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Subject:	EU Threat Assessment in the field of counterterrorism: recommendations

DOCUMENT PARTIALLY ACCESSIBLE TO THE PUBLIC (05.09.2025)

To better anticipate possible threats, the Working Party on Terrorism (TWP) is tasked, according to the procedure set out[1], if required by changes to the terrorist threat picture, to prepare a set of conclusions and policy recommendations or to adjust the existing recommendations, based on INTCEN's assessments and Europol's six-monthly report on the terrorism threat to the EU. The assessments and the outlook report, covering the period from 1 July to 31 December 2024, were presented at the TWP meeting on 12 March 2025.

The policy recommendations, as set out in the Annex, cover all forms of extremism which could lead to a terrorist threat or to violence, and will be integrated into the ongoing work and implementation of counter-terrorism measures.Following written comments by a number of Member States, delegations will find attached the second revised version.

If no objections are received by **Wednesday 7 May 2025 cob**, following agreed procedures, this second revised version will be considered approved by TWP and submitted to the Standing Committee on Operational Cooperation on Internal Security for endorsement.

1 13414/1/17 REV 1.

SUMMARY

1. **Terrorism and violent extremism continue to pose a significant threat to the European Union and its Member States.** The overall threat level remains high. **Destabilising internal and external events have increased the terrorism threat level in some Member States**[2] **and contributed to the intensification of radicalisation, enhanced tension and social polarisation, potentially leading to terrorism and violent extremism across the Union**[3]**.** The involvement of **minors and young adults** in terrorism and violent extremism is a concerning, crosscutting and rising problem[4]. The number of attackers that have displayed mental health issues remains a concern[5].

2. **Islamist/jihadist terrorism remains the most prominent threat to the European Union (EU).** Some European countries face a significant threat from **violent right-wing extremism** (VRWE). The threat stemming from **violent left-wing and anarchist extremism** (VLWAE) is currently deemed low by most Member States, although some consider it moderate. **The threat landscapes across Europe vary according to the nature and level of the national terrorist threat in Member States**.

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2 Since June 2024, the Working Party on Terrorism (TWP) has been following Member States' threat levels.

3 Conclusions on reinforcing external-internal connections in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

4 16820/24: Council conclusions future priorities for strengthening the joint counterterrorism efforts of the European Union and its Member States, approved by the Council (Justice and Home Affairs) at its 4068th meeting held on 12 December 2024.

5 13146/23: 'Terrorism - mental health issues as a vulnerability factor in the process of violent radicalisation'.

3. Following the fall of Assad's regime in **Syria** in December 2024, the situation, particularly in the north-eastern part of the country, remains complex and volatile. DELETED

The **European Council emphasised the importance of the fight against terrorism, of the prevention of re-emergence of terrorist groups, and of the destruction of Syria's remaining chemical weapons stockpiles**[6]. DELETED

4. DELETED

5. **It has become increasingly evident that global/external conflicts can have a direct and rapid impact on the internal security of the EU**[7]**. The conflicts in the Middle East region have raised the threat to the EU's internal security and hold considerable potential for mobilisation and radicalisation**, which could activate a range of new threat vectors across Europe. The conflict has greatly increased the volume of extremist content online, including terrorist propaganda, anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim content and polarising narratives.

6. Terrorists and violent extremists continue to disseminate propaganda, and attempt to recruit, organise and exchange information **online**. Member States report an increase in harmful online content, in particular anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim rhetoric. In particular, the conflict in the Gaza Strip has given rise to challenges related to addressing borderline and manipulated content, AI-generated materials and platform cooperation.

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6 DELETED

7 In this context, see also 5535/25: Terrorist threats to the EU arising from global conflicts - terrorist threats from state actors.

7. The **generation of funds**, including transfers from abroad, trade-based and online activities, plays an important role as a means for terrorists and violent extremists to finance their activities and organisational structures. Terrorists and their financiers actively seek to conceal the origins of funds in order to avoid detection, tracing and confiscation. DELETED

8. **Other forms of violent extremism, such as violent anti-system/anti-government extremism[8] that is not directly attributable to specific ideologies and often stems from conspiracy narratives**[9], continue to be observed in many Member States, however this is generally not assessed to pose a significant terrorist threat to security, with the majority of the movement not engaging in violence.

