities, airlines and pilot associations as well as NATO have collectively made major efforts to improve civil-military coordination of air traffic control.

# Values and liberties vs. security

1. Calls for more efficient security services and more comprehensive international counter‑terrorism cooperation have prompted increased concerns, particularly by human rights watchdogs, over potential implications for the privacy and liberty of citizens. New powers acquired by security services are not exclusively used to tackle Daesh-inspired terrorism: for instance, several radical ecologists were put in custody or forced to stay home during the COP 21 Climate negotiations in Paris – a move that was facilitated by the law on the state of emergency in France. While certain trade-offs cannot be avoided, making the security-liberty balance as optimal as possible is vital not only because the respect for individual rights and liberties underpins democratic societies, but also due to practical considerations. Indeed, if there are concerns that a country might use the sensitive information it receives from partners for repressive ends outside the scope of counter-terrorism efforts, it is more likely that democratic nations would be deterred from sharing information with that particular country.

## Privacy

1. In the digital age, counter-terrorism agencies increasingly rely on signal/electronic surveillance and data gathering. In the United States in particular, electronic surveillance constitutes one of the main pillars of the country's counter-terrorism strategy. It stems from the assumption that terrorist cells and individual terrorists in Western societies can emerge sporadically and quickly, responding to extremist propaganda both on the Internet and spread through other channels such as radical preachers. Radicalisation and violent tendencies can develop within a very short period of time. From the standpoint of security services, it is therefore necessary to have the capacity to comb through large volumes of electronic communications and online activity quickly in order to find patterns, and identify and track potentially dangerous individuals as well as to monitor entities that could be chosen as targets.
2. This type of intelligence work has indeed brought significant results. Numerous thwarted terrorist acts include the above-mentioned plot to attack the United States on 4 July 2015. Also, reportedly, days before the November 2015 Paris attack, a terrorist network run from a prison by Mullah Krekar, the Norway-based Iraqi-Kurdish founder of the Ansar al-Islam terrorist organisation, was disrupted by online surveillance. More than a dozen members of this group were arrested in Italy, United Kingdom and Norway (Klausen). The use of electronic surveillance is also seen as less biased against Muslim communities than neighbourhood patrolling for instance because it involves processing large amounts of collected data regardless of where it comes from. Furthermore, this type of surveillance reduces the need for activities that might endanger human lives, such as employing undercover agents (Stern).
3. Nevertheless, online surveillance and data gathering is not a silver bullet. First, in the run-up to major plots, terrorists usually try to avoid using mobile phones and the Internet, preferring face‑to-face communication. These terrorists often know each other well, are even close relatives in some cases and can communicate directly. The terrorists hiding in Brussels’ Molenbeek district reportedly avoided capture for so long precisely because they avoided using mobile phones (Leroy & Hiltermann).
4. Second, terrorists are increasingly using encryption techniques for electronic communication that create serious problems for security services. These techniques are now standard technological features in major commercial products such as mobile phones and video game consoles. Reportedly, the Paris attackers used the PlayStation 4 game system for messaging. The development of encryption techniques has led to major legal disputes between the US government and some leading technology companies, including Apple, Google and Microsoft; authorities have demanded that products such as iPhones should have a feature allowing back door access to their contents for counter-terrorism purposes[[4]](#footnote-4). The debate on whether or not technology companies should be legally obliged to leave gaps allowing for “back door access” in their commercially available encryption solutions is ongoing. Technology companies argue that this would be counterproductive since it would provide new opportunities for hackers, including those working for hostile countries. Besides, the rapid development of new technology, such as cloud services, TV sets with microphones and web-connected cars, provides ample new opportunities for law enforcement agencies’ data-collecting activities (Sanger). It is also noteworthy that major technology companies do cooperate with law enforcement agencies on issues such as the removal of violent or hateful content from platforms such as Google, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. In 2014, for instance, YouTube removed approximately 14 million videos, while in April 2015, Twitter announced that it suspended 10,000 accounts linked to Daesh in a single day (Cohen J.).
5. Third, electronic surveillance and especially metadata collection activities can give rise to legal problems. Within the EU, it is a challenge to make these techniques compatible with the legal and judicial standards developed by the European Court of Justice. In the United States, the current administration has introduced new requirements that resulted in the curtailment of some of the NSA’s most aggressive techniques. Canadian judicial authorities and the European Parliament’s Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs have questioned whether the electronic information exchange within the Five Eyes format has been proportionate and properly respectful of the privacy rights of citizens.

