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NOTE

From: EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator
To: Council / European Council

Subject: **Follow-up to the statement of the Members of the European Council of 12 February 2015 on counter-terrorism: Report on implementation of measures**

In their Statement on counter-terrorism of 12 February 2015, members of the European Council set out an ambitious agenda based on three pillars: ensuring the security of citizens, preventing radicalisation and safeguarding values and cooperating with our international partners. They requested the Council to report on the detailed implementation of these priorities by the June European Council.

In the meantime, on 28 April 2015, the European Commission has adopted the European Agenda for Security, which includes counter terrorism as a priority and supports a number of the directions identified by Heads of State and Government.

On 9 February 2015, under the leadership of High Representative/Vice President (HRVP) Mogherini, the Foreign Affairs Council adopted ambitious conclusions on counter-terrorism to strengthen cooperation with the countries in North Africa, the Middle East, the Gulf, Turkey and the Balkans.

I. ENSURING THE SECURITY OF CITIZENS

At its meeting on 12 March 2015, as suggested by the Latvian Presidency, the JHA Council (Interior ministers) decided to focus on four priority areas to achieve tangible progress by June: reinforced application of the Schengen Framework, stepping up information sharing and operational cooperation, the fight against illicit firearms and strengthening internet referral capabilities, in particular at Europol. In parallel, work on the EU Passenger Name Records (PNR) directive was regarded as a priority.

1. Passenger Name Records (PNR) directive

In its resolution of 11 February 2015 on anti-terrorism measures, the EP "*commit[ted] itself to work towards the finalisation of an EU PNR Directive by the end of the year*", breaking the long deadlock on the proposal¹. Following this statement the rapporteur presented a revised draft report on 26 February 2015 with 47 amendments, suggesting in particular a narrowing of the scope, reduced retention periods, inclusion of intra-EU flights and appointment of a national data protection supervisor. By the deadline of 1 April 2015, another 791 amendments had been submitted, revealing that, in spite of the resolution, there are very different views within the Parliament on what the future PNR Directive should look like. It is also an indication of the substantial legislative work that still lies ahead on this important file. The proposal will be discussed by the EP's Civil Liberties and Justice and Home Affairs Committee (LIBE) on 4 June 2015.

¹ The Commission's proposal on an EU PNR system was presented in February 2010. In April 2012, the Council agreed on its general approach. The EP rapporteur issued his report on 14 February 2012, but the vote in the LIBE Committee did not take place until 24 April 2013. This vote resulted in a rejection of the Commission proposal, with a majority of 30 against and 25 votes in favour. On 12 June 2013, the Plenary sent the file back to the LIBE Committee.

The date for the vote of the draft report in the LIBE Committee has not yet been set, which will define the negotiations mandate given by the EP Committee to the Rapporteur for starting informal trilogues. The Council remains firmly committed to reaching an agreement as soon as possible.

Europol has presented its position on how Europol's information exchange infrastructure and criminal information databases can help national competent authorities to maximise their use of targeted PNR information, to achieve a better intelligence picture and ultimately to close security gaps which purely national PNR systems would fail to address (by making links and obtaining additional transnational information).

2. Reinforced application of the Schengen Framework

The requirement from the Heads of State or Government was "to proceed without delay to systematic and coordinated checks on individuals enjoying the right of free movement against databases relevant to the fight against terrorism based on common risk indicators; the Commission should rapidly issue operational guidelines for this".

The Council (Justice and Home Affairs) decided on 12 March 2015 (see Presidency discussion paper 6891/15 and outcome document 7166/15) that airports and relevant land borders would step up systematic checks on all travel documents, in all cases, against the SIS and SLTD databases, from 1 June 2015. With regard to checks on persons, the Council decided to introduce, as of 1 June 2015, systematic and coordinated checks at external borders on individuals enjoying the right of free movement under Union law against the relevant databases, based on common risk indicators. The Commission was asked to introduce the abovementioned measures regarding checks on persons and travel documents in the Schengen Handbook before the end of May 2015. Frontex would support the coordinated implementation based on common operational guidelines. Member States were asked to report to the Presidency and the Commission on the implementation of the abovementioned checks. Implementation progress would be assessed by the Frontiers Working Party.

1) With regard to the enhanced checks of the relevant databases and Member State capacity to do so, the Commission had issued informal recommendations² and has organised two expert meetings (one in early February and one in mid-April) and sent out a questionnaire. Based on Member States' contributions, the Commission submitted a non-paper³ to the Working Party on Frontiers on 8 May 2015 to prepare reporting to the JHA Council in mid-June 2015. The results of the progress can be summarized as follows:

Progress has been made on increasing the checks of relevant police and documents databases, based on a risk assessment. Most Member States have carried out awareness-raising among operational units, many have developed risk analysis products and some highlighted enhanced cooperation between national border and intelligence services. Technical and policy differences exist in Member States, for example with regard to whether simultaneous checks in SIS and SLTD can be carried out, whether the separate consultation on travel documents and on persons is available, with regard to response time of consultation with the relevant databases and tailoring of national risk analysis products to the foreign terrorist fighters, as well as undertaking investments in equipment.