9. The Russian Federation's war of aggression against **Ukraine** has so far had a limited impact on the terrorist threat and violent extremism in the EU, although it could have significant medium and long-term implications DELETED Most of the measures/actions agreed as part of the **EU-Ukraine internal security dialogue** launched in autumn 2022 and the EU-UA list of eleven actions are well underway.

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8 In the absence of agreed language, the term 'anti-system/anti-government extremism' has been used in this document.

9 In some cases, an intersection between anti-system/anti-government extremism and VRWE ideologies is noted; see also point 21.

10. The situation in **Afghanistan** is still being monitored, but the threat to Europe remains limited. DELETED

11. **The misuse of new technologies** remains a concern for EU law enforcement agencies. Terrorists may display increasing interest in technologically enhanced or enabled weaponry, potentially drawing inspiration from information available online and manuals circulating in social media. DELETED

FINDINGS

12. **Overall, the threat level is high. The threat level from Islamist/jihadist terrorism remains high. The number of completed attacks remains low** DELETED **, but the number of foiled/disrupted attacks has increased.** Some Member States have a higher threat level than others, especially in western and northern Europe. In addition to the enduring threat from Islamist terrorism, **the threat from VRWE remains high in some European countries, with the majority of countries assessing the threat to be low to medium.** VRWE in Europe is not uniform in appearance or form; it is fragmented and leaderless and comprises many smaller groups, which differ in terms of their membership, structures, and ideologies[10]. Due to the diverse manifestations, the potential for significant violence, and the various targeted groups VRWE represents a complex and dynamic security threat that requires continuous monitoring. **The threat stemming from a heterogeneous VLWAE is considered to be low to moderate, ranging from barely noticeable to situations entailing a high degree of violence.** The risk level differs across the Member States.

13. The **geopolitical situation in north-east Syria in particular** could translate into an increased security threat to the European Union. DELETED

[10] These include: 'anti-minority ideologies' (anti-Islam, anti-Semitism, anti-LGBTI, anti-left-wing) and those espoused by alt-right, accelerationist, neo-Nazi and eco-fascist groups.

14. The conflict in the **Middle East** region and the volatile security situation have raised the threat to the EU's internal security. The situation has increased the threat of self-initiated/lone actor attacks within Europe and may encourage attacks by small cells or groups. In particular, countries with large or significant Jewish and Muslim communities and sites face challenges. Tensions have increased in several EU Member States, some have witnessed attacks and attempted attacks, and the threat levels remains high. Across Europe, public spaces and places of Jewish or Israeli interest are still under enhanced protection, DELETED

15. Online radicalisation remains a key concern, as all Member States continue to report online terrorist and extremist content being spread. In connection with the conflict in the Middle East, Member States additionally report **spikes in anti-Semitism~~,~~ anti-Muslim content and harmful content**. ~~The Middle East conflict is challenging the EU's existing content moderation measures and response mechanisms~~. The drastic increase in hateful content online, the mixing of terrorist, violent extremist content with hate speech and disinformation, including exploitation of AI, use of borderline content and bystander footage[11] is challenging online service providers content moderation measures.

[11] The EUIF is developing guidelines on how to deal with bystander footage during crisis response.

16. Member States increasingly report threats arising from **foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)**[12] linked to terrorism and violent extremism and committed by foreign state and non-state actors. Some Member States have been targeted by coordinated and staged campaigns of foreign origin that seek to mobilise and radicalise diaspora groups and groups with a low level of trust in the authorities, but also to polarise society as such. In some cases, disinformation campaigns have begun at national level and have then been picked up internationally and turned into FIMI-activities. A key risk associated with the manipulation of public opinion through FIMI is an increase in violent extremism. Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine and the conflict in the Middle East have both led to increasing FIMI activities, and have also accelerated the spread of disinformation, hate speech and illegal content.

17. DELETED

There has been a **continued increase in the number of younger people, including minors from the age of 12, involved in plotting attacks**. This trend is particularly concerning also because it is a cross-cutting phenomenon affecting different terrorist and violent extremist scenes. The range of targets remains broad, with crowded places and publicly accessible locations, including places of worship, being the most likely to be chosen.

[12] 6629/25: Foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI): a threat to EU security; EU CTC paper (14494/23 R-UE/EU-R) 'Islamist Extremist Foreign Information Manipulation and Interference (FIMI) and its impact on EU security' (containing five recommendations for the way forward).

