



**Brussels, 7 December 2020**

**CM 5237/20**

**LIMITE**

**CT  
ENFOPOL  
COTER  
JAI  
COVID-19**

**COMMUNICATION**

**REQUEST FOR CONTRIBUTION**

From:	Portuguese delegation
To:	Working Party on Terrorism (TWP)
Subject:	Questionnaire regarding the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the threat of terrorism and violent extremism

The first informal meeting of the Terrorism Working Party (TWP) under the Portuguese Presidency (PPEU21) will be held on 6 January 2021. As in previous meetings in 2020, it will be held as a video conference.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic is a serious concern and is causing an unprecedented situation, discussing its impact on the threat of terrorism and violent extremism is one of the priorities of the PPEU21, which is keen to identify changes in the outlook within the Member States (MS) and to share any adjustments that the pandemic has forced our counterterrorism bodies (especially police and security services) to take.

In March 2021, we will have endured one year of COVID-19. During the first six months of the pandemic we can already establish some trends, such as the risk of increasing radicalisation numbers due to a (potential) higher consumption of, and engagement in, extremist propaganda during lockdowns. Also, various extremist ideologies have found ways of ‘appropriating’ COVID-19 into their narrative. In the course of 2020 several EU stakeholders – EEAS-INTCEN, EUROPOL, EU CTC, etc. – have also produced papers and assessments regarding the impact of COVID-19.

Moreover, police and security services have also had to adapt to the lockdown, contingency measures and associated restrictions. Many counterterrorism activities were suspended or have had to be adapted into a different format. We now realise that we will have to live with this phenomenon in the near future. So the PPEU21 considers it a priority to discuss the ongoing changes in the terrorist and violent extremist threat situation, and the ways in which the CT and CVE authorities have found to address this new reality. We have therefore decided to send this exploratory, relatively short questionnaire before the start of our Presidency – it may be updated, if necessary, at a later stage. The main aim of the initiative – combined with the EEAS-INTCEN threat assessments and analysis by Europol and the EU CTC – is to learn from each other, and to close potential gaps created by the pandemic SARS-COV2-COVID 19.

We propose to summarise the main findings from MS delegations’ answers, with a view to identifying lessons learned or good practices that can be shared, and proposing possible ways to close any gaps. Based on the findings, the PPEU21 will consider drafting Council Conclusions for prior discussion in the TWP.

Please send your answers to [TWP.PPUE@pcm-c.com](mailto:TWP.PPUE@pcm-c.com) by **8 January 2021**.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to send an e-mail to:

[TWP.PPUE@pcm-c.com](mailto:TWP.PPUE@pcm-c.com); [joao.ventura@pj.pt](mailto:joao.ventura@pj.pt); [jrc@sis.pt](mailto:jrc@sis.pt).

**Questionnaire to European Union Member States regarding the impact of the  
SARS-COV2-COVID 19 pandemic on the threat of terrorism and violent extremism,  
including threats to counter-terrorism and the CVE authorities – Situation Update and  
Security Response**

1. Has the SARS-COV2-COVID-19 pandemic – particularly during periods of lockdowns and restrictions – affected the daily work of the CT and CVE authorities in your MS? – If so, please describe in what way.
2. In this context what have been the main challenges and/or changes identified in international cooperation and information exchange procedures?
3. Which lessons learned and good practices in procedures have your MS CT and CVE authorities identified during this pandemic?
4. During this period have your CT and CVE authorities observed changes in the terrorist/violent extremism picture in your country, in particular regarding:
  - a. Actors' activities and attacks;
  - b. Extremist/terrorist propaganda and discussion/discourse;
  - c. *Modi operandi* – in views of mobility restrictions/lockdown.
5. What main long-term risks relating to terrorism or violent extremism can you identify stemming from the serious economic consequences of the pandemic?

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