



Analysis

TESAT report shows decrease in terrorist activity in 2011 but national police forces see a continuing threat

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Europol's report shows a significant decrease in terrorist incidents between 2009 and 2011 and its attempt to justify anti-terrorism initiatives. The lack of recent activity from established threats such as Al Qaeda and ETA has led anti-terrorist policing to increasingly focus on left-wing, anarchist and single issue groups.

Europol's 2012 EU Terrorism Situation and Trend (TESAT) report, covering the year 2011, was published on 25 April 2012. It noted a decrease in terrorist activity which it described as "a welcome development" that does not translate into a "diminished threat." The report is based on information submitted by national law enforcement agencies detailing "arrests and terrorist or extremist incidents that took place in the EU." Europol Director, Rob Wainwright, noted in his foreword that following an assessment by Europol's First Response Network after the killing spree by Anders Breivik in Norway in July 2011, the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network was established "in which Europol is playing a key role". Eurojust, the EU Intelligence Analysis Centre (INTCEN) and the Office of the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator also provided material to help produce the report. As stated in the report's introduction, TESAT was established in the aftermath of the 11 September 2001 attacks in the USA "to provide an overview of the terrorism phenomenon in the EU, from a law enforcement perspective" and "to record basic facts and assemble figures" while presenting "trends and new developments from the information available to Europol."

The first chapter sums up key findings, highlighting the "highly diverse terrorism picture" that emerges from the analysis of events in 2011. This is likely to be "mirrored" in 2012 with a "possible increase in lone or solo actor plots" in response to the killing of Osama bin Laden and because the core of Al Qaeda is under pressure, making it harder for them to organise large-scale attacks. The organisation has called for "individual violent jihad through the execution of small-scale attacks," although the threat of attacks by solo actors is not "limited to al-Qaeda inspired terrorism."

"Radicalisation towards violence" is deemed a "critical component of the terrorist threat" and "radical thinking" per se is linked to violence in the claim "Radical thinking becomes a threat when individuals or groups engage in violence to achieve political, ideological or religious goals." Media exposure and propaganda on the Internet may contribute to radicalisation and inspire the planning and commission of terrorist attacks by "like-minded individuals." The "substantial presence" of propaganda by terrorist and extremist groups on the Internet, is identified as their main

communication medium, and is deemed a cause for concern. Social media is viewed as facilitating “radicalisation and recruitment for terrorist and violent extremist purposes.”

A sustained decrease in terrorist incidents, attacks and arrests between 2009 and 2011 (there were 174 attacks, 484 arrests and 316 individuals charged for terrorist-related offences) is noted, “but overall activity relating to terrorism and violent extremism still represents a significant threat.” Groups inspired by Al Qaeda aim to cause mass casualties by striking targets of symbolic value. Further, the threat from violent right-wing extremists, either by lone actors or organised underground groups that “have the capability and intention to carry out attacks, “has reached new levels in Europe and should not be underestimated.” “Cross-border cooperation between violent extremist groups” is deemed to be on the rise, both in terms of providing support for violent activities and in communications, to inform like-minded individuals about future actions and to inspire others. Finally, a “convergence of social and technical factors” may “prove fertile ground for ideologically-motivated electronic attacks.”

General overview: an increased threat from lone actors

The report notes a decline in both terrorist attacks and arrests in the EU between 2007 and 2011. Lone actors were responsible for 79 deaths (two in Germany and 77 in Norway). The majority of terrorist attacks were in France (85), Spain (47) and the UK (26). The report notes that no religiously-inspired terrorist attacks were recorded, although the “religiously-inspired” lone actor who killed two US servicemen in an attack at Frankfurt airport in March 2011 is not deemed a terrorist attack under German legislation, [1] despite the fact that “the incident clearly carried some such characteristics.” The highest arrest figures were in France (172), Ireland (69) and Spain (64). Most of the total figure (247) concern “ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism.” This is just one of the categories used in the report alongside “religiously-inspired”; “left-wing and anarchist”; “right-wing” and “single-issue” terrorism. There was an increase in arrests for “membership of a terrorist organisation, disseminating propaganda, possession of arms and explosives, and the dispatch of fighters to a conflict” and a decrease in those for “preparation of attacks, attempted attacks and completed attacks.”

