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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN
PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL**

**The EU Counter-Terrorism Policy:
main achievements and future challenges**

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1. INTRODUCTION

Even though no large-scale terrorist attack has taken place in the European Union since Madrid and London, the threat from terrorism remains significant and is constantly evolving[1]. The threat comes not only from Islamist terrorism, but also from separatist and anarchist terrorists. The modes of attacks used by terrorists have changed, as demonstrated by the 2008 Mumbai attacks and the attempt on a flight from Amsterdam to Detroit on Christmas day 2009. Threats now come both from organised terrorists and from so-called "lone wolves", who may have developed their radical beliefs on the basis of extremist propaganda and have found training materials and recipes for bombs on the internet. These developments mean that the international community's efforts to combat this threat need to evolve as well.

The time has come to take stock of the main legislative and policy achievements at the EU level in the fight against terrorism, and to outline some future challenges in this field. This Communication provides the core elements of a political assessment of the current EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, as requested by the European Parliament, and constitutes an important preparatory step in the framework of the broader Internal Security Strategy. It is without prejudice to the fact that Member States are the main actors in this sensitive policy area.

Taking stock of past achievements and looking ahead to future challenges is particularly relevant following the entry into force of the Lisbon Treaty, as well as the adoption of a new multi-annual work programme and action plan for the area of Justice, Freedom and Security (the "Stockholm Programme"). This communication builds upon and complements the counter terrorism-related measures and initiatives identified in the Stockholm programme[2] and its implementing action plan[3] which broadly outline the EU's future actions.

The 2005 EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy[4], which continues to be the main reference framework for EU action in this field, consists of four strands: prevent, protect, pursue and respond. This Communication follows that structure. For each of the four strands some major achievements have been highlighted and future challenges identified. The Communication is accompanied by a Commission Staff Working Paper, which includes a table giving a more complete overview of the main actions taken by the EU under the four strands[5].

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[1]   For the latest figures, see Europol's 2010 Terrorism Situation and Trend (TESAT) Report, online available under http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications.
[2]   OJ C 115, 4.5.2010, p. 1.
[3]   COM (2010) 171 final of 20 April 2010.
[4]   Doc. 14469/4/05 of 30 November 2005.
[5]   SEC (2010) …..

The evaluation of specific instruments for data collection and management (including instruments dealing with passenger name records and the retention of telecommunications data) will be the subject of separate communications. Also, this Communication primarily looks at the threats from terrorism to the internal security of the European Union. Cooperation with external partners has only been covered where it directly affects the EU's internal security.

2. MAIN EU ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE CHALLENGES

The EU Counter-terrorism Strategy and the Action Plan implementing it take a broad approach in defining actions and instruments which can contribute to combating terrorism[6]. Within the scope of this Communication, not all of the work which has been taken forward over the past five years in these broad areas can be discussed – this Communication therefore focuses on the main strategic threads under each of the four strands of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy – prevent, protect, pursue and respond.

2.1. Prevent

The main challenge under this strand is preventing radicalisation and recruitment leading to the willingness to commit terrorist offences. But prevention also includes dealing with the way terrorists use the internet – for communication, fund-raising, training, recruitment and propaganda. The Stockholm Programme[7] stresses that this strand in particular should be reinforced in the coming five years, which includes also more and better tailored security research covering operational and technical work as well as policy-related studies and societal aspects.

2.1.1. Main achievements

The EU's main legal instrument for dealing with terrorist crimes is the Framework Decision on combating terrorism (2002/475/JHA)[8], which defines what acts should be considered terrorist offences by the Member States. At the initiative of the Commission, this legal instrument was amended to deal more specifically with prevention aspects[9]. The amended Framework Decision now provides a legal framework for approximating national provisions on:

– public provocation to commit a terrorist offence;

– recruitment for terrorism; and

– training for terrorism.

This means that, once the Framework Decision will be transposed in all Member States, it will be possible to prosecute and punish people who try to involve others in terrorist activity by encouraging them to commit terrorist acts, by trying to enlist them in their terrorist networks,

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[6]   The last complete overview of all actions to be completed produced in 2007 (doc. 7233/1/07) consisted of 140 different action points, and the most recent overview of outstanding action points (doc. 15358/09 produced in November 2009) still includes 50 action points.