The Commission will update the Schengen Borders Handbook by June to clarify the interpretation of Article 7 (2) Schengen Borders Code as well as the requirements for checks at Schengen external borders.

² doc 16880/14, further developed in February 2015 in doc 6801/15

³ Commission services non-paper: Implementation of the measures taken in order to enhance border checks to better identify foreign fighters: summary of Member States replies in view of the report to be presented at the June Council

2) The development of common risk indicators is progressing. Based on the last meeting organised by the Commission on this issue on 26 February 2015 and Member States' contributions, the Commission has prepared draft risk indicators. Europol merged the draft common risk indicators with the Dumas Working Group indicators list and will regularly update the documents in close consultation with the entities involved. The Commission expects to have finalised the common risk indicators before the Council (Justice and Home Affairs). Frontex will operationalise the risk indicators and coordinate implementation of the more systematic checks by Member States.

3) On 18 December 2014, the Working Party for Schengen Matters (SIS/SIRENE) agreed on specific recommendations aimed to improve the use of the Schengen Information System in the context of foreign terrorist fighters, as set out in 14523/3/14 REV 3. Some of the measures were addressed to the competent authorities of the Member States, others should be implemented at EU level.

3. Stepping up law enforcement and judicial information sharing and operational cooperation

Europol

There has been a notable increase in the quantity and quality of contributions to the CT AWF Focal Point Travellers. There are sometimes legal and organisational constraints which do not allow the partners to share information. With regard to 'connectivity', Europol is studying the possibilities and preparing for a CT dedicated communication system based on the existing SIENA system, which would directly link CT units in Member States with Europol and with each other. Eurojust is now a partner in the FP Travellers, while with regard to Albania the administrative process is pending.

Member States have now started to make use of the Europol Information System (EIS) for counter terrorism purposes. The Member States now record names of persons, specifically labelled as "Foreign Fighters". To date, 14 Member States have made efforts to use the EIS.

A Dumas WG meeting was held in Rome on 11 and 12 May 2015, facilitated again by Europol in close cooperation with the Italian "driver". The meeting served to keep the momentum with the Network of National Contact Points for Foreign Terrorist Fighters as the "Alert List" activity plan was prioritised on the agenda. In the area of "outreach", the Dumas WG decided to invite Norway, Switzerland, Australia, the US Customs and Border Protection authority and Interpol to the next meeting in October. The WG Dumas indicators list was merged with the draft common risk indicators and submitted to the European Commission. It was decided that WG Dumas would contribute to updating the common risk indicators every four months.

In the area of operational cooperation, a second training session and an exercise to revive the First Response Network (FRN) was held at the end of March 2015. The Network now comprises two or more trained experts per Member State. In the second half of 2015, a third training exercise for remaining Member State experts, third states and third parties will take place. It is foreseen to regularly hold alert-exercises. The inclusion of third-state experts in the FRN is part of the outreach philosophy.

In March 2015, Europol presented a paper with proposals for improving information and intelligence exchange in the area of counter terrorism across the EU (7272/15), which was discussed by COSI. The paper includes the idea of setting up an **EU Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC)** within the existing organisational structure of Europol to ensure that the existing platforms and services are utilised to maximum effect.

In the European Agenda for Security, the Commission supports the establishment of such an ECTC (*"reinforcing Europol's support functions by bringing together its anti-terrorism law enforcement capabilities in a European Counter-Terrorism Centre⁴ within Europol"*).

⁴ The Centre, operating within the legal mandate of Europol, would include (1) Europol's Focal Point Travellers on foreign terrorist fighters and related terrorist networks, (2) the EU-US Terrorist Financing Tracking Programme (TFTP), (3) FIU.NET, the decentralised computer network supporting Financial Intelligence Units, which will be embedded in Europol in 2016, and (4) Europol's existing capabilities on firearms and explosive devices.

Eurojust

In March, Eurojust submitted to COSI proposals for improving information sharing between Member States and with the relevant EU agencies (7445/15), highlighting the importance of ensuring that information shared can be used as evidence to secure convictions. This included:

- a call to Member States for better compliance with the obligations stemming from Council Decision 2005/671/JHA on the exchange of information on terrorist offences and from Article 13 of the Eurojust Decision, particularly the exchange of information with Eurojust in cases involving illicit trafficking in firearms.
- Eurojust's readiness to take part in discussions regarding the possible development of the ECRIS (European Criminal Records Information System) to assist the Member States in accessing information on convictions of third-country nationals.
- reinforced information sharing by making optimal use of existing networks, e.g. the Consultative Forum of Prosecutors-General and Directors of Public Prosecutions of the Member States of the European Union (Consultative Forum), the national correspondents for terrorism, the Eurojust Contact Points in third States, the EJTN.
- a call to the Member States to make better use of Eurojust in operational cases, in particular of Eurojust coordination meetings and coordination centres.
- increased information sharing between Eurojust and Europol.
- the commitment of Eurojust to continue reinforcing operational and strategic cooperation with third States in relation to the foreign fighter phenomenon, in particular by strengthening cooperation with the USA and with Eurojust Contact Points in Turkey and in the Western Balkans; by considering enlarging the Eurojust contact point network in MENA countries and by considering the organisation of a strategic seminar with these countries in 2015 with a focus on judicial cooperation, including the challenges in addressing the foreign terrorist fighters phenomenon; by discussing the posting of Eurojust liaison magistrates in third states, including the role of a liaison magistrate and the criteria for selecting countries (e.g. the need to address the phenomena related to the travel of foreign terrorist fighters).