The situation in **Afghanistan** continues to be monitored[13], to ensure that the country does not generate new security threats to EU citizens. DELETED

The **Counter-Terrorism Action Plan**[14] and its implementation were last reviewed in October 2023[15]. The growth and operational activities of ISKP in neighbouring countries should be closely monitored by the relevant stakeholders. Successes achieved by ISKP are likely to have a direct impact on increasing the number of ISKP core supporters or sympathisers on European soil. **ISKP appears to be seeking to expand its reach and poses a threat to Europe**. DELETED

Moreover, ISKP is extremely active and capable in terms of online propaganda, targeting especially young people, also in Europe. The group has been particularly effective in using digital platforms to inspire attacks, as seen in its English-language magazine, Voice of Khorasan, which explicitly calls for violence against Westerners and Jewish communities.

13 11385/21 (https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2021/08/31/statement-on-the-situation-in-afghanistan/)

14 12315/21.

15 Reviews will be carried out wherever deemed necessary in consultation with the TWP and COTER.

18. Russia's war of aggression against **Ukraine**[16] has so far had a limited impact on the terrorist threat in the EU, although it could have significant medium- and long-term implications. Hybrid activities targeting Europe, such as disinformation, cyber-related activities, attempts to instrumentalise migration and an increased threat to and sabotage actions ~~targeting~~ against critical infrastructure have~~, however,~~ intensified. Hybrid activities such as sabotage, could potentially constitute terrorism, and could be tried in accordance with national terrorism legislation. The diversified terrorist threat also involves actions where state-actors instigate, often young people, to carry out acts of violence that could be classified as terrorism.

19. DELETED

[16] The European Council decided in December 2023 to open accession negotiations with Ukraine. A Ukraine Facility covering the period 2024-2027 was set up to contribute to the recovery, reconstruction and modernisation of Ukrainian society.

20. **Da'esh-inspired attacks continue to be the main terrorist threat to most Member States**, although attacks by **al-Qaeda (AQ)** and its sympathisers remain a possibility. DELETED

All major Islamist terrorist groups maintain a presence on social media, with Telegram, TikTok, X and Instagram being some of the most widely used. DELETED

Although it is unevenly distributed throughout Europe, **radicalisation in prisons and radicalised prison leavers** are a particular challenge for a number of Member States[17]. DELETED

Recidivism remains low. Nevertheless, a small number of **inmates convicted of terrorism or terrorism-related offences (including FTFs)** and other radicalised inmates have committed attacks after their release. The possible impact on the terrorist threat requires vigilance. While Member States have, in recent years, already made considerable efforts to manage this group, this specific aspect will require the competent authorities to step up their risk management, disengagement programmes and monitoring efforts within the limits of existing capacities and the corresponding prioritisation, disengagement and post-prison reintegration efforts[18].

[17] 9997/22: Protecting Europeans from terrorism: achievements and next steps.

[18] Council conclusions on dealing with individuals released from prison who may represent a potential terrorist threat (16335/23).

21. **Since early 2019 only a small amount of male FTFs have returned to the European Union**. Over the past few years Member States have carried out an increasing number of controlled return operations in the form of the repatriation of mainly women and children. Most women were taken into custody upon arrival in Member States, with a significant number of them having been charged with criminal offences, including terrorist offences and core international crimes, leading to a number of convictions. DELETED

22. DELETED

23. **The situation in Northeast Syria remains highly volatile**. DELETED , the political and security context is increasingly fragile. DELETED

Along with other measures, the EU and Member States are looking at ways to further support Iraq in its efforts to repatriate and reintegrate Iraqi citizens from the area, while taking possible security risks into consideration.

24. Terrorism is on the rise in multiple regions of the African continent. While this does not pose a direct and immediate threat for the EU at this stage, developments should be closely monitored.