[7]   OJ C 115, 4.5.2010, p. 24.

[8]   OJ L 164, 22.6.2002, p.3.

[9]   Framework Decision 2008/919/JHA, adopted on 28 November 2008. OJ L 330, 9.12.2008, p. 21.

or by providing them with the information they need to commit their attacks, such as bomb-making recipes. With the adoption of this amendment, these forms of criminal behaviour will become punishable throughout the EU, also when they are committed using the internet. This is an important step which aligns EU legislation with the Council of Europe Convention on the prevention of terrorism of May 2005, on which the new provisions were modelled.

The Commission also seeks to promote a public/private partnership approach for countering terrorist use of the internet[10]. It has started a dialogue between law enforcement authorities and service providers in order to reduce the dissemination of illegal terrorism-related content on the internet. A European Agreement Model to facilitate public/private cooperation on the issue is under development.

Radicalisation takes place not only over the internet but also through direct recruitment. The 2010 Europol Terrorism Situation and Trend report indicates that many terrorist or extremist organisations are supported by active youth branches which are of particular concern to some Member States as potential vectors for radicalisation and recruitment. This confirms that extremist ideologies still hold some attraction for receptive individuals. The TE-SAT report also confirms that a not insignificant number of radicalised people travel from the EU to conflict areas or are attending terrorist training camps and then returning to Europe. These are indications that the risks associated with youth being radicalised to commit terrorist offences remain considerable.

Over the past years, the European Union has put in place a number of important policies dealing with radicalisation and recruitment. Significant work to implement and support these policies is ongoing. A milestone has been the adoption of a specific EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment[11]. This Strategy has three main targets: to disrupt the activities of the networks and individuals who draw people into terrorism; to ensure that the voices of mainstream opinion prevail over those of extremism and to promote democracy, security, justice and opportunity for all. Detailed steps to further these objectives have been laid down in an Action Plan and an implementation plan approved in June 2009. In addition, a Media Communication Strategy has been adopted.

Following an initiative by the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator[12], a number of significant projects to implement this Strategy and Action Plan have been initiated by certain Member States, which have agreed to take the lead in developing concrete work-streams. These are

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[10]   With a view to supporting law enforcement authorities in this field, the Commission has contracted two studies that will contribute to the development of policy and serve as a basis to decide on the adoption of practical measures to counter the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes:
- non-legislative measures to prevent the distribution of violent radical content on the Internet, including co-operation between NGOs and law enforcement authorities;
- methodologies and adapted technological tools to efficiently detect violent radical content on the Internet.
The results of these studies are expected in 2011.
[11]   The EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism was revised in November 2008 (CS / 2008 / 15175).
[12]   The establishment of the position of a Counter-terrorism Coordinator (CTC) was agreed by the European Council at its meeting on 25 March 2004 in a Declaration on Terrorism, adopted in reaction to the Madrid bombings. The CTC works within the Council Secretariat, co-ordinates the work of the Council in combating terrorism and, with due regard to the responsibilities of the Commission, maintains an overview of all the instruments at the Union's disposal with a view to regular reporting to the Council and effective follow-up of Council decisions.

media and strategic communication (UK), training of imams (ES), community policing (BE), working with local authorities (NL), de-radicalisation (DK) and terrorism and the internet (DE). A significant number of these projects receive financial support from the Commission.

The Commission has contributed to the development of policy in this area through its 2005 Communication addressing the issue of violent radicalisation[13]. In addition, a significant number of studies and an overview of the available academic research have been produced with the Commission's support.

Also, in order to support the dialogue between academics and policy makers working in this field, the Commission set up a European Network of Experts on Radicalisation (ENER) in 2008. ENER held its first meeting in Brussels on 27 February 2009. Seminars in 2009 and 2010 brought together social scientists, other academics and front-line practitioners to develop and exchange best practices. The topics covered include areas of dynamic evolution such as hotbeds of recruitment, engaging civil society to counter violent extremism and empowering local communities to oppose radicalisation. The seminars also aim to support the implementation of the projects initiated by the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator.