Eurojust has continued to collect and analyse the national judicial responses to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters. A Eurojust questionnaire addressing this matter was disseminated at the end of March 2015 to all Eurojust National Correspondents for terrorist matters and to the Eurojust Liaison Magistrates from Norway, Switzerland and the USA. The questionnaire focuses on legislative developments at national level, on challenges and best practice in investigating and prosecuting foreign terrorist fighters as well as on the role played by the judiciary in disengagement, rehabilitation and anti-/de-radicalisation. The responses to the questionnaire will serve as a basis for discussion at the Tactical Meeting on Terrorism organised by Eurojust at the end of June 2015. They will also serve as input to the update of the Eurojust Foreign Fighters Report scheduled for the end of 2015.

On 5 June 2015 Eurojust will present its findings on the judicial responses to the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters to the members of the Consultative Forum in order to facilitate an exchange of views among the highest representatives of the Prosecution Services of the Member States. Eurojust presented the findings of its Foreign Terrorist Fighters Report to judges and prosecutors and called for a better exchange of information between the judicial authorities of the Member States and with Eurojust at the conference on “Countering Radicalisation towards Terrorism and Violent Extremism,” organised by the Academy of European Law in Trier from 21 to 22 May 2015.

In April 2015, Eurojust joined the Focal Point Travellers at Europol and will facilitate, where appropriate, the judicial follow-up of information exchanged within the Focal Point.

Criminal justice approach

On 15 February 2015, CATS held a debate on the judicial aspects of counter terrorism in implementation of the HoSG and Riga statements. There was broad agreement among delegations on the relevance of considering specific measures and enhancing the implementation of the tools which already exist within the five areas of action identified in the Presidency paper (5917/15) namely (i) criminalisation, (ii) conducting effective criminal proceedings, (iii) exchange of information and cooperation of judicial authorities, (iv) disengagement, rehabilitation, and de/anti-radicalisation measures in the judicial context, and (v) cooperation with third countries. A number of specific measures have already been integrated in the European Agenda for Security.

The need to assess the feasibility of reviewing the existing Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA on combatting terrorism, as amended by Framework Decision 2008/919/JHA, in the light of the requirements of the UNSC Resolution 2178(2014) was pointed out by Member States on several occasions. The European Agenda for Security envisages that "the Commission will launch an impact assessment in 2015 with a view to updating the 2008 FD on terrorism in 2016". It is noted that the negotiations on the Additional protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism currently underway will be taken into account in this respect.

On 21 January 2015 the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe established the Committee on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Related Issues (COD-CTE) to prepare a draft Additional Protocol supplementing the CoE Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 196) in the light of UNSC Resolution 2178 calling, inter alia, to criminalise travel abroad for terrorism purposes, as well as the organisation and funding of such travel.

The Commission submitted a Recommendation for a draft Council decision authorising negotiations on behalf of the EU on 13 March 2015. Further to very intensive negotiations, the Council adopted the above decision under a written procedure pursuant to Article 12 (1) of the Council Rules of Procedure on 1 April 2015 (7300/3/15 REV 3 EU RESTRICTED). Work will continue with a view to the signing and conclusion of the protocol on behalf of the EU pending the submission of a Commission proposal to that effect.

ECRIS

Information on past criminal convictions is an important source for law enforcement and judicial authorities. A swift and simple exchange of information on criminal records is essential. To date, most Member States exchange information via the European Criminal Record Information System with over 100 000 messages per month and growing. However, ECRIS fulfils its full potential only for the criminal records of EU nationals. An efficient system is currently lacking for criminal records of third country nationals (TCNs) and stateless people.

The Commission is currently assessing ways of addressing this issue. This is also a priority in the European Agenda for Security. The Commission will use the next weeks to consult to further explore the most appropriate way forward. A solution could be the search in an index, with a hit-/no-hit functionality, either decentralised like the FIU-Net (Financial Intelligence Unit-Net) or centralised like the SIS (Schengen Information System). In the event of a "hit", the requesting Member State could contact the Member State(s) holding a criminal record on the person concerned through ECRIS.

4. Fight against illicit firearms

On 26 March 2015 the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security (COSI) discussed a number of concrete measures and activities, the implementation of which will be accelerated notably regarding information exchange, reducing access to illegal firearms, decommissioning and deactivation of firearms as well as cooperation with third countries (6739/15). Further work to implement this is now necessary. Member States were encouraged to participate in the Operational Action Plan Firearms and it was agreed that the information exchange should be improved as should cooperation with third countries. COSI supported these four lines of work and underlined the importance of revising the Firearms Directive (Directive 91/477/EEC on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons amended by Directive 2008/51/EC), notably to establish a high level of minimum standards for the de-activation of firearms. The importance of involving customs authorities and of providing training has also been noted, as well as the specific challenge posed by the internet and the darknet.