## Democratic oversight

1. The Rapporteur is convinced that while it is a legitimate demand to provide sufficient powers and resources to counter-terrorism agencies, this process needs to be complemented by the adequate improvement of democratic oversight of the security sector. The absence of robust and impartial oversight creates mistrust among partners with regard to how the information provided will be used. However, an overly lax and broad oversight mechanism might deter the exchange of sensitive information due to the fear of leaks. It is therefore imperative that nations of the Euro‑Atlantic community engage in a close dialogue on the best practices of the oversight systems. While national oversight systems will retain their differences due to constitutional, cultural and historic differences, states need to be reassured that their allies and partners have in place reasonable and efficient oversight mechanisms.
2. The Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights have done some very valuable work in this regard. The Court has developed safeguards to limit the potential for abuses by security agencies. These safeguards include limits on the duration of telephone tapping, procedures for data storage and the defining of circumstances in which recordings must be erased. Also, according to the Court, provisions should be made for the destruction of data that might incidentally be gathered on offences other than those that are specifically being investigated. Furthermore, the mandate to monitor contact chains (i.e. people in contact with those who are officially suspected) should either be strictly limited or be subject to stronger oversight.
3. Parliaments play a critical role in democratic oversight. It is naturally problematic because not all legislators have the necessary expertise required to make educated decisions within this sector. The system of security clearances also varies from one country to another and in some cases the fear of leaks is real. The shortage of legislators with security clearances and with extensive knowledge of the intelligence sector implies that oversight bodies could be more efficient if they combined relevant members of parliament and representatives of legal and expert communities. Countries such as Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands and Norway rely considerably on oversight by expert bodies.
4. A Council of Europe report on parliamentary oversight mechanisms concluded that they have not worked as well as expected and that accountability problems are greater than previously perceived. Nevertheless, some improvements have been made in recent years, such as the setting-up in France in 2007 of a parliamentary oversight body (*délégation parlementaire au renseignement*), composed of four members from each chamber of Parliament. It can call for hearings with the Prime Minister, Ministers and heads of the relevant security services, but not with junior officials. It produces short annual reports, but overall its mandate is relatively limited.
5. Germany, largely due to its historical experience, places utmost importance on the need to keep security services under democratic control. In recent years, further steps have been taken to enhance an already comprehensive oversight system. The government is now required to be pro‑active in providing complete information to the Parliamentary Control Panel (*Parlamentarisches Kontrollgremium*), whose staff has been increased. Also, a whistleblowing initiative was introduced through which intelligence staff can now approach the Panel directly. This parliamentary oversight is complemented by an expert body, the G10 Commission. Members of this Commission are elected by the Panel and may or may not be members of the Bundestag. The chair of the G10 Commission must have a background in the judiciary, thus making the G10 a hybrid body of politicians, lawyers and experts. Among its powers, the G10 Commission has a right to make ad hoc inspections.
6. The United States’ system of checks and balances implies that the Congress has considerable powers to monitor the activities of the executive, including the security agencies. Congress’s extensive legislative and budgetary powers compel security agencies to be cooperative with legislators. The Senate and House committees on intelligence receive regular classified briefings from intelligence officials. However, the sheer size of the US security community and the scope of its operations make it difficult for legislators to ensure comprehensive oversight, especially since there are limitations for House members on bringing additional staff, including lawyers, to these briefings. Important oversight functions are also carried out by the Privacy and Civil Liberty Oversight Board (PCLOB), an expert body whose members are appointed by the executive with the Senate’s approval. In 2014, the PCLOB released a major report criticising some of the NSA’s activities and recommending that the agency's practice of bulk data collection be discontinued. When conducting surveillance operations US security agencies, need to receive judicial authorisation from the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court. In 2014, President Obama introduced reforms that impose some limitations on NSA activities, particularly in relation to metadata collection. It is worth noting that a group of US legislators have proposed the LEADS (Law Enforcement Access to Data Stored Abroad Act) legislation which suggests putting tighter limits on when and how US authorities can request access to terrorism-related data stored abroad, namely by following not only the US laws but also laws of the respective countries.
7. Since the parliamentary elections in 2015, the new Canadian government announced that it intends to considerably strengthen existing democratic oversight mechanisms over security services. This was a response to the controversies surrounding the Anti-terrorism Act of 2015, or C-51, adopted by the previous government following a "lone wolf" terrorist attack on the country’s Parliament. The opponents of the Act argued that it provides too many pervasive powers to security services, while oversight mechanisms are weak. The new government announced the creation of a multi-party, bi-cameral committee, the members of which would be required to hold security clearances. Tasked with monitoring the entire security community in Canada, the committee would be supported by full-time staff and would be granted access to secret information as necessary.
8. In conjunction with the establishment of EU-level institutions such as Europol or Eurojust, it is important that they are also subjected to democratic oversight. Currently, Europol’s work is overseen by a Joint Parliamentary Scrutiny Group, with members from national parliaments and the European Parliament. It is also envisaged that the European Data Protection Supervisor will be responsible for monitoring Europol’s work. In addition, there will be a clear complaints procedure for citizens under EU law.