Finally, it is important to stress that the EU initiatives to fight racism, xenophobia and discrimination can also contribute to preventing radicalisation and recruitment into terrorism.

2.1.2. *Future challenges*

It will be necessary to identify more accurately the most effective ways to combat radicalisation and recruitment. The effectiveness of the national policies that have been put in place will need to be assessed, and reliable indicators developed to provide data to assist with that assessment.

> → The Commission intends to launch a Communication in 2011 which will look at the experience that has been gathered in countering radicalisation and recruitment linked to terrorism in the Member States. This will provide the basis for reviewing and updating the existing EU Strategy and Action Plan.

Another challenge will be to find and put in place the most effective approaches for dealing with use of the internet for terrorist purposes.

Further work will be necessary to support the efforts of the Member States' law enforcement authorities to deal with illegal internet content in this context - public private partnerships will need to be enhanced as well.

2.2.   Protect

Protecting people and infrastructure is the second objective of the Counter-Terrorism Strategy. This part of the Strategy is by far the broadest area, and covers a wide range of activity, including EU-wide threat assessments, security of the supply chain, protecting critical infrastructure, transport security and border controls, as well as security research.

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[13]   COM (2005) 313 of 21 September 2005.

2.2.1. Main achievements

Significant steps forward have been taken to enhance border security over the past five years. New technologies are being used in the development of a modern, integrated border management system. Biometric passports were introduced in 2006. The second generation of the Schengen Information System and the Visa Information System are under development and their legal framework has been established.

In the area of cyber security, the Framework Decision on attacks against information systems[14] was established in 2005, and a 2009 Communication[15] established a plan of action to deal specifically with threats to the critical information infrastructure.

A substantial legislative framework on transport security has been established and developed over the past years, in particular with respect to civil aviation and maritime transport. In the area of civil aviation, this common framework has clearly increased the level of security in the EU and further afield. After the attempted use of liquid explosives against EU-US flights in 2006, legislation was developed to deal with this threat. The Commission has just issued a separate Communication on the on the use of Security Scanners at EU airports[16]. The EU also cooperates with international partners in addressing the introduction of new technologies to meet developing threats. In the field of maritime transport security, the EU has made the International Ship and Port facility Security Code part of EU legislation, and the Commission plays an active role in the context of the International Maritime Organisation. In both the aviation and maritime contexts, the Commission works closely with Member State administrations to operate a system of inspections of airports and port facilities.

The Commission has also developed an EU Action Plan for Enhancing the Security of Explosives which was approved by Council in April 2008[17]. The implementation of the 50 concrete actions to minimise the risk of terrorist attacks with explosives is under way, and involves Europol and Member State authorities.

The work on explosives includes measures to tackle the easy availability of certain chemicals that are used by terrorists to prepare home made explosives. Based on extensive consultation with Member State authorities and the chemicals industry, the Commission is preparing proposals for legislative and non-legislative measures to improve EU-wide control of access to these precursor substances. These proposals are expected to be adopted in the autumn of 2010.

In order to support the development of security and counter-terrorism policies, a comprehensive Security Research Programme was established as part of the 7th Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development, and 1.4 billion €has been made available for the period 2007-2013. The European Security Research and Innovation Forum (ESRIF), which produced its final report last year[18], provides the latest thinking in this area.

An overall European Programme for the Protection of Critical Infrastructure (EPCIP), was adopted by the Commission in 2006. As part of this Programme, the Directive on European

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[14]   OJ L 69, 16.3.2005.
[15]   COM (2009) 149 final of 30 March 2009.
[16]   COM (2010) 311 final of 15 June 2010.
[17]   Doc. 8109/08.
[18]   Online available at: http://www.esrif.eu.