25. **The threat posed by VRWE groups has not changed significantly in the past year, but continues to vary throughout Europe**. Right-wing ideologies range from anti-Semitism, anti-LGBTI, anti-Muslim, neo-Nazi, accelerationist and anti-immigration sentiments to eco-fascism. Recently a growing overlap between VRWE promoting violent extremism and terrorism and Satanism has been observed, with a particular fascination for extreme violence[19]. Some Member States have noted that anti-system/anti-government extremism and conspiracy narratives can intersect with VRWE ideologies, potentially serving as a mobilising force linking the two. DELETED

The increasingly transnational threat over the past few years has led to some VRWE groups being banned in several European countries. DELETED

[19] DELETED

26. The **online presence of VRWE and Islamist/jihadist groups alike has been rising continuously** since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic[20], and they appeal to a growing and ever-younger target group[21], ~~in general the entire stream of youth radicalisation,~~ such as specificities of genZ / Alpha content online, general gore fascination and desensitisation to violence as a radicalisation stream that is not necessarily ideology driven. This has fuelled the spread of federating themes such as conspiracy theories, anti-Semitism and VRW extremist ~~ideology~~ discourses. The digital space remains a significant breeding ground for radicalisation and a space for recruitment, via platforms such as Telegram and TikTok. DELETED These features all play into the online communication and distribution strategies of VRWE groups and Islamist/jihadist terrorist groups alike, thereby further increasing radicalisation. One recent trend is the use of artificial intelligence by VRWE groups to create illegal and hateful (below the threshold of moderation, but still contributing to radicalisation) content in both text (bots) and image format.

27. In today's digital age, almost every means of communication and transaction has an online component. **Technologies and tools that are necessary to guarantee the functioning of our society are also abused for criminal and terrorism-related purposes**. It is increasingly challenging to maintain effective law enforcement across the EU, i.e. to safeguard public security and detect, prevent, investigate and prosecute crimes effectively, without lawful access to and retention of data, including legally and technically sound solutions to access electronic communications in a readable format, and without generally weakening encryption.

28. DELETED

[20] 13718/23: Preventing online radicalisation of minors: state of play and next steps.
[21] To be noted that there are also many young persons among the perpetrators.

29. **VLWAE continues to be reported in various parts of Europe, although there is little indication of a change in the current threat landscape.** The assessments depict a heterogeneous landscape, with acts of vandalism and sabotage mainly directed towards technology-related targets and, more generally, symbols of economic and systemic power. In some Member States, the Palestinian-Israeli conflict has mobilised the violent left-wing arena. DELETED

Finally, VLWAE seems to have moved to more private platforms.

30. **Violent anti-system/anti-government extremism remains a concern but is not assessed to pose a significant threat to the internal security of the EU, with the majority of the movement not engaging in violence**. Conspiracy and evil-elite narratives are widespread in the violent anti-system/anti-government scene and given the thematic flexibility and high adaptability of these narratives, they may end up triggering other forms of violent extremism, although the lack of a common cause of mobilisation and general fragmentation reduce this risk, while also making it less predictable than other forms. The potential for online radicalisation is high and may constitute a first step to recruiting new members into terrorist and violent extremist groups. The overall terrorist threat stemming from violent anti-system/anti-government extremism is currently assessed to be limited, however it still represents a cause for concern in some Member States with the implication of a high level of violence or other physical manifestations.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

31. **The threat level remains high and therefore counterterrorism and preventive efforts should remain a high priority**. **The intertwining of internal and external security is a continuing challenge**.

32. **All existing recommendations, such as the ones included in the 2022 and 2024 Council conclusions, remain valid**. Hamas terrorist attacks in Israel on 7 October 2023 and the response by Israel have inspired and triggered individuals in Europe to use violence, thereby heightening the current threat to security in the EU. The conflict risks having long-term effects in terms of polarisation and radicalisation, and there is a need for continued vigilance, not least since the conflict could act as a catalyst for violence.

33. The **complex and volatile situation in Syria, particularly in the north-eastern part of the country**, following the December 2024 overthrow of the Assad regime by a coalition of insurgent forces, led by the Islamist Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), **requires close monitoring**. The camps and prisons in north-east Syria hold individuals with alleged links to Islamic State (IS), including a considerable number of foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs), among them some Europeans. DELETED

34. DELETED

35. Building on the recently adopted **ProtectEU Internal Security Strategy**[22], which sets out a comprehensive response to all internal security threats whether online or offline, the **Commission should continue its work on its forthcoming new Agenda for Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism**. In light of the evolving terrorist *modus operandi*, the ideologies fuelling radicalisation, and the impact of the changing geopolitical landscape, the development of the new Agenda, which is expected in the last quarter of 2025, should provide a coherent strategic framework for EU action in this field. The Commission should ensure that the Agenda includes concrete, forward-looking measures that leverage former Council Conclusions pertaining to counterterrorism to strengthen the EU's collective capacity to prevent and counter all forms of terrorism and violent extremism, taking into account the key intervention areas and suggested measure highlighted in the Council on future priorities for strengthening the joint counterterrorism efforts of the European Union and its Member States, while maintaining strong cooperation across Member States and with international partners.