## The refugee/migration crisis and the liberty-security nexus

1. The refugee/migration crisis currently facing Europe injects new urgency into the debate over the appropriate balance between civil liberties and values and security. While the refugee/migration and terrorism phenomena are fundamentally different in nature, several instances involving terrorists arriving in Europe disguised as refugees[[5]](#footnote-5) as well as assaults in Cologne during the New Year’s celebration, have prompted parts of Western society to draw implicit connections between the two. After the Paris attacks in November 2015, the US House of Representatives voted on new Syrian/Iraqi refugee quotas in the United States, and more than half of the governors in the United States announced they would not accept these refugees on their states' territories, citing security risks as the main reason[[6]](#footnote-6). Following the Brussels attacks, the Polish government announced it was no longer prepared to accept its proposed quota of 7,000 refugees. Additionally, there is growing pressure from parts of the population to close national borders and the electoral support for anti-immigrant parties threatens to alter traditional political systems in Europe.
2. The potentially misconstrued linkage between the challenges of migration and terrorism needs to be explored further. On the one hand, a vast majority of refugees have never been engaged in combat and about half of them are children. From a psychological standpoint for example, one survey of Darfurian refugees in Chad showed that those who had personally experienced violence during the civil war in Sudan have a greater aversion to conflict and a greater desire for peace than those who had not (Bollfrass, Shaver, & Zhou). On the other hand, Europol warns that “it is possible that elements of the (Sunni Muslim) Syrian refugee diaspora in Europe may be vulnerable to radicalisation. Indeed, there are reports that refugee centres are being specifically targeted by Islamic extremist recruiters” (Withnall). Another serious threat is the growth of Daesh in Libya, which is reported to already have several thousand fighters there. The French Defence minister Jean-Yves Le Drian warned that these fighters might attempt to reach Europe by mixing in with the refugees. According to the minister, some 800,000 people are gathered on the Libyan coast looking for opportunities to cross the Mediterranean.
3. Even if the share of violent individuals among the refugees and migrants is negligible, monitoring the number of people entering Europe, with some 1.3 million in 2015 alone, is a gargantuan task for border and security services that are expected to vet them. Doubts that the EU’s south-eastern and southern states have the capacity to cope with this task by themselves are putting the future of the Schengen Agreement at risk. There is also a debate in the United States on whether it should revoke the so-called Visa Waiver Program permitting visa-free travel from Europe to the United States (Alden).
4. In any case, it is clear that Europe should rethink its external border management policy. In December 2015, the European Commission proposed the creation of the European Border and Coast Guard (EBCG), which would replace Frontex. Compared with Frontex, EBCG will have stronger powers to mobilise national border guards; will have a clearer mandate to intervene when the situation at a particular section of the external border becomes critical; will be able to acquire equipment itself and have more manpower. A pool of some 1,500 experts and national technical equipment will be formed and ready to be deployed within three days. The Commission also announced that mandatory systematic checks of EU citizens will be introduced at external borders when they enter or leave the EU, which will include the use of biometric identifiers. The checks will be connected with key databases, including SIS, the Interpol Stolen and Lost Travel Documents Database and relevant national systems. While this is a timely initiative, its implementation is lagging in practice.
5. To help the frontline EU states, namely Italy and Greece, to deal with the refugee/migration crisis, the EU also announced the establishment of several EU-run reception centres in certain “hotspots” (four in Italy and one in Greece) to identify and fingerprint arriving refugees. The idea is to separate genuine refugees from economic migrants. The implementation of the "hotspots" system has so far been sluggish due to red tape, the lack of financial resources and the opposition of local inhabitants. As of February 2016, only one hotspot centre was operational in Greece out of five planned, yet in January 2016 alone the country received some 37,000 refugees (DW). The implementation of EU requirements for national reception and asylum systems is also unsatisfactory: in September 2015, the European Commission launched 40 infringement proceedings against EU member states for incorrect transposition and implementation of common European asylum standards. The presence of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) at the hotspots has been inadequate: only about 20 member-state experts have been sent to Italy and Greece (Carrera & den Hertog). The EU has increased the resources devoted to the refugee crisis by EUR1.7 billion; in total, the Commission will spend EUR9.2 billion on the refugee crisis in 2015‑2016. The EU’s milestone agreement with Turkey is potentially a game-changer and the initial reports indicate that the number of new arrivals have dropped sharply. However, it remains to be seen how the agreement is implemented in practice and what the humanitarian and political consequences of this deal will be.