Critical Infrastructures (ECI), which focuses on the procedure for identifying and designating ECI and includes a definition of European Critical Infrastructure, was adopted at the end of 2008. This Directive is only a first step in the EU approach to deal with threats to European Critical Infrastructure. Initially, the Directive is only applicable to the energy and transport sector. Work on critical infrastructure includes efforts towards establishing a Critical Infrastructure Warning and Information Network (CIWIN) and an EU Reference Network for laboratories testing security equipment, which should support the establishment of standardisation and certification of security solutions.

In the area of supply chain security the EU has committed itself to implementing the World Customs Organisation's (WCO) SAFE Framework of Standards to secure and facilitate global trade, adopted by the WCO Council in June 2005. The Commission has introduced security amendments to the existing Community Customs Code and its Implementing Provisions (Regulation 648/2005[19] and Regulation 1875/2006[20]) to strengthen the security of the supply chains entering or leaving the EU. The measures included the introduction of advance cargo information requirements and a Community Risk Management Framework. In addition, the Authorised Economic Operator Programme was launched under which economic operators volunteer to increase the security of their supply chains in return for trade facilitation measures.

2.2.2. *Future challenges*

There are many areas for further work under this strand. The Directive on Critical Infrastructure will be reviewed after three years, to assess its impact and the need to include other sectors, e.g. the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) sector. The Action Plan on the Security of Explosives should be reviewed and its effectiveness assessed as well.

> → Work will continue to enhance transport security, notably through deployment of new technologies to defeat the efforts by terrorists to escape detection (e.g. by using liquid explosives or non-metallic materials). While respecting fundamental rights, we need to ensure the security of passengers. The involvement of stakeholders is particularly important in the field of transport security.

The issue of standardisation and certification of security solutions (e.g. detection technology) should be taken forward, as part of efforts to develop a European industrial security policy. An EU-wide process for testing and trialling security solutions, as well as a system of mutual recognition of certification results, should be put in place.

> → One of the main challenges is to ensure that the links between public sector users - including law enforcement practitioners - the research community, and technology providers and industry are strengthened and maintained in order to ensure an effective security research policy and, by doing so, contribute to a high level of security.

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[19]   OJ L 117, 4.5.2005, p.13.
[20]   OJ L 360, 19.12.2006, p. 64.

2.3. **PURSUE**

This strand of the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy covers issues such as information gathering and analysis, impeding terrorists' movements and activities, police and judicial cooperation, and combating terrorist financing.

2.3.1.   Main achievements

A significant number of instruments enhancing the gathering and exchange of information between the law enforcement agencies and judicial authorities of the Member States have been agreed in recent years. These include the Data Retention Directive, the integration of the Prüm framework into EU legislation and the Framework Decision on simplifying the exchange of information and intelligence between law enforcement authorities. The European Arrest Warrant has facilitated the transfer of persons suspected of serious crimes, including acts of terrorism, between the Member States[21]. The first phase of the European Evidence Warrant, which makes it easier to obtain evidence in another Member State was also adopted[22].

The functioning of Europol was enhanced by way of its new legal framework, and its cooperation with Eurojust was strengthened. Europol has contributed significantly to the implementation of many elements of the counter-terrorism strategy, including by way of information exchange and its analysis work files, as well as through developing more strategic instruments, such as the European Bomb Database and the Early Warning System for explosives and Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) material.

Legal provisions have been put in place to tackle terrorist financing, in particular the third Anti-Money Laundering Directive. EU legislation concerning the procedures for listing persons and entities related to terrorism with a view to freezing their assets has been reviewed to ensure its compliance with fundamental rights. This review comprised, in particular, the right to an effective redress and the rights of the defence of the persons and entities concerned in line with the case law of the European Court of Justice. Finally, Regulation 1889/2005[23] of the European Parliament and the Council of 26 October 2005 on controls of cash entering or leaving the EU contributes to the prevention of terrorism financing through monitoring the movements of cash at the EU borders.

Apart from legislation, the Commission also develops policy measures to counter terrorist financing, for example voluntary guidelines to address the vulnerability of non-profit organisations with regard to abuse for terrorist financing purposes. A Communication is planned for early 2011.