The terrorist threat posed by small groups and lone actors “whose radicalisation takes place largely undetected” is deemed to be on the increase. This is as a result of the call for “individual jihad” issued by Al Qaeda in the Arab Peninsula (AQAP) through its online magazine Inspire, Anders Breivik’s attack in Norway in which he killed eight people with a “vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED)” in Oslo and shot a further 69 people at random on the island of Utøya, and the discovery of a group of German right-wing terrorists who committed “politically-motivated” murders between 2001 and 2007.

Activities, tactics and counter-measures

The report highlights the wide-ranging fundraising activities of terrorist organisations whose pragmatism allows them to ignore “religious or political boundaries... if they stand in the way of the acquisition of funds.” Hostage taking with ransom demands is on the rise in Maghreb countries and Africa as a “tried and tested method” of raising funds. The PKK is singled out for narcotics trafficking and Tamils are suspected by intelligence services of engaging in “extortion, human trafficking, [cash] skimming schemes and other crimes” to “raise money to fight for their cause.” The report also

makes questionable claims about the “abuse of social benefits” to fund terrorism and the growing prevalence of “fundraising by self-radicalised terrorist supporters.”

TESAT notes that “improvised explosive devices” (IEDs) are a “growing concern” as their components are legally available (the Breivik case is cited as evidence of this) and the necessary expertise for their manufacture is easily available from open sources. There was a decrease in “the use of commercial explosives” due to “increased monitoring and control by law enforcement agencies.” IEDs are described as “the weapon of choice of ethno-nationalist terrorists in Spain, France and the UK”, with this type of bomb used in 2011 in France and Northern Ireland. “Left-wing terrorist groups” used letter-bombs to target “public and private institutions and companies in France, Greece, Germany, Italy and Switzerland.” In October 2011, such “Improvised Incendiary Devices” (IIDs) were used against railway infrastructure in Germany. Both IEDs and IIDs are used by “animal rights violent extremists and related single-issue organisations.”

The report stresses the importance of the internet for communications between “terrorist and violent extremist actors.” It is described as being “firmly established” as a “facilitating factor” for such groups due to the “high numbers” who use “social media sites.” This includes the use of internet forums “to address targeted audiences, including supporters” with whom they have no other links. The activities for which the internet is used are listed as: “instruction”, “recruitment of supporters”, “dispatch of members to conflict areas”, “fundraising”, “facilitating cooperation” with other groups and the “planning and coordination of attacks.” The internet increases their “audience” and “magnifies” their “propaganda efforts.” Internet forums are used to distribute “a substantial proportion of terrorist propaganda” and “individuals posing as media outlets edit, translate and publish terrorist content.” This blurs the “boundaries between virtual support networks, media outlets and terrorist organisations.” The Internet is also said to enable “individuals to undergo a process of radicalisation without necessarily being formally recruited”... “controlled or guided” by terrorist groups. This claim is worrying in that it could easily be applied to reading books, education or any activity that may lead to individuals developing a critical view of society. A further threat assessed as “moderate or even high” by the report, is the possibility of “electronic attacks on the operating systems of critical infrastructure” in EU Member States.

The term “cyber-terrorism” may be applied to “electronic attacks on critical infrastructure”, “intellectual property theft”, and the use of the internet to disseminate propaganda or for communication purposes, although the report bemoans a “lack of international consensus” on its definition. It notes that “developments.. point to a convergence of social and technological factors which may well prove fertile ground for an increase in ideologically-motivated attacks.” Cybercrime is deemed to have developed “from a niche activity into a mature service industry” with “criminal tools,” crimeware toolkits and encoding available in the “digital underground economy,” with little concern over how they may be used. “Hacktivism” is deemed to be the source of a “new online model for distributed disorder,” including the use of “Distributed Denial of Service” (DDoS) attacks by cells or lone actors in response to “perceived wrongdoing.” The developments of similar tools and methods have blurred the distinction “between organised crime and terrorism” and require a “continuing holistic response to electronic attacks” and “greater collaboration” in developing counter-measures between law enforcement and critical infrastructure protection agents.