[22] "ProtectEU", the European Internal Security Strategy published by the Commission on 1 April 2025 (7750/25) elaborates on the main avenues, initiatives and priority areas where the EU needs to invest in the years to come in order to **anticipate, prevent and effectively respond to security threats**.

36. Taking into consideration the high threat level from home-grown terrorists, **further efforts are needed to prevent radicalisation leading to terrorism and violent extremism**, taking into account the Commission's Strategic Orientations on a coordinated EU approach to the prevention of radicalisation for 2024-2025. It is also important to improve the understanding of the violent radicalisation process (mobilisation for violent action), including the possible role of ideology, irrespective of the form it takes. This could include ideologies promoting or tolerating violence within the Islamist, right-wing, left-wing or any other extremist scenes. There is a **need to increase the transparency of any financing structures concerning terrorism and extremism**- including those involving undesirable foreign funding, which could contribute to the expansion of violent extremism and the dissemination of extremist ideologies - and the exchange of information between Member States[23]. Member States are encouraged to fully utilise the consolidated knowledge and training offered by the **EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation**[24].

37. **The impact of Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on the terrorist threat in Europe and globally has so far been limited.** DELETED Furthermore, the potential threat of persons associated with terrorism/violent extremism entering irregularly through the EU's external border including through the instrumentalisation of migration flows, will need to be continuously monitored. **In light of the volatile geopolitical situation, it is therefore essential that the European Union and Member States be provided with the appropriate tools to efficiently detect and hinder such individuals.** DELETED EU Member States, with support from INTCEN and Europol, should continue monitoring the impact of the Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine on terrorist activities and narratives in Council preparatory bodies. The threat emanating from violent extremists fighting on either side of the front line and their possible return to or entry into the EU needs to be monitored.

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23 In line with Council conclusions on future priorities for strengthening the joint counterterrorism efforts of the European Union and its Member States (6820/24): *joint efforts are needed to ensure (...) all forms of violent extremist groups, promoting radicalisation, hatred or values contrary to those enshrined in Article 2 TEU cannot benefit from European funding.*

24 See EU Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation - European Commission

38. The situation in **Afghanistan** and neighbouring countries should continue to be closely monitored in order to address possible terrorist threats to EU internal security stemming from the Taliban's takeover of power in August 2021. DELETED

39. There is a need for effective measures to address the risks associated with radicalisation leading to violent extremism and terrorism in prisons. Furthermore, such measures should deal with the release of individuals who have been convicted of terrorism-related offences and of radicalised inmates convicted of other criminal offences who are still considered to pose a threat proportional to the number of terrorism offenders and radicalised non-terrorism offenders in each country, based on an individual risk assessment. Both prison and post-release reintegration efforts, and the adoption of probation or security measures, should be intensified when a given case is analysed and found to pose a post-release risk. It is important to assess the risk posed by inmates during the detention period and, if necessary, following their release[25]. Social reintegration efforts made in prisons and after a person's release need to be strengthened. It is crucial to ensure continuity between the rehabilitation and reintegration efforts made within prisons and after release, and to encourage effective sharing between authorities throughout the Member States of relevant information concerning the imminent release of prisoners convicted of terrorism, including returnees, or of radicalised inmates convicted of other criminal offences to counter potential future security concerns.

[25] DELETED

40. DELETED

The **complex threat posed by violent anti-system/anti-government extremism**, which is able to rapidly adapt to, reshape and exploit crises, **also deserves continued attention** DELETED

The need to further strengthen the sharing within the existing national and EU regulatory frameworks of information about such persons when they travel or connect with individuals or networks in other Member States should be considered, while respecting the fact that, in accordance with Article 4(2) of the TEU, national security remains the sole responsibility of each Member State.