2.3.2.   Future challenges

The relationship between all of the new legal instruments for information exchange, their interaction and the best practices for using them, are currently being examined and will be the

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[21]   Council Framework Decision 2002/584/JHA of 13 June 2002 on the European Arrest Warrant and the surrender procedures between Member States, OJ L 190, 18.7.2002, p. 1.

[22]   Council Framework Decision 2008/978/JHA of 18 December 2008 on the European evidence warrant for the purpose of obtaining objects, documents and data for use in proceedings in criminal matters, OJ L 350, 30.12.2008, p. 72.

[23]   OJ L 309, 25.11.2005, p.9

subject of separate Communications. The challenge will be to ensure that these instruments cover the real needs, so that Member States' authorities can exchange the information necessary to prevent and combat terrorist offences while ensuring full respect for the right to privacy and data protection rules.

> → This includes determining the right way to establish a European policy for the use of passenger name record (PNR) data to combat terrorism and organised crime.

On terrorist financing, the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union introduced a new provision (Art. 75 TFEU) which can serve as a legal basis for establishing a framework for specific administrative measures, such as the freezing of funds or financial assets belonging to, or owned by, natural or legal persons, groups or non-State entities.

The Commission will also examine the need to adopt EU legislation on investigation techniques which are particularly relevant for investigating and preventing terrorist crimes.

> → This issue may be tackled by way of a legislative proposal for a comprehensive regime on obtaining evidence in criminal matters based on the principle of mutual recognition and covering all types of evidence, which the Commission will prepare in 2011.

A final challenge under this strand is to ensure that the EU's policy in the counter-terrorism area is adequately evidence-based and supported by the best available threat assessments. Part of the answer to that challenge will come from jointly establishing a methodology based on common parameters for analysing threats at European level.

2.4. RESPOND

This strand of the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy brings together issues such as civilian response capacity to deal with the aftermath of a terrorist attack, early warning systems, crisis management in general and assistance to victims of terrorism.

2.4.1. Main achievements

The main element of the EU response which has been developed over the past years is the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, which ensures a coordinated response to any crisis, including terrorist attacks, capitalising on the Member State's capabilities. In addition, mechanisms have been put in place both at the European Union level (the Crisis Coordination Arrangements - CCA) and specifically for the Commission (the ARGUS system) to arrange for a coordinated response to crises. Regular exercises take place to practice these arrangements at all levels.

Europol has an important role too in responding to terrorist incidents, in particular where these have cross-border effects: it supports coordinated responses to such incidents by way of its information exchange mechanisms.

The capabilities of the Member States to respond to terrorist incidents have been reviewed by way of the second peer evaluation exercise. The final report on this initiative was recently adopted, and makes a number of concrete recommendations to the Member States to improve

their efforts. These relate to structural issues, communications, improved cooperation and contact with the public[24].

Given the potential far-reaching consequences if terrorists would obtain Chemical, Biological or Radiological/Nuclear (CBRN) materials, the Commission has worked on better securing such materials since 2006. The Commission adopted a Communication and draft EU CBRN Action Plan in June 2009, which was approved by the Council in November 2009. The EU CBRN Action Plan consists of 130 specific actions in the areas of prevention, detection and response to CBRN incidents, and establishes a clear agenda of work for the Member States and the EU for the years to come.[25] In the preparedness and response area, this includes ensuring that CBRN risks are taken on-board in emergency planning, organising regular CBRN exercises, strengthening counter-measures and improving information flows.

Victims of terrorist attacks have been consistently supported by the Commission, including by financing activities aimed at improving their situation. Over the last five years, around € 5 million has been made available to support victims of terrorism. The Commission also finances a Network of Associations of Victims of Terrorism. The main aim of this network is to stimulate trans-national co-operation between associations of victims of terrorism and enhance the representation of victims' interests at EU-level.

2.4.2. *Future challenges*

An evaluation of the EU civil protection policy is currently underway which will inform the necessary follow-up actions. The Commission is also looking into ways of reinforcing coordination and cooperation to facilitate consular protection, notably during crises, and will present a Communication to this end in the autumn of this year.