Trials and verdicts

There were 153 completed court proceedings involving 316 individuals (40 of them women, most of whom were tried for “separatist terrorism”) involving terrorist charges reported in 12 member states in 2011. 346 verdicts were handed down, resulting in 239 convictions and 107 acquittals (31% of the total). 208 of the verdicts were final, whereas 138 await further judicial scrutiny. The lion’s share were in Spain where 235 verdicts were reached in trials, 210 of them for separatist terrorism. Spain was also the country in which the most proceedings were completed concerning religiously-inspired (14) and left-wing (11) terrorism. France was a distant second with 46 verdicts reached, 33 of which were for separatist terrorism. There was an increase in Denmark (4), Germany (17) and France compared to 2010, a decrease in Belgium (8) and the Netherlands (5) and a decrease for the second consecutive year in the UK (12) and Italy (4). Lithuania reported its first “terrorism-related court decision”. Overall, the distribution based on the affiliation of suspects tried for terrorist offences was as follows: 259 classified as “separatist”; 59 as “religiously-inspired”; 14 as “not specified”; 11 as “left-wing” (all of them from Spain) 3 as “right-wing”(all of them from Belgium) and none for the “single issue” category.

The highest acquittal rate was in Sweden where only two verdicts were reached, both of them acquittals, followed by Spain, where 42% of verdicts (98) were acquittals. The UK (4 out of 12) and Greece (1 out of 3) both had a 33% acquittal rate, and one acquittal was recorded in both France (2%) and Ireland (11%). The 39 completed court proceedings in six other countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Italy, Lithuania, and The Netherlands) had a full conviction rate. The highest acquittal rate was for separatist terrorism (34%), followed by left-wing (27%) and religiously-inspired terrorism (24%). The report notes that both the number of verdicts and the acquittal rate in Spain are high, with the latter rising to 42% in 2011 for the third consecutive year (from 21% in 2009 and 38% in 2010.) It explains this by noting that the Spanish judicial system focuses on prevention and protection, criminalising and prosecuting preparatory acts, recruitment, training, conspiracy to commit terrorist activities or support for these, often on the basis of circumstantial evidence. It falls short of noting that this approach leads to the criminalisation of a broad sector of Basque society belonging to the so-called *izquierda abertzale* or “nationalist left” which is sometimes treated as an appendage of ETA with far-reaching implications in terms of “guilt by association”, political and media freedom and a wide interpretation of complicity with “terrorism.”

The average penalty imposed for terrorist-related convictions in 2011 is estimated at eight years; 12 for “separatist and left wing terrorism”, seven for “religiously-inspired terrorism” and less than one year for “right wing” terrorism. The “not specified” category has the highest average penalty due to life sentences imposed in France.

The TESAT report continues by analysing the different typologies of terrorism that it addresses.

Religiously-inspired terrorism

The section on “religiously-inspired terrorism” highlights that, in spite of “an increase in sophistication,” “violent jihadist terrorist groups...continue to exhibit poor skills and professional tradecraft” that prevents them from “committing effective attacks in the EU.” “European home-grown groups are becoming less homogeneous in terms of their ethnicity.” The report also argues that “political changes in Arab countries in 2011” and the death of Osama bin Laden have not had a great impact in terms of the “terrorist threat” or “increased activities.” There were no Al Qaeda

attacks in Europe in spite of the aforementioned “religiously-inspired attack in Germany,” and the number of arrests in this category “dropped from 179 in 2010 to 122 in 2011.” The report notes that despite the absence of attacks, plots were developed by “Al Qaeda directed groups, home-grown cells inspired by Al Qaeda and self-radicalised, self-directed lone actors.” There was a rising threat towards Scandinavia and Germany, while France, Spain and the UK “remained constant targets and centres for radical activities” and countries with a military presence in Afghanistan faced a “persistent threat.” A majority of the 122 arrests for “religiously-inspired terrorism” were for “suspicion of membership of a terrorist organisation”, 17 for “preparation of a terrorist attack” (down from 89 in 2010), 13 for financing terrorist activities, 12 for “propaganda”, 10 for facilitation and seven for recruitment and four for possession of arms and explosives. Arrests connected to attacks and financing have decreased, but the percentage of arrests for recruitment and sending volunteers to be trained in the Afghanistan/Pakistan border area and Somalia has increased.