# Conclusions and recommendations

1. In many ways, the series of recent terrorist attacks linked to Daesh mark the end of an era for the Euro-Atlantic community. The free world can no longer afford complacency or take peace and security for granted. A number of terrorist attacks in recent years have been labelled as “wake‑up” calls and, fortunately, many plots have been thwarted. However, after the November 2015 events in Paris, March 2016 bombings in Brussels and the 14 July attack in Nice, the feeling of being under attack has truly become entrenched in the European psyche. The new attitude in Europe is comparable to that which prevails in countries where terrorist threats have been particularly acute for decades, such as Israel. Democratic European societies demand urgent and resolute action from their governments and can no longer tolerate excuses for the lack of international counter-terrorism cooperation.
2. It is important to note that there is no shortage of counter-terrorism cooperation frameworks within Europe, in the transatlantic area and even on a global scale. The fact that following the Brussels bombings, European justice and interior ministers did not launch new initiatives or institutions is a case in point: the instruments are there, but there is a lack of political will and mutual trust to use them to their full potential. While there has been noticeable improvement in cooperation on a bilateral level, for instance, between France and Belgium, or the United States and Belgium, the trust in supranational institutions remains limited. Security services prefer to communicate directly with their counterparts in other countries (particularly in culturally and politically close countries) rather than using EU, NATO, UN or OSCE platforms. Terrorism-related information is not systematically shared with Europol or Eurojust.
3. The current security environment is strengthening the perception that the safety of Euro‑Atlantic societies is closely interlinked and that terrorist threats need to be addressed in a more collective fashion. This current opportunity to bolster multinational cooperation mechanisms should not be missed. The political climate is favourable for carrying out initiatives such as the establishment of a European PNR, a European Prosecutor's Office and European Border and Coast Guard, as well as for reinvigorating NATO mechanisms for information exchange between Europe and North America. More needs to be done to enhance systematic cross-checking among various multinational databases such as SIS II and those of Europol, Frontex and Interpol. It is also critical to increase assistance to smaller European states such as Belgium, because disparities in intelligence-gathering and antiterrorist forces capabilities among the Euro-Atlantic nations are significant. Furthermore, the information exchange should include the success stories as well – such as disrupted attacks in Brussels in June and, more recently, one targeting Paris (Ju et Ben; Cornevin).
4. To nurture a necessary level of trust, the Euro-Atlantic nations need to have a good understanding of each another’s security mechanisms, as well as mechanisms of cooperation arrangements with third-party countries, across the Euro-Atlantic area in order to be able to identify (and rectify) potential flaws and loopholes that might result in leaks. Mutual trust can also be bolstered by more intensive participation in joint operations such as the EU’s Joint Investigation Teams. In relation to third-party countries, particularly those in the MENA region, it is advisable to circumvent issues when there is no consensus, such as whether or not certain groups should be labelled as terrorist organisations, and to focus on information exchange on individuals suspected of concrete terrorist activities.
5. A very important pre-condition for greater mutual trust is the recognition that one’s partner has robust democratic oversight mechanisms in place to prevent the misuse of information received through international data-sharing channels. Bolstering these mechanisms is also vitally important in order to maintain the balance between security and civil liberties, particularly in the current environment where state security structures have been granted more intrusive powers. These oversight mechanisms may differ depending on a country’s constitutional and historical context, but they need to meet the basic requirements of competence and independence.
6. The role of parliaments is critical in this regard. The existence of a parliamentary body composed of both majority and opposition legislators with security clearances and supported by competent staff is a critical component of effective national oversight structures. The exchange of best national practices in this area among relevant parliaments needs to be encouraged. It is also important that supranational structures, including Europol, Eurojust and Frontex, are properly scrutinised by the European Parliament and national parliaments of the EU countries, particularly as the scope of their mandates are increased.
7. Parliaments also play a key role in updating counter-terrorism-related legislation and adjusting it to the contemporary security environment. For instance, inflexible rules of engagement for the Belgian police may have been partly responsible for the failure to apprehend Paris attacker Salah Abdeslam earlier. Also, for a number of Euro-Atlantic nations, it is necessary to adopt more precise legislation defining the mandate of security services in sensitive areas such as electronic surveillance and metadata collection.