> → The EU's role in crisis and disaster management will need to be further developed, in particular, by developing the EU rapid response capacity based on existing instruments for humanitarian aid and civil protection.

The implementation of the EU CBRN Action Plan is a priority. The structures for supporting implementation of the CBRN Action Plan were put in place at the beginning of 2010, and work is ongoing. The Commission will support the implementation also by way of targeted calls for proposals under the financial programme established to support combating terrorism and organised crime.

The Action Plan implementing the Stockholm Programme indicates that a legislative proposal to provide a comprehensive instrument on the protection of victims, including victims of terrorism, will be proposed by the Commission in 2011.

> → An important new element is the solidarity clause, introduced in the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (Article 222). The implementing arrangements for this mandatory mechanism will need to be established quickly.

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[24]   Doc. 8568/10.
[25]   Doc. 15505/1/09.

2.5. Horizontal issues

In addition to the four strands of the counter-terrorism strategy of 2005, a number of horizontal issues are important for the implementation of the strategy. These include respect for fundamental rights, cooperation with external partners in the field of combating terrorism, and funding.

2.5.1. Respect for fundamental rights

Respect for fundamental rights and the rule of law is at the heart of the EU's approach to countering terrorism. Measures to fight this scourge must always be undertaken within the framework of full respect for fundamental rights. The EU must be exemplary in this respect and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU must be the compass for all EU policies. This is not only a legal requirement but also a key condition for promoting mutual confidence between national authorities and trust among the public at large. The Commission is therefore dedicated to ensuring that all tools that are deployed in the fight against terrorism fully respect fundamental rights. In particular, it must be ensured that information exchange for anti-terrorism purposes is compliant with the rights enshrined in the Charter of Fundamental Right, in particular the protection of personal data, and EU legislation in this area. Moreover, the Commission is committed to ensuring that its policies promote inclusiveness and participation and do not stigmatise any particular group of people.

In this context, reference can be made to a report prepared by the Commission in 2009, which provides a synthesis of the replies from the Member States to a questionnaire on criminal law, administrative law/procedural law and fundamental rights in the fight against terrorism[26]. It is important to follow developments in Member States, including legal challenges brought against counter-terrorism measures in national courts, and to draw conclusions for sustainable policy-making at EU level in this field.

> → The priority will be to ensure that any EU legislation and actions in this area fully complies with the Charter of Fundamental Rights, including implementing legislation put in place by the Member States.

2.5.2. International cooperation and partnerships with third-countries

Following the events of September 2001, many efforts have focussed on creating the necessary legal and political framework conditions for enhanced cooperation with the EU's external partners in the field of combating terrorism. This has included working through international organisations and bodies, such as the United Nations and the G8, as well as developing close partnerships with a number of third countries, in particular the United States.

The United Nations has developed its own global counter-terrorism strategy, which was adopted by the General Assembly in September 2006. Counter-terrorism initiatives are also pursued by the Council of Europe and the OSCE. The G8 has also been active in this area, in particular via its Roma/Lyon Group and the Counter-Terrorism Action Group.

There are also linkages between the policies developed for internal security within the European Union and their international dimensions. For example, the EU CBRN Action Plan

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[26]   SEC (2009) 225 of 19 February 2009.

has interrelations with the world-wide efforts to combat the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction. There are also very close links between the Action Plan and the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. Moreover, the functioning of the EU's export control regime for dual-use items significantly contributes to limiting the access of state and non-state actors to materials which could be used to make chemical, biological or nuclear weapons. The Commission leads developments in this area.

The relationship with the United States has taken a special place in the EU's efforts to combat terrorism. Several joint declarations were adopted in 2009 and 2010, notably the EU-US Joint Statement on the closure of the Guantanamo Bay detention facility and future counter-terrorism cooperation, the EU-US Statement on enhancing transatlantic cooperation in the area of justice, freedom and security, the joint Toledo Statement on aviation security and a EU-US 2010 counter-terrorism declaration. A number of important agreements with the US have also been put in place. These include two cooperation agreements with Europol, a cooperation agreement with Eurojust and an agreement on Passenger Name Records (PNR). An agreement on the Terrorist Financing Tracking Programme (TFTP) has recently been finalised. All these agreements have aimed to ensure that the information needed to prevent terrorism is available to the relevant law enforcement authorities in accordance with EU legal requirements. Agreements on the transfer of PNR data have also been signed with Canada and Australia.