EU member states’ main concern in this field is home-grown groups, which were involved in the “most significant plots” for attacks in 2011, in Germany and the UK. In Germany, there were four arrests in April and December 2011 of people who “had established connections to the Al Qaeda core and other Al Qaeda affiliates,” and were believed to be planning at least one attack. In the UK, 12 people from Birmingham were arrested in September and November 2011 and charged with offences including “preparation for an act of terrorism in the UK, providing money for the purposes of terrorism and failing to disclose information about potential acts of terrorism.” The report argues that this shows “the unfaltering determination of home-grown violent jihadists to strike” in spite of a lack of links to established groups among those arrested.

The report argues that home-grown religiously-inspired terrorist groups “have engaged the services of organised crime groups (OCGs) to assist their activities”, although “OCGs have at times been unaware of the terrorist intentions of those they support.” They are also deemed to have “attempted to establish connections with Eastern European OCGs involved in the trafficking of human beings and the production of forged documents.” Moreover, “a small number of known terrorists were also able to capitalise on the refugee surge from North African states to the Italian island of Lampedusa” as a result of the Arab Spring. The conflation of the categories of religiously-inspired terrorism, organised crime, counterfeit documents, “illegal” immigration, and the influx of migrants and refugees as “infiltration” is laid out explicitly.

The report goes on to describe home-grown religiously inspired groups’ internet propaganda and the terrorist situation outside the EU, expressing concern over the availability of “uncontrolled Libyan arms” following the Arab Spring and the increasing use of kidnapping as a “tried and tested method” to raise funds through ransom demands. The involvement of OCGs in such activities, particularly in the Horn of Africa, “have blurred the distinction between pure criminality and terrorism.”

“Ethno nationalist and separatist terrorism”

Focussing mainly on the separatist struggles in the Basque Country (Euskadi), Corsica and Northern Ireland, the report notes a “significant decrease” in attacks in Spain, a total of 110 attacks in EU member states (85 of which were in France), 247 arrests for “separatist terrorism-related offences” (126 in France, 68 in the Republic of Ireland and 41 in Spain). The report also notes the role of EU states’ as “important logistical support bases for groups based outside the EU.”

The key developments in this category were two announcements by ETA in January and October 2011, first declaring a cease-fire and then a cessation of its armed actions. The report refers to an attack in France in which a gendarmerie officer was injured when two ETA suspects opened fire to escape from a checkpoint and “only” 13 instances of “street violence” in the Basque Country and Navarre. The extortion of businessmen was deemed to have “almost disappeared.” ETA is considered to be in a “weak” position due to the dismantling of cells and seizures of explosives in Spain, France and Portugal. The report adopts the Spanish authorities’ argument that the ceasefire is a result of weakness and does not offer any guarantees: “ETA has not announced the surrender of its weaponry or the dissolution of the terrorist organisation”, thus “Experience...may lead to the conclusion that ETA could resume its activities at any moment, if they fail to achieve their political goals”, namely “a peace talk process with the Spanish and French governments to create an independent state.” 55 people were arrested for “membership, support or criminal/terrorist links to ETA.”

Twelve attacks by the Galician “pro-independence movement” are reported, four of which can be attributed to the Resistencia Galega, leading to six arrests in November and December 2011. Dissident Republican groups, who carried out the “first fatal attack... since 2009” when they killed a Catholic police constable in April 2011, are deemed a threat in Northern Ireland. The Real IRA is said to have improved its engineering and technical capabilities, marked by “continued success in terms of deployment of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs) across a wide range of targets in Northern Ireland.” The Continuity IRA is deemed to be in “internal turmoil” and does not have the same capabilities. 75 completed or attempted attacks in France mainly targeting the tourism sector were reportedly carried out by Corsican terrorist groups.