In the European Agenda on Security, the Commission announced its intention to review legislation on firearms with proposals in 2016 to improve the sharing of information, to reinforce traceability, to standardise marking, and to establish common standards for neutralising firearms.

The Customs Cooperation Working Party discussed fighting the trafficking of firearms from a customs perspective, including cooperation between customs and the police.

Within the framework of European Firearms Experts (EFE), advising the Law Enforcement Working Party (LEWP), the Netherlands has volunteered, with support from the UK, to be the driver of a Working Group entitled "*Firearms Directive / legal loopholes and modified weapons*". Also in EFE's opinion, it has now become pressing to address the revision of the Directive.

In the European Agenda on Security, the Commission also highlights the importance of the external dimension of trafficking of firearms in particular with regard to the Western Balkans and MENA countries.

5. Deepening of cooperation of Member States' security services

At the initiative of the Latvian Presidency, Member States' security services informed COREPER on 16 April 2015 about their cooperation, which takes place outside EU structures.

6. Financing of terrorism

On 27 January 2015, the Commission and the ECOFIN Council adopted a joint declaration.

(5748/15) in the context of the endorsement of the anti-money laundering (AML) package, placing the AML package in the context of the fight against terrorism and highlighting the importance of further efforts such as strengthening cooperation on terrorist financing between Financial Intelligence Units at European level and addressing terrorist financing risks via the EU's supranational risk assessment.

At its meeting on 20 April 2015, the Council adopted its position at first reading on new rules aimed at preventing money laundering and terrorist financing. The European Parliament, with which agreement was reached on 16 December 2014, adopted the package on 20 May 2015.

The Anti-Money Laundering Directive and Regulation will strengthen EU rules against money laundering and terrorist financing and ensure consistency with the approach followed at international level, notably by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). The Regulation deals more specifically with information accompanying transfers of funds.

On 31 March 2015, the German and French Ministers of Finance addressed a joint letter to the European Commission, calling on the Commission to take new initiatives at EU level related to terrorist financing, including an asset freezing system for terrorists based in the EU without a link to international terrorist organisations (Article 75 of the Lisbon Treaty), strengthening the control of anonymous payments instruments, a regulatory framework preventing cash payments for artefacts (cultural heritage), enhanced due diligence on financial flows to high-risk areas and better access of Financial Intelligence Units to banking data in centralised registers.

As an EU response to the Syria/Iraq Foreign Fighter phenomenon, the Terrorist Finance Tracking Program (TFTP) has, to date, provided 1 344 intelligence leads to 12 EU Member States relating solely to this posed threat. Europol's Counter Terrorism and Financial Intelligence expertise provides analytical, strategic and operational expertise, including on-the-spot operational support, analytical methodologies i.e. (trend and spend, asset control, travel pattern analysis) to Member State authorities. With the embedment of FIU within Europol in 2016, opportunities to provide CT financial capability will be strengthened.

7. Network and Information Security Directive

The objective of the proposal, which is part of the Cybersecurity Strategy of the European Union, is to put in place the necessary mechanisms at national and EU level to improve security levels and respond to cyber threats with a view to ensuring a secure and trustworthy digital environment throughout the EU. Two trilogues took place in October and November 2014 and have been followed by technical meetings with the EP in recent weeks. A third trilogue took place on 30 April 2015 but a complete solution on all issues has not yet been found. Politically, both the EP and Council support a rapid deal on the proposal as they both fully underline the need to further secure the EU's information and communications systems. However, on substance, there are still some fundamental issues to be solved such as the scope and level of harmonisation, as well as territoriality and enforcement. As requested at the trilogue, the Commission provided input on the open issues on 27 May, based on which further technical meetings have started to take place. The next trilogue has not yet been scheduled, however the Presidency remains committed to making progress throughout June.

The EU Cybersecurity Strategy also included a number of measures aimed at promoting a Single Market for cybersecurity products together with fostering research and development investments and innovation. The development of a digital single market is also the main objective of Commission's Digital Agenda, one pillar being strengthening online trust and security, on which the growth of the European economy and the development of a strong digital business sector depend. The Commission presented a digital single market package on 6 May 2015 which underlines the strong link between the functioning of the digital single market and cybersecurity. The Digital Single Market Strategy includes both legislative and non-legislative measures and will focus on better access to digital goods and services across Europe, creating the right conditions for digital networks and services and maximising the growth potential of the digital economy.

In the European Agenda for Security presented by the Commission on 28 April 2015, cybercrime was prioritised together with terrorism and organised crime, given its strong cross-border dimension as well as being an area where EU action can make a real difference. The Agenda highlights the importance of full implementation of the existing EU legislation and cooperation with the private sector and the work of Europol's European Cybercrime Centre and Eurojust. Activities reviewing obstacles to criminal investigations will be needed, notably on issues of competent jurisdiction and rules on access to evidence and information, implementation of existing policies on cybersecurity, cyber attacks, enhancing cyber capacity building action under external assistance instruments and reviewing legislation on combatting fraud and counterfeiting of non-cash means of payment.