At the expert level, too, a number of concrete steps have been taken to improve practical cooperation with our partners on counter-terrorism issues, including an EU-US expert seminar on the security of explosives at the end of 2008. Since then, further EU-US expert seminars were organised in 2010 on explosives, critical infrastructure protection and the prevention of violent extremism. Last, EU-US counter-terrorism cooperation takes place on the ground in several third countries and in international fora such as the United Nations.

> → The main challenge will be to further develop cooperation channels and mechanisms with external partners, especially the US, which will enable the EU to engage with these partners more effectively and in a more structured way, both at the strategic and at the practical level. Such reinforced cooperation should not only focus on internal security aspects but also on third countries and regions identified as common priorities in combating terrorist threats, such as Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Yemen, Somalia or the Sahel region. EU agencies, in particular Europol and Eurojust, should continue to be closely involved in the cooperation with external partners to strengthen the EU added value.

Such endeavours should take stock of research on the socio-economic situation of those countries to highlight possible roots of radicalisation or terrorist recruitment as well as endogenous response capacities, and should take fundamental rights as a basis for dialogue with the relevant partners.

2.5.3. Funding

Increasingly, funding has proven to be an important part of supporting both the EU's policies to combat terrorism, and the efforts of the Member States. For actions within the EU, such funding has been provided by way of the programme Security and Safeguarding Liberties, which includes the specific programme for prevention, preparedness and consequence management of terrorism and other security-related risks and the programme for prevention of

and fight against crime[27]. Over the period 2007-2013, a total amount of 745 million € has been made available to support policies to counter terrorism and organised crime. Dozens of projects to support the implementation of the EU counter terrorism strategy have been funded from these programmes, and the number of applications continues to rise.

> → The Commission will make proposals on funding for the post-2013 period in the context of the next multi-annual financial framework and will consider the feasibility of setting up an Internal Security Fund.

With regard to external actions, the Instrument for Stability was created in 2006 to provide the EU with a strategic tool to address a number of global security challenges, including countering transnational terrorist networks. In 2010 up to € 22 million has been made available for security-related cooperation in several regions where the threat of terrorism has increased.

3. WAY FORWARD

The assessment of main achievements set out in this Communication shows that there is a significant amount of work to be taken forward over the coming years, in particular in the areas of preventing terrorism and protecting the EU's population against possible attacks and their consequences. This should be the main focus of the European Union's efforts in this area and the Commission will go into the identified challenges in more detail in the framework of the broader Internal Security Strategy - a Communication on the Internal Security Strategy is under preparation.

The Counter-Terrorism Strategy of 2005 has proved its worth in bringing together and encouraging the implementation of a broad array of actions and instruments which have contributed significantly to combating terrorism at the EU level. The benefit of having such an over-arching strategy is that it has allowed the European Union to develop more systematic and less incident-driven policy-making. The strategy's continued relevance was recently confirmed by the Stockholm Programme. However, as indicated in the Action Plan implementing the Stockholm Programme, the new institutional framework offers the Union an unprecedented opportunity to better interlink its different counter terrorism instruments, as well as the internal and external dimension. Although the relevance of and the main approach taken by the Strategy as such are not under discussion, the time is now right to take this a step further and look at both the implementation of the Strategy at the national level and at ways to ensure that the Strategy continues to be up to date and in line with the latest developments in the field. The new institutional structure put in place under the Lisbon Treaty should be given special consideration in this work.

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[27]   OJ L 58, 24.2.2007, p. 1.

In order to support this work, the Commission will launch a study to make a more detailed evaluation of the current policies and priorities, which should be available in time for the mid-term evaluation of the Stockholm Programme. This is important in order to support all key players at EU level – Council, Parliament, Commission – with a common vision and understanding of the future priorities in the counter-terrorism field.

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