Regarding “terrorist” groups in non-European member states, the report mentions the Kurdish Workers’ Party (PKK) and Tamil Tigers (LTTE). The number of arrests due to links to the PKK is decreasing, but the report maintains that “Europe remains a logistical base for funding, recruitment, training and propaganda” for the organisation. Suspected PKK members were arrested in France, Germany and Romania. The PKK is reported to have committed “several terrorist attacks on Turkish territory in 2011” although there is no mention of counter-insurgency operations in the region by the Turkish state’s security forces. The Tamil Tigers (LTTE) did not commit any attacks and did not suffer any arrests, yet it was “re-listed as a terrorist entity by the EU in July 2011.” The LTTE is said to have split into a “peaceful” and an “active militant” faction. Both groups are deemed to be involved in a range of illegal activities: “extortion, money laundering, facilitating illegal migration, drugs and human trafficking” (PKK), and “extortion, running illegal lotteries, human trafficking...spreading propaganda on radio and TV stations and via numerous websites” (the “militant factions” of the LTTE).

“Left-wing and anarchist”, “right-wing” and “single-issue terrorism”

37 attacks attributed to “left-wing and anarchist terrorism” were reported by Denmark, Germany, Greece, Italy and Spain in 2011 (down from 45 in 2010). These were largely arson attacks targeting the government and businesses. Bomb attacks decreased from 25 in 2010 to 11 in 2011, and the deaths resulting from these attacks fell from six in 2010 to one in 2011 (a person who was building an IED in Greece). 42 people were arrested (up from 34 in 2010) mainly in Greece, Italy and Spain, most of them “suspected of membership of a terrorist organisation.” The Italian group Federazione Anarchica Informale [the Italian police, and hence the report, acritically uses the acronym FAI, in spite of its longstanding use by the Federazione Anarchica Italiana (Italian Anarchist Federation)

since 1945] claimed responsibility for attacks in Italy, Greece, Germany and Switzerland [in 2011] during two campaigns in March and December 2011. Parcel bombs, some of which were intercepted before they exploded, were sent to a military barracks and a tax collection company in Italy, a prison in Greece, a bank's headquarters in Germany, the Greek Embassy in France and the offices of the Nuclear Industry Federation in Switzerland. In Greece, there were arrests and the confiscation of weapons by the police, while attacks by "left-wing and anarchist groups" fell "from 20 in 2010 to six in 2011." Five people were arrested in Denmark for arson attacks against police buildings, a bank and the Greek embassy in Copenhagen. There were 20 attacks in Spain, where two "violent extremist anarchists" were arrested and three other people were arrested "in the framework of international cooperation to fight terrorism."

As for "terrorist and violent extremist activities", the report notes that "the use of incendiary devices...is not new" but the targeting of weak spots in the railway infrastructure is noteworthy, pointing to attacks in Germany, Italy and Finland. These included the discovery of 18 improvised incendiary devices (IIDs) in nine railway locations in Germany between 10 and 13 October 2011. An unknown group claimed responsibility for planting the devices as a "direct response to German military involvement in Afghanistan" and the logistical support offered to the army by the German railway system. Attempts to set up an international anarchist network called for by the Greek "terrorist organisation" Synomosia Pynon Fotias is deemed a likely explanation for the Federazione Anarchica Informale's "renewed activism," as indicated by documents found in parcel bombs. The motivation for anarchist related attacks is often an "expression of solidarity with imprisoned anarchists" and the report notes "signs of increased coordination between groups."

The inclusion of the Dutch No Border campaign in this category, due to incidents in France "motivated by the expulsion of asylum seekers" and actions against construction companies building detention centres (including a home visit that damaged the house of a construction company's CEO), is highly contentious. These are in addition to "traditional meetings and protest demonstrations, a number of violent incidents, such as arson attacks, clashes with police and criminal damage."