41. Additional efforts are being made to **strengthen cooperation and the exchange of information between immigration and asylum authorities**, and counterterrorism authorities ~~and migration and asylum authorities~~ at the national level regarding foreigners who intend to stay on EU territory and may pose a terrorist threat. It is crucial to ensure the efficient and swift return of people who do not, or no longer, have a right to stay and who represent a security threat. DELETED

42. DELETED

43. It is crucial to continue addressing and acting on the spread of violent extremist and terrorist content online by ensuring the full implementation and use of the Regulation on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online (TCO Regulation)[26] and the Digital Services Act (DSA)[27]. The TCO Regulation[28] requires hosting service providers to **ensure the swift removal of terrorist content online** after receiving a removal order from a Member State's competent authorities. The use of the PERCI platform is strongly encouraged. In addition, Member States are encouraged to continue using voluntary referrals and actively engage in the **the EU Internet Forum** to tackle the spread of terrorist and violent extremist content online, regardless of ideology. The EU Internet Forum continues to play a key role in addressing emerging challenges related to new technologies, including in particular the risks and opportunities associated with generative artificial intelligence[29]. The effects of the algorithmic amplification of borderline, terrorist and violent extremist content, the lack of sufficient content moderation, and non-cooperative platforms and websites operated by terrorists are other issues that need to be dealt with.

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[26] Regulation (EU) 2021/784 of 29 April 2021 on addressing the dissemination of terrorist content online (OJ L 172, 17.5.2021, p. 79).

[27] Regulation (EU) 2022/2065 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 October 2022 on a Single Market for Digital Services (OJ L 277, 27.10.2022, p. 1), fully applicable since 17 February 2024.

[28] OJ L 172, 17.5.2021, p. 79 and 6677/24 + ADD 1 (implementation report).

[29] DELETED

44. **Foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI)** and malign interference linked to terrorism and violent extremism and committed by state and non-state actors, such as disinformation and cyber-related activities, **merit additional attention**. Hybrid activities targeting Europe have recently intensified, and these require a consolidated response. It is important to improve the knowledge and understanding of FIMI and its impact on violent radicalisation and terrorism. Dealing with these types of FIMI requires synergising actions, whilst respecting the division of competences between the Member States and the EU. The focus should be on early detection, as implemented by the EEAS, EU institutions and Member States via the Rapid Alert System and countermeasures, in the form of strategic communication and counter-narratives based on verifiable facts and figures. This demonstrates the importance of a **continued and strengthened dialogue with all stakeholders, in particular internet providers/online platforms, but also with civil society organisations, researchers or religious leaders where relevant**.

45. The challenges associated with combating FIMI phenomenon stem not only from the actual content of manipulated messages, but also from the ambiguity surrounding the adversary and its forces of influence, and from the social media tools used. In this context, attention should be paid to the growing role of AI in generating seemingly reliable material, including deepfakes. Early and rapid intervention is crucial.

46. Based on Europol's mandate, it is crucial that the **capacity of the EU Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) to support Member States' actions to prevent the dissemination of all types of terrorist content is continuously developed and used**. In line with the implementation plan on combating violent right-wing extremism and terrorism, the EU IRU should continue its efforts to flag violent extremist and terrorist content online.

47. Terrorism financing poses a critical and systemic threat to security by enabling groups to recruit, plan, train for and carry out attacks. Activities to strengthen counterterrorism financing investigators' expertise, skills, and in particular, capacities to trace and confiscate crypto assets should continue in the context of the **EU Network of CTF Investigators**, and in close cooperation with Europol and the network of EU Financial Investigative Units (FIU). The focus should also be on exploring, based on a thorough gap analysis, how to provide CTF investigators with additional relevant EU tools[30] for accessing relevant financial information in cooperation with the relevant financial service providers and in line with EU data protection rules.

48. It is essential to continue implementing the Conclusions of the European Council of December 2020 to ensure greater transparency of external funding for non-profit organisations and religious institutions, in order to prevent the **external financing of extremism** and to ensure that religious education and training are fully in line with European fundamental rights and values[31]. Dialogue should be continued with third countries, in particular Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, on Islamist extremism, including training materials and financing.