II. PREVENTING RADICALISATION AND SAFEGUARDING VALUES

1. Strengthening internet referral capabilities, including the establishment of an Internet Referral Unit at Europol

On 12 March 2015 the Council (Justice and Home Affairs) agreed that building on the Check-the-Web project, **Europol will develop an EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) by 1 July 2015** for the following four tasks:

- to coordinate and share the identification tasks (flagging) of terrorist and violent extremist online content with relevant partners,
- to carry out and support referrals quickly, efficiently and effectively, in close cooperation with the industry,
- to support competent authorities, by providing strategic analysis and operational analysis,
- to act as a European Centre of Excellence for the above tasks.

Europol presented a concept note to COSI (7266/15) in March 2015, which was further refined in a blueprint which was discussed at an experts' meeting hosted by Europol in April 2015 with the participation of Member States, the Commission and the CTC's office. Further expert discussions, including with industry, mean that the EU IRU pilot phase can start on 1 July 2015, followed by the second phase on 1 January 2016 reaching full operational capacity on 1 July 2016. The phased approach will enable adjustments along the way. Member States are expected to appoint national contact points to the EU IRU, so that a network and cooperation can be established. The EU IRU's services to Member States will vary depending on the needs and capabilities of each Member State.

2. Counter-narratives

The Commission is working on setting up the forum with Internet companies. The preparatory work of the *Forum with the Internet service providers community* is complementary to the work of the EU IRU. The Commission has announced that it will launch in autumn 2015 an EU-level Forum with IT companies to bring them together with law enforcement authorities and civil society. In cooperation with IT companies, the Forum will also explore the concerns of law enforcement authorities on new encryption technologies.

The Syria Strategic Communications Advisory Team (SSCAT) is a Belgian-led project with two components: the first is an operational consultancy service tasked with advising Member States on the delivery of countering violent extremism (CVE) and counter-terrorism (CT) communications campaigns. The second is a network, through which Member State representatives exchange best practice in CVE and CT communications. The project is funded by an 18-month grant from the European Commission. The SSCAT consultancy team has visited, or is due to visit, 10 Member States in the first half of 2015. The SSCAT Network has met twice since the beginning of 2015 and currently has more than twenty participating Member States.

On 11 March, Victims Day, the Commission organised the yearly event with victims organisations, giving a voice to victims of terrorism.

Communication and CT

After the terrorist attacks in Paris, a CT communication hub was opened on the Integrated Political Crisis Response arrangements (IPCR) web platform, the main IPCR communication tool. This forum aims to contribute to preparedness and to facilitate the political response in the event of possible terrorist acts in the future. It allows exchanges and constitutes a repository of relevant information related to the political decision-making process at EU level and throughout the Member States (e.g. political statements, public communication strategies, dedicated meetings and events programmes, etc.). Information is not classified and is shared on a voluntary basis. The CT communication hub is open to Member States, the President of the European Council, the Commission, the EEAS, the CTC and EU agencies. This tool was designed to assist Member States and may be further developed according to their needs, although without replacing the existing communication channels (in particular when operational/classified information is concerned).

The "Club of Venice" (informal network of Member States communications directors) will have a meeting in Vienna in June 2015 focusing on communication challenges related to preventing radicalisation, an exchange of views on Member States' communication strategies and activities. Attention will be paid to the use of new media instruments (effectiveness, affordability, outreach, monitoring).

3. Rehabilitation in the judicial context, including in prisons

On 13 March, at the initiative of the Latvian Presidency, Ministers of Justice discussed this topic over lunch. Together with the Luxemburg Presidency and with the support of the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Commissioner Jourova plans to organise a ministerial conference on 19 and 20 October on rehabilitation in the judicial context, including in prisons. As a first step, on 18 May 2015, together with the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT, The Hague) the Commission organised an expert meeting with judicial and prison authorities and radicalisation experts.

The Commission has redirected the financial instruments for justice to support relevant initiatives: the topics of counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism have been added to the list of priorities by way of an amendment to the 2015 Justice Annual Work Programme. Commissioner Jourova has earmarked EUR 1.5 million in the Judicial Training Call of EUR 5.5 million; in the Judicial Cooperation Call, she has earmarked EUR 1 million from a total allocation of EUR 3.3 million. The call for proposals on European judicial training will be published in the summer of 2015 with a deadline for applications of autumn 2015. This will focus on the training of practitioners and projects that facilitate the exchange of best practices between actors in our criminal justice systems. The European Judicial Training Network has adapted its training programme at the request of the European Commission to add training seminars on counter-radicalisation and counter-terrorism as well as exchanges and study visits for prosecutors in 2015 and 2016.

The Commission will further enhance its longstanding cooperation with EuroPris and the European Organisation for Probation (CEP) to address the issue of rehabilitation, including de-radicalisation and prevention of radicalisation in prison. This is also a priority in the European Agenda for Security.

The Radicalization Awareness Network is also working on this issue among practitioners. For example, an expert meeting will take place on 15-16 June in Brussels on foreign fighter returnees, including rehabilitation and radicalization in prison.