Clashes between anti-fascists and right-wingers are reported to have "hardened and become increasingly violent in recent years." In Germany, these predominantly occur during right-wing meetings and parades, whereas activists in the Czech Republic increasingly target individuals. In Sweden, representatives of the Democrats party are a preferred target. A shift by anarchists towards environmental struggles is noted, singling out the participation of anarchists in demonstrations "against the construction of the future airport of Notre Dame des Landes (Nantes) and the high-speed railway line linking France and Italy in Val Susa," a popular protest that the Italian government and mainstream media have tried to criminalise as violent, verging on terrorist, for several years. Thus, largely demonstrative acts of violence, political struggles and resistance are included alongside Al Qaeda in a report in which they have no place.

This is in stark contrast to the treatment of "right-wing terrorism." The report found that there was one right-wing terrorist attack (an arson attack in Spain) and five arrests in Germany and that the threat comes from "undetected lone actors or small groups rather than established extreme right groups." The five people arrested in Germany were suspected members of the "right wing extremist/terrorist group 'Nationalsozialistischer Untergrund - NSU' (National Socialist Underground)" which was accused of nine murders of people with Greek and Turkish origins, the shooting of a German policewoman and the attempted murder of a male German police officer between 2001 and 2007. The arrests resulted from evidence seized after the suicide of two NSU

members in November 2011 who were pursued following a bank robbery. NSU was also accused of involvement in two bomb attacks in Cologne that injured over 30 people, mostly foreigners, in 2001 and 2004. The Guardian reported on 2 July 2012 that the head of the German internal intelligence service resigned following criticism about the failure “to detect the group and for poor co-ordination between various state, local and national authorities involved in the case.” The move followed an admission by the service that “files relevant to the investigation into the neo-Nazi group had been destroyed after the group was discovered” amid criticism that both the “intelligence agency and police forces were too focused on Islamic and leftist extremism, allowing the neo-Nazis to operate unchecked.”

The report moves on to “violent right-wing extremism”, of which several member states reported “xenophobic (violent) offences and right-wing parades.” This includes attacks and mobilisations against Roma people in Bulgaria and the Czech Republic in 2011, reportedly following crimes committed by members of the Roma community. The report concludes that economic crisis and immigration-related concerns “may lead to an increase in right-wing activities.”

Concerns expressed in the report include the existence of international links and the recruitment and distribution of “violent extreme right-wing propaganda.” The report mentions the White Power Music (WPM) movement in Sweden and refers to attempts by the Portuguese right-wing music scene to reorganise after the imprisonment of “important representatives of the ‘Portuguese Hammerskins’.” Members of the right-wing scene in several member states reportedly have or seek access to weapons, and “legal possession of (fire)arms is relatively common among violent right-wing extremists.” Although the seizure of illegal weapons and ammunition, IEDs and materials to produce IEDs “may be an indication of a certain level of militancy for at least some parts of the scene, police authorities say that this phenomenon often relates more to the aspect of their subculture, than to an intention to use these weapons for terrorist ends.” The authors nonetheless note that “these illegal weapons might be used in sporadic incidents to cause significant harm.”

Compared to the rest of the report, the section on right-wing extremism is understated and the evidence (possession of weapons or exchanges between Internet websites) is not strung together in the same way to criminalise communities or movements as “terrorist” or “violent extremist.” It stresses that several right-wing extremists who were arrested “were acting alone” and “might share an ideological identification with a violent extremist group, but do not necessarily communicate with the organisation.” Likewise, suggestions that Breivik’s attacks in Norway “were acts of right-wing terrorism, or had links with right-wing extremist groups in the EU, have not been substantiated.” It should be noted (the report fails to do so) that attacks by right-wingers in 2011 include stabbings, attacks and ambushes in which left-wingers or migrants were seriously injured and social and cultural centres damaged. Police forces and the mainstream media in some countries (particularly Italy) downplayed such cases: “Violent attacks appear to be, in most cases, the result of an accidental encounter or a reciprocal provocation.”