8. Furthermore, in terms of the role of legislatures in the fight against terrorism, a noteworthy initiative was the meeting of legislators from various European parliaments in March 2015 in Paris, at the invitation of Gérard Larcher, President of the French Senate and Jean Bizet, Chairman of the European Affairs Committee. The meeting adopted a joint declaration on priority actions to be taken regarding the fight against terrorism at the European level. Also, the Malta-based International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law has been facilitating an inter-parliamentary exchange of best practices in the field of counter-terrorism. This includes drafting a report on specific guidelines for legislators on issues such as incorporating requirements of international instruments against terrorism into domestic law and enacting timely anti-terrorism laws respecting human rights and fundamental freedoms.
9. This report has focused on the most urgent issues of countering terrorist threats, namely improving international cooperation and bolstering the capabilities of security services. However, in order to achieve longer term results, the international community needs to address the root causes of modern terrorism – the war in Syria and the process of radicalisation that is taking place among some Muslim communities in Europe. While discussing the strategic efforts to defeat Daesh is beyond the scope of this report, the General Rapporteur wishes to stress the gravity of the current situation and underline the mistakes that were made in the beginning of this conflict when the international community failed to form a broad coalition and act decisively to prevent the escalation of the conflict. Learning from past mistakes, the international community must redouble its efforts to prevent the escalation of conflict in Libya.
10. In terms of preventing radicalisation, this Committee’s [General report in 2015](http://www.nato-pa.int/Default.asp?SHORTCUT=4011) provided a more detailed analysis of the problem. The General Rapporteur wishes to reiterate that combatting violent extremism (CVE) is a relatively new field, but several Euro-Atlantic nations have already acquired valuable expertise in this area. Even the United States, which is traditionally averse to attempts to combat ideologies, has embarked upon implementing CVE programmes where federal agencies collaborate with regional partners to tackle locally bred extremism. It is important that Euro-Atlantic nations exchange expertise and best practices in areas such as preventing radicalisation in prisons, reducing the influence of radical preachers and supporting the spreading of moderate messages by popular Muslim figures. Increasing efforts to disrupt Daesh’s financial lifeline would have a strong anti-extremist effect as it would weaken Daesh’s recruiting activities and damage Daesh’s image by exposing its inability to perform the duties of a state.
11. An overwhelming majority of the perpetrators of the latest major terrorist attacks in Europe were second and even third-generation immigrants born and raised in European countries. The Euro-Atlantic community is therefore faced in particular with the phenomenon of home-grown terrorism. Refugees and migrants who are trying to reach and settle in the EU over the last several years are predominantly peaceful and law-abiding, with minor exceptions. Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to ignore the possibility that some terrorists might use the refugee routes to enter Europe. Some might also be radicalised in refugee camps. It is therefore critical to strengthen EU and national capacities to treat the arriving people with due dignity, but at the same time to ensure that relevant institutions have all the necessary information about people entering European borders. Adequate resources need to be allocated to separate refugees from economic migrants, to create a capable and efficient European Border and Coast Guard Agency and to strengthen the role and competences of the European Asylum Support Office.
12. It is also important to recall that in times of armed conflicts, impartial humanitarian organisations, such as the International Committee of the Red Cross, need to have contacts with non-state armed groups that might be designated as terrorist groups. Indeed, these humanitarian organisations are also working in territories under the control of some parties to armed conflicts which are also designated as terrorist groups in order to fulfil their mandate which is to assist and protect the victims of armed conflicts. Therefore, when adopting new legislation, lawmakers should pay attention not to criminalise the activities of impartial humanitarian organisations that are carried out in favour of victims of armed conflicts.
13. Eliminating the terrorist threat completely is an impossible task. Even with considerable extra funding and manpower, police and armed forces will not be able to protect every single restaurant, shop or public space from an attack by an armed fanatic. However, concerted national and international efforts, combining efficient law enforcement and border control apparatuses, good intelligence, resolve in tackling arms trafficking and terrorist financing, preventive work and close international cooperation can achieve the goal of destroying terrorist and extremist networks and bring the threat to a manageable level. At the time of a considerable political crisis and uncertainty in post-Brexit Europe, and in the context of massive arrivals of refugees and migrants, it is mandatory that the European project focuses even more on rebuilding a sense of community and security among its citizens and develops a coherent strategy and discourse on this subject.