4. Initiatives regarding education

On 17 March 2015, an informal meeting of EU education ministers took place to discuss prevention of radicalisation, a joint initiative of the French government, the European Commission and the Latvian Presidency. A 'Declaration on promoting citizenship and the common values of freedom, tolerance and non-discrimination through education' was adopted at the meeting, which may be further operationalised by Council Conclusions. The issue was taken up again by the Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting on 18 May 2015. The Commission is planning to mobilise funding programmes in a more targeted way to support these efforts.

As stated in the European Agenda for Security, the Commission will prioritise combating radicalisation, marginalisation of youth and promoting inclusion with a series of concrete measures under the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation on Education and Training ("ET 2020"), the European Youth Strategy, the EU Work Plan for Sport and the Culture Work Plan. To underpin these activities, the Commission will mobilise funding under the Erasmus+ and Creative Europe programmes, inter alia by increased support to mobility of teachers and youth workers, youth exchanges and volunteering, strategic partnerships in the field of education and youth policy, transnational networks, school cooperation platforms, joint projects on citizenship education, and collaborative partnerships in sport. The Commission will also initiate further research under Horizon 2020 (*specifically in its components "Societal Challenges" and "Science With and For Society"*) to gain a better understanding of the causes and manifestations of radicalisation.

The Commission will also explore closer cooperation possibilities between education and other relevant areas, such as culture, sports, employment, welfare, security and other channels of work on social inclusion.

5. Communication strategies to promote tolerance, non-discrimination, fundamental freedoms, inter-faith and other community dialogue

At the initiative of the Latvian Presidency and France, on 11 January 2015, the EU ministers for culture issued a joint statement defending the freedom of expression and artistic freedom.

At the initiative of the Latvian Presidency, on 21 April 2015, the General Affairs Council had a lunch discussion on possible implementation and attainment of these measures on the basis of statements by France, Commission Vice-President Timmermans and the CTC.

The Commission committed itself to organising an annual colloquium on the state of play of fundamental rights in the EU in order to improve mutual cooperation and political engagement for the promotion and protection of fundamental rights. The first colloquium in October 2015 will focus on promoting tolerance and respect, in particular to prevent and combat anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim hatred. It is preceded by consultations with civil society and stakeholders, including two high-level dialogues, one with religious leaders and one with representatives of non-confessional organisations.

On 8 May 2015 the Commission adopted its annual report on the application of the EU Charter on Fundamental Rights which emphasises the need to ensure full respect and promotion of fundamental rights in taking security measures. The Council is holding its annual debate on the Charter on the basis of this report on 23 June 2015.

The European Union Agency on Fundamental Rights continued its work in assisting EU institutions and EU Member States in understanding and tackling challenges to safeguard the fundamental rights of everyone in the EU.

6. Vocational training, job opportunities, social integration

At the initiative of the Latvian Presidency, on 9 March, the Employment and Social Policy Council (EPSCO) adopted Conclusions on "Moving towards more inclusive labour markets" (6182/15) suggesting a series of measures, including support for measures to improve the inclusiveness of labour markets through the use of financial instruments such as the European Social Fund and the financial and the European Union Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) with a focus on improving labour-market integration of disadvantaged groups.

As stated in the European Security Agenda, the European Social Fund provides financial support to Member States to promote social inclusion, combatting poverty and any discrimination. A minimum of 20% of ESF resources in each Member State have to be allocated to "Promoting social inclusion, combating poverty and any discrimination". Overall, well above the 20% threshold has been allocated to this. 60.54% of ESF and youth employment initiative funding are concentrated on the following five ESF priorities: Active Inclusion, sustainable integration of young people, access to employment, early school-leaving and life-long learning.

In the context of the European Semester, some country-specific recommendations focus on better integration of persons with a migrant background into the labour market.

III. COOPERATING WITH OUR INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

Priority is implementation of the ambitious conclusions on counter-terrorism adopted by the Foreign Affairs Council on 9 February, 2015, which further operationalize the directions of the Heads of State or Government with regard to international cooperation.

1. To address crises and conflicts, in particular in our Southern Neighbourhood, through a strategic rethinking of our approach

On Libya, a second Political Framework for a Crisis Approach (PFCA) was provided and discussed by the Foreign Affairs Council in April 2015. Counter-terrorism aspects were part of the PFCA. Building on the PFCA and further developments, a CT strategy for Libya will be prepared as soon as conditions on the ground allow.

On Syria/Iraq, the EU adopted the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as on the ISIL/Da'esh threat on 16 March 2015 and it is now focusing on its implementation.

Regarding Yemen, the EU adopted a CT Action Plan on Horn of Africa/Yemen in 2013. Its implementation has been put on hold due to current explosive political situation.

- 2. To engage more with third countries on security issues and counter-terrorism, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa and in the Sahel, but also in the Western Balkans, including through new capacity building projects (e.g. border controls) with partners and better targeted EU assistance**

MENA countries

HRVP Mogherini set the following political priorities for the implementation of the conclusions of the Foreign Affairs Council as: establishment of targeted and upgraded security and counter-terrorism dialogues, counter-terrorism action plans, counter-terrorism workshops, deploying security/counter-terrorism experts in EU delegations, new bilateral capacity building projects, strategic communication, projecting JHA agencies and tools in the MENA countries and an Euromed ministerial meeting on foreign terrorist fighters. A summary of the political priorities has been established for implementation and shared with Member States. EU delegations have been mobilised to contribute actively to implementation.