Protests cited in the report under the heading “terrorist and violent extremist activities” include longstanding popular mobilisations that have involved resistance and a degree of criminal damage or sabotage (for instance No Border or the movement in Val di Susa). This is in stark contrast to the scant information provided about right-wing attacks. The fact that only one arson attack in Spain is reported exemplifies this.

Moreover, in Florence on 13 December 2011, Gianluca Casseri shot three Senegalese street sellers in Piazza Dalmazia, killing two of them and seriously injuring a third, before going to San Lorenzo market to continue shooting at Africans. He committed suicide once caught by the police. Casseri had links to the far-right organisation Casa Pound (which is growing and has been linked to numerous cases of street violence). Three days earlier, on the outskirts of Turin, a false allegation by a 16-year-old girl that she was raped by two Roma men resulted in a neighbourhood march against a Roma camp in cascina Continassa that caused its inhabitants to flee while camper vans were set alight and make-shift shacks were burnt down. It seems that attacks against minorities, NGOs and non-institutional or economic actors or infrastructures are not within the report's scope.

As for "single-issue terrorism", there were neither attacks nor arrests in 2011, although a "number of incidents were reported by France, Italy, the Netherlands, the UK and the Republic of Ireland" and "additional monitoring of open sources shows" that many incidents are not reported. The key findings are: "increased activity by violent animal rights extremist groups have a significant impact on the businesses involved"; this category of extremist groups "focus on a broad range of targets, including directly related institutions and businesses"; and an increase in "cross-border cooperation" between them is a "cause for concern." Activities attributed to animal rights extremists (ARE) and violent environmentalist groups "range from fairly low-level vandalism...to significant acts of destruction and the use of incendiary or improvised explosive devices." Their activities are a "cause for concern" despite few recorded incidents, because they cause millions of euro worth of damage to companies and institutions and individuals linked to companies, "and sometimes even random people," are targeted. They are broadly described as "relatively young" and "found in the group of idealistic, often relatively deprived, youngsters who do not agree with some movements in society and therefore seek to achieve their goals through violent action." Their similarity with left-wing groups could explain growing cooperation "between violent left-wing and violent environmentalist extremist groups." The threat they pose is heightened by "professionalism and the often high competencies and capabilities of group members," including "effective" use of the internet for recruitment and propaganda, and they "will continue to attract radical individuals who are ready to use violent tactics." As for their activities, "the pharmaceutical industry reported 262 incidents worldwide in 2011," most of which were demonstrations involving small numbers that "have a serious impact on these industries."

Intensification of violent extremist activities has featured "incendiary or improvised explosive devices, assaults on persons and hoax bomb telephone calls." Groups cited in the report for their involvement in assaults on pharmaceutical company personnel and for targeting businesses linked to animal testing with IEDs include Stop Huntingdon Animal Cruelty, Militant Forces Against Huntingdon Life Sciences and the National Anti-Vivisection Alliance. Specific incidents include the destruction of a golf green sponsored by an airline that transports animals to laboratories across the world, an arson attack on Bologna University Food Science Department, the Animal Liberation Front setting fire to a fast food restaurant and actions against the fur and leather industry through threats to shop owners and paint sprayed on fur coats. Hunting shops, circuses and kennels were also targeted.

Internet propaganda is deemed "one of the main tools of ARE groups." Their websites are managed professionally giving "the impression that some ARE groups are supported by a large group" and they seek support through "disinformation campaigns." The report cites the illegal entry of "multiple pig and rabbit farms" where footage was filmed and published online "to show the alleged

malpractices taking place in these farms” - an example of activism rather than terrorism, and of “information” rather than “disinformation”, unless the footage was false. Changes to animal rights legislation “may trigger new and increased actions.”

The targets of “violent environmentalist extremist groups” are broadly identified as “construction companies, the energy and transport sectors, nuclear power and nano-technology,” with a limited number of incidents. Demonstrations against the construction of two airports in France and protests against the high-speed rail connection between Italy and France are mentioned alongside “traditional actions against radioactive waste transport.” Joint transnational protests and actions may indicate “stronger ties and cooperation” between “violent left-wing extremist and violent environmental extremist groups.”