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1. Arabic acronym of the terrorist organisation “Islamic State in Iraq and Syria” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Airborne Warning and Control System. At the Warsaw Summit, the Alliance committed to “providing direct NATO AWACS support to increase the coalition’s situation awareness” as of autumn 2016. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. 58 jurisdictions were identified, of which 43 had since made necessary reforms. According to FATF, only 33 jurisdictions had secured convictions for terrorist financing, and most implemented UN asset freezes too slowly. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. At the time of writing, the US authorities dropped the demand, possibly because a technological solution to overcome encryption was found in that case. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. These instances include a Syrian passport that belonged to one of the Paris attackers; the discovery of an extremist who staged a failed attack on a Paris police station who was reportedly living in a shelter for asylum seekers in western Germany; intelligence that an Istanbul suicide attacker had been registered as a refugee. Nevertheless, following the November 2015 Paris attacks, Europol said it had found nothing to suggest “that terrorist travellers systematically use the flow of refugees to enter Europe unnoticed”. Member of the French government, Harlem Desir, has publicly warned against mixing the issues of migration and terrorism, but admitted that Daesh is infiltrating some of its people into the refugee flow. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. The US administration does not support such measures. Opponents of these measures argue that the US system of screening refugees is robust and comprehensive, and that potential terrorists would find it too cumbersome to use this channel to enter the United States. According to a State Department spokesperson, of the nearly 785,000 refugees admitted through the US Refugee Admissions Program since 9/11, only about a dozen have been arrested or removed from the country due to terrorism concerns. Also, the number of Syrian refugees admitted to the United States since the beginning of the civil war–just over 2,000 people – is incomparable with European numbers (President Obama announced plans to admit another 10,000 in 2016). [↑](#footnote-ref-6)