CT/security experts seconded by Member States have been selected to be deployed to for eight key EU delegations and the process is well underway and will be completed at the latest in September.

Counter-terrorism engagement with **Tunisia and Lebanon** has been pursued as a matter of priority: HRVP Mogherini engaged Tunisia on CT in the Association Committee meeting and participated in the march in Tunis after the Bardo Museum attack. President of the European Council Tusk, accompanied by the CTC, visited Tunisia in the aftermath of the Bardo attack on 30 March 2015. The CTC, accompanied by the EEAS director for multilateral affairs, led an inter-service mission to Tunisia in February 2015 to identify areas for CT assistance. A CT project is under preparation with the objective to start as soon as possible: HRVP Mogherini sent a letter and memorandum to the Tunisian Prime Minister in May offering specific areas of assistance and CT cooperation, on the basis of which assistance measures are being developed in cooperation with Tunisia.

The visit of the PM of Tunisia to Brussels on 27-28 of May has served to get the TUN views on this Memorandum on CT which will be the basis of a future Plan of Action on CT with Tunisia and includes the necessity to hold as soon as possible – reference is made to June 2015 - an EU Tunisia security and CT dialogue. In addition, a 25 million security sector reform project (to start in mid-2016) is under preparation, which includes counter-terrorism aspects. Eurojust participated in the Subcommittee on Security and Justice with Tunisia in April 2015 and offered closer cooperation: a visit of Tunisian officials to Eurojust, encouraged Tunisia to appoint additional contact points, the organisation of a seminar with MENA countries in late 2015/early 2016 on judicial cooperation in the fight against terrorism.

A counter-terrorism workshop took place in **Lebanon** on 23 February 2015 with the participation of all relevant services from Lebanon, EEAS, Commission, CTC, EU agencies Europol and CEPOL, and Member States. Areas for capacity building and cooperation were identified. On this basis, a counter-terrorism action plan and a capacity building project are being developed.

A counter-terrorism workshop with **Turkey** will take place on 23 June in Ankara.

Upgraded and targeted security and counter-terrorism dialogues will take place with **Morocco** and **Lebanon** as soon as possible.

Progress has been made also on **capacity building projects, in particular in the area of crisis response**:

A project for **prevention of radicalisation in Jordan** (EUR 10 million , short-term IcSP) was approved by the PSC on 5 May 2015. The project will assist the Jordanian authorities to develop and implement a prevention strategy and policies and will also support civil society organisations active in this context. The project will start after the summer.

A project mitigating social tensions and preventing radicalisation in **Lebanon** (EUR 2.5 million, short-term IcSP) was also approved by the PSC on 5 May 2015. The project aims to prevent conflict between refugees and host communities. It will support municipal financial and operational capacity and social services as well as local media campaigns promoting peace. The project will also provide capacity building and training and outreach activities to strengthen the capacities of religious institutions to counter violent extremism.

A counter-terrorism capacity building project for **Iraq** was approved by the PSC in February and will also start after the summer (EUR 3.5 million, short-term IcSP). It will assist Iraq, in particular in cooperation with the National Security Adviser, to improve information sharing, to develop and implement a comprehensive and human rights compliant CT strategy and to work on prevention of radicalisation as well as the criminal justice response to terrorism.

A project to be implemented by the **European Police College (CEPOL)** was approved by the PSC in February and will start after the summer (EUR 2.5 million, short-term IcSP). CEPOL will organise exchanges with EU Member States counterparts, study visits to Member States, EU agencies and institutions and tailor-made trainings for CT officials from the MENA region.

A **strategic communications project** for the MENA region advising interested countries to counter the Daesh narrative effectively was approved by the PSC in February (EUR 3.3 million, short-term IcSP). Negotiations with the implementing partners are ongoing.

A project to assist the MENA countries, Turkey and the Balkans to **implement UNSCR 2178** (criminal justice and law enforcement aspects of foreign terrorist fighters) implemented by UNODC was approved by the Commission in April 2015 (EUR 5 Million, European Neighbourhood Instrument - ENI) and will start in June. It has already been officially launched.

A project to assist **Maghreb and Sahel** countries on **prevention of radicalisation** (working with civil society) has been approved by the Commission (EUR 5 Million, ENI) and will be implemented by UNICRI, starting in June 2015.

Under the short-term IcSP (crisis response), a project on **prevention of radicalisation and violent extremism in Sahel/Maghreb** (and Nigeria, Cameroon and Central African Republic), entitled "Programme de Prévention Régionale de l'Extémisme Violent de l'Union européenne - PPREV-UE" has started, providing hands-on research, advice and training/coaching to decision makers at all levels in the countries covered - governments, local authorities, civil society, international organisations and other donors, including the European Union (EU delegations) and its Member States (EUR 1.675 million).

