

The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy and the EU Action Plan on Terrorism

The European Union Counter-Terrorism Strategy

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st14/st14469-re04.en05.pdf>

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The EU's strategic commitment: *To combat terrorism globally while respecting human rights, and make Europe safer, allowing its citizens to live in freedom, security and justice.*

Four strands of work fit under this strategic commitment

PREVENT

To prevent people turning to terrorism by tackling the factors or root causes which can lead to radicalisation and recruitment, in Europe and internationally

Priorities:

- Develop common approaches to spot and tackle problem behaviour, in particular the misuse of the internet;
- Address incitement and recruitment in particular in key environments, for example prisons, places of religious training or worship, notably by implementing legislation making these behaviours offences;
- Develop a media and communication strategy to explain better EU policies;
- Promote good governance, democracy, education and economic prosperity through Community and Member State assistance programmes;
- Develop inter-cultural dialogue within and outside the Union;
- Develop a non-emotive lexicon for discussing the issues;
- Continue research, share analysis and experiences in order to further our understanding of the issues and develop policy responses.

PROTECT

To protect citizens and infrastructure and reduce our vulnerability to attack, including through improved security of borders, transport and critical infrastructure

Priorities:

- Deliver improvements to the security of EU passports through the introduction of biometrics;
- Establish the Visa Information System (VIS) and the second generation Schengen Information System (SISII);
- Develop through Frontex effective risk analysis of the EU's external border;
- Implement agreed common standards on civil aviation, port and maritime security;
- Agree a European programme for critical infrastructure protection;
- Make best use of EU and Community level research activity.

PURSUE

To pursue and investigate terrorists across our borders and globally; to impede planning, travel, and communications; to disrupt support networks; to cut off funding and access to attack materials, and bring terrorists to justice

Priorities:

- Strengthen national capabilities to combat terrorism, in light of the recommendations of the peer evaluation of national anti-terrorism arrangements;
- Make full use of Europol and Eurojust to facilitate police and judicial cooperation, and continue to integrate the Joint Situation Centre's threat assessments into CT policy making;
- Further develop mutual recognition of judicial decisions, including by adopting the European Evidence Warrant;
- Ensure full implementation and evaluation of existing legislation as well as the ratification of relevant international Treaties and Conventions;
- Develop the principle of availability of law enforcement information;
- Tackle terrorist access to weapons and explosives, ranging from components for homemade explosive to CBRN material;
- Tackle terrorist financing, including by implementing agreed legislation, working to prevent the abuse of the non-profit sector, and reviewing the EUs overall performance in this area;
- Deliver technical assistance to enhance the capability of priority third countries.

RESPOND

To prepare ourselves, in a spirit of solidarity, to manage and minimise the consequences of a terrorist attack, by improving capabilities to deal with: the aftermath; the coordination of the response; and the needs of victims

Priorities:

- Agree EU Crisis Co-ordination Arrangements and the supporting operational procedures for them;
- Revise the legislation on the Community Mechanism for civil protection;
- Develop risk assessment as a tool to inform the building of capabilities to respond to an attack;
- Improve co-ordination with international organisations on managing the response to terrorist attacks and other disasters;
- Share best practice and develop approaches for the provision of assistance to victims of terrorism and their families.

Review process of the strategy

The European Council will review progress on the Strategy once every six months.

This Strategy will be complemented by a detailed Action Plan listing all the relevant measures under the four strands of this strategy. This will allow for detailed progress to be monitored on a regular basis by the Committee of Permanent Representatives, with regular follow-up and updates from the Counter-Terrorism Co-ordinator and the European Commission.

The EU Action Plan on Terrorism

History

Madrid attacks prompted the European Council to create the EU Action Plan against terrorism. The European Council Declaration of 25 March 2004 set out the following seven objectives for the EU's Action Plan against terrorism:

1. To deepen the international consensus and enhance international efforts to combat terrorism;
2. To reduce the access of terrorists to financial and economic resources;
3. To maximise the capacity within EU bodies and Member States to detect, investigate and prosecute terrorists and to prevent terrorist attacks;
4. To protect the security of international transport and ensure effective systems of border control;
5. To enhance the capability of the European Union and of member States to deal with the consequences of a terrorist attack;
6. To address the factors which contribute to support for, and recruitment into, terrorism;
7. To target actions under EU external relations towards priority Third Countries where counter-terrorist capacity or commitment to combating terrorism needs to be enhanced.

The Action Plan was structured along these seven objectives. The structure has changed with the introduction of the Strategy. The current four headings are: Prevention, Protection, Pursuit and Response.

The Action Plan contains numerous actions. Many of them are accompanied by specified deadlines. Other actions are of an on-going nature or specified in more general terms ('as soon as possible' or 'without delay'). Action should be undertaken by different EU-bodies (Council, Commission) or by Member States.

Action Plans

December 2005

Not yet available

June 2005

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st09/st09809-re01.en05.pdf>

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st09/st09809-re01ad01.en05.pdf>

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st09/st09809-re01ad02.en05.pdf>

December 2004

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/04/st16/st16090.en04.pdf>

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<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/04/st10/st10586.en04.pdf>

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