Conclusion

Throughout the report, there is a self-serving intention to justify initiatives that are underway, some of them controversial and with far-reaching implications. This applies to “radicalisation”, the emphasis on the internet as a setting for “radicalisation” and other terrorist activities (recruitment, fundraising, etc.), and the potential that it offers for cyberterrorism. Europol is “playing a key role” in the EU Radicalisation Awareness Network (which builds on recommendations for member states to “take steps to share information on radicalisation and put in place mechanisms to systematically analyse and assess the extent of radicalisation on the basis of a multidisciplinary approach”, see April 2010 Draft Council Conclusions document in the sources) and the establishment of a new European Cybercrime Centre that is set to open in 2013 in Europol’s offices in The Hague. The report collapses different categories into a single cauldron to allow very different phenomena (forged documents, illegal immigration, organised crime, political activism) to be treated using the form of policing - that is, anti-terrorist policing - that enables the lowest level of judicial and legal guarantees to be applied. As the report admits, it reflects the views of EU member state police forces, but this makes matters worse, heightening the importance of its shortcomings or biases. The report is largely unquestioning of law enforcement activities, and it goes further by uncritically adopting their frames of reference, and underplaying the significance of right-wing, racist or fascist violence in comparison with other categories. The inclusion of No Borders, or the struggle in Val Susa against the high-speed railway tunnel in the Alpine valley, protests in France against the construction of a new airport and the activities of animal rights activists are clearly out of tune with the subject at hand and often reflect the alarmist internal discourse of governments.

It also signals the effect of the adoption of a wide definition of terrorism agreed by EU governments after the 9/11 attacks in the United States on policing. The net was cast very wide to include acts committed with the aim of “unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing any act” (art. 1 of the text), which could apply to any protest movement, and “causing extensive destruction to a Government or public facility, a transport system, an infrastructure facility, including an information system, a fixed platform located on the continental shelf, a public place or private property likely to endanger human life or result in major economic loss” (art. 1.d). To counteract the threat that it may limit legitimate rights, a declaration was included in the Framework Decision on combating terrorism (recital 10) that read:

Nothing in this Framework Decision may be interpreted as being intended to reduce or restrict fundamental rights or freedoms such as the right to strike, freedom of assembly, of association or of

expression, including the right of everyone to form and to join trade unions with others for the protection of his or her interests and the related right to demonstrate.

But, statements do not carry the same weight as actions.

Nonetheless, the TESAT report's key finding for 2011 is a significant decrease in attacks by groups that are deemed established terrorist threats – none by Al Qaeda or “religiously-inspired terrorism” (unless the case in Germany is counted as such), while ETA in Spain has declared a ceasefire and a cessation of its armed activities. Police forces remain understandably wary about such developments but, if it were maintained in the long term, this could lead to the scaling back of antiterrorist policing activity. However, the report appears to indicate that other targets will be found to justify the use of this form of policing. This has serious implications for the movements that are targeted and on society at large by limiting rights and political freedoms, as well as granting exceptional surveillance and operational powers to police forces and undermining due legal protection for defendants. In particular, the attention paid to “radicalisation” has important implications on freedom of thought and expression. By focussing such efforts on so-called left-wing, anarchist or single-issue struggles classified as “terrorism” or “violent extremism,” particularly in the context of an economic crisis and mobilisations and campaigns against measures tending towards “austerity,” it could turn “antiterrorist policing” into “political policing.”

Endnotes

1. A 22-year-old Kosovar, Arid Uka, was convicted on 10 February 2012 on two counts of murder and three of attempted murder, receiving a life sentence. Uka claimed that he did not belong to any terrorist group but was radicalised in the weeks before the attack after viewing footage of US soldiers raping a Muslim woman from the 2007 Brian De Palma anti-war film “Redacted.” BBC online, 2.3.11, 10.2.12; Huffington Post, 11.2.12.

Sources

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