Under long-term IcSP, two projects for MENA countries have been launched in cooperation with **the International Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law - Malta** in the context of the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum: they allow parliamentarians and supreme court justices to exchange with their counterparts from Europe and expand the knowledge about human rights compliant CT adjudication, legislation and oversight. Preparation of the EUR 14 million CT MENA project under long-term IcSP has continued.

The "**Supporting rule of law compliant investigations and prosecutions in the Maghreb region**" project (EUR 3 million) implemented by UNODC in cooperation with UNCTED started in March 2014 to increase the capacity of criminal justice and law-enforcement officials to effectively investigate, prosecute and adjudicate terrorism cases in full respect of human rights. The project covers Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya. Mauritania participates at regional level. A national workshop for Tunisia took place in January 2015 in Tunis on the use of special investigation techniques to combat terrorism with due regard for the rule of law and human rights. A regional event took place in the Senate of Rome, from 25 to 27 February 2015 on parliamentarians' oversight of law enforcement and security services in cooperation with the International Institute for Justice, UNCTED and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean. A national seminar on "Challenges and good practices regarding the adjudication of terrorist cases" took place in Rabat from 4 to 6 March 2015. A national workshop on "Strengthening legal and institutional measures to support victims of terrorism" will take place in Tunis from 12 to 14 May 2015.

Under the European Neighbourhood Instrument, **Euromed Police IV** (EUR 4,8 million) has been approved and will be launched by the end of 2015, implemented in close cooperation with Interpol, Cepol and Europol from 2016. Counter-terrorism and organised crime are likely to be top priorities for the new project, which will develop a Euromed Strategy for Cooperation to Increase Citizen Security, strengthen strategic and operational cooperation and provide tailored training and capacity building in priority areas.

A paper is under preparation by the CTC to facilitate strategic discussion on the greater **use of JHA tools, including the JHA agencies** externally, in particular in the MENA countries, and the creation of information exchange channels.

The **third Euromed meeting on foreign terrorist fighters** is being prepared and envisaged to take place in the second half of September in Baghdad.

The EU delegations and the relevant services in the EEAS and the Commission have been asked by HRVP Mogherini **to review existing and future programming** of EU projects and mainstream CT into them where possible and appropriate, for example in the context of rule of law, SSR, police, justice, prisons, borders projects, but also with regard to the prevention of the radicalisation of groups in civil society, youth, education, media projects.

A high level workshop on terrorism financing with the **Gulf Cooperation Council** took place on 22 April 2015 in Bahrein. The EEAS organised with the US an **expert meeting on anti-ISIL financing** in February 2015 with the participation of EU Member States, EU institutions, CTC, EU agencies (Europol, CEPOL), Australia, Canada, Iceland, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, the US, the UN and the Council of Europe.

Western Balkans

Three Western Balkans Counter-Terrorism (WBCT) Informal Meetings took place in the first half of 2015. The meetings served to map existing CT initiatives of the EU as well as bilateral activities of Member States and to streamline cooperation efforts. The Commission supports this process and agreed to fund key priorities which the group will now develop to strengthen CT cooperation with this important region.

On 20 March 2015 Austria organised a Ministerial Conference with the Western Balkan states, the Commissioner for Home Affairs and the EU CTC which adopted a declaration developing ideas for cooperation with Western Balkan states promoting the three-tier approach (shaping - preventing - reacting) for a better living together in freedom and security on the basis of fundamental rights and values as well as to jointly tackle violent extremism. Particular emphasis was given to developing communication strategies to promote tolerance and respect, non-discrimination, fundamental freedoms and solidarity as well as to strengthen the intercultural dialogue with and within the countries of the Western Balkans.

3. Sustained and coordinated international engagement with the UN and Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) as well as with relevant regional initiatives

HRVP Mogherini and the CTC participated in the Summit and Ministerial on Countering Violent Extremism organised by President Obama and Secretary of State Kerry in February 2015. The EU is involved in follow-up to the summit and preparations of the second summit meeting in September in the margins of the UN General Assembly.

The EU is a member of the anti-ISIL coalition and participated in meetings of the anti-ISIL coalition and its working groups.

The EU is a full member of the GCTF, participated in GCTF coordinating committee, plenary and relevant workshop meetings and, together with Turkey, the EU continues to co-chair the GCTF Horn of Africa working group. The EU and Turkey organised the fourth plenary meeting and the exposition of the Horn of Africa Working Group in Kampala in March 2015.

4. 4. A dialogue among cultures and civilisations to promote fundamental freedoms together

Under the leadership of HRVP Mogherini, the EU is exploring the establishment of relevant cultural dialogues etc. HRVP Mogherini asked EU delegations in the MENA region, the Gulf and Turkey to set up more frequent intellectual exchanges and to promote broader thematic dialogues on the roots and ramifications that terrorism and radicalisation exert on our societies and to promote public events on themes related to values and fundamental rights, including freedom of expression and tolerance.

A strategic communications task force is being created involving the EEAS, including EU delegations, the CTC, the Commission and the Syria Strategic Communications Advisory Team to improve EU communication in MENA countries.