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30 Regulation (EU) 2024/1620 of the European Parliament and the Council of 31 May 2024 establishing the Authority for Anti-Money Laundering and Countering the Financing of Terrorism and amending Regulations (EU) No 1093/2010, (EU) No 1094/2010 and (EU) No 1095/2010. With special reference to the EU-wide system to track terrorist financing, particularly focusing on intra-EU and SEPA transactions. Key aspects include strengthening cooperation among EU agencies like Europol, Eurojust, and the EU Anti-Money Laundering Authority (AMLA). Also, in line with Council conclusions on future priorities for strengthening the joint counterterrorism efforts of the European Union and its Member States (6820/24) (par.21)

31 EUCO 22/20 (point 25).

49. The **effective implementation and use of EU tools at policy level** as the 2020-25 EU Action Plan on firearms trafficking[32] and the **timely and correct application of EU law at national level should be monitored**, in particular the Regulation on the marketing and use of explosives precursors[33], the Directive on control and acquisition of weapons[34], and the Regulation on import, export, and transit of civilian firearms[35] and the interoperability package.

50. **Cooperation with key third countries and international partners on access to battlefield information should continue to be further developed** in accordance with national and EU legislation, so as to support investigations and prosecutions. DELETED

32 10035/20 + ADD 1.

33 Regulation (EU) 2019/1148 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 June 2019 on the marketing and use of explosives precursors (OJ L 186, 11.7.2019, p. 1).

34 Directive (EU) 2021/555 of 24 March 2021 on control of the acquisition and possession of weapons (codification) (OJ L 115, 6.4.2021, p. 1); 12828/24: 'From legal purchase to illicit use: challenges in preventing terrorist access to firearms'.

35 Regulation (EU) 2025/41 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 19 December 2024 on import, export and transit measures for firearms, essential components and ammunition, implementing Article 10 of the United Nations Protocol against the illicit manufacturing of and trafficking in firearms, their parts and components and ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime (UN Firearms Protocol) (recast) PE/87/2024/REV/1 (OJ L, 2025, 22.1.2025, p. 41).

51. It is important that Member States continue to use adequate and effective measures to hinder third country nationals posing a security threat who are illegally staying on their territory. Furthermore, it is crucial that Member States continue to issue **entry bans** against third-country nationals representing a terrorist threat and enter these into SIS in accordance with their national law. As several Member States encounter difficulties in issuing such a measure, a solution to this challenge should be reflected upon at the European level. Member States should also use, where appropriate, **expulsion measures** against third-country individuals posing a security threat who are subject to an entry ban but have illegally entered their territory.

52. Cooperation with third countries should be further developed in accordance with national and EU legislation, in the form of cooperation between the competent internal and external security actors, with a view in particular to **sharing experience and capacity building on counter-terrorism and preventing and countering violent extremism and on information exchange on FTFs**[36] (which could be used in criminal proceedings, e.g. travel, possible returns, and networks facilitating travel by FTFs). Efforts to detect and prevent the entry of terrorists within EU territory must continue. Continued implementation of the EU-Western Balkans Joint Action Plan on Counter-Terrorism and of the six bilateral Implementing Arrangements with partners in the region is of utmost importance. An updated Joint Action Plan is expected to be signed at the next EU-Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Forum in autumn 2025[37]. Counter-terrorism engagement with the MENA (Middle East and North Africa) region, the Sahel, the Horn of Africa and Central Asia should be enhanced. The presence of terrorists in migration flows remains a concern across Europe.

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[36] See also 16175/24 (Council conclusions on reinforcing external-internal connections in the fight against terrorism and violent extremism, as approved by the Council at its meeting held on 16 December 2024.and 12274/24: Advancing the EU Counterterrorism Experts' Network.

[37] The EU-Western Balkans Justice and Home Affairs Ministerial Forum held on 26-27 October 2023 welcomed the results achieved by the Joint Action Plan and agreed on the need to update it in the light of emerging threats. At the EU-Western Balkans Ministerial Forum on 28-29 October 2024, this commitment was reiterated.

53. The implementation of measures suggested in the **Commission's 2017 Action Plans on the protection of public places[38] and on enhancing preparedness against chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear security risks[39] should continue** in the light of the overall threat level.

54. **The use of innovative tools and new technologies remains crucial for law enforcement agencies and intelligence services to be able to counter terrorist threats**. Funding of research, innovation and development activities at EU level[40], for example under the EU Innovation Hub and by Member States, is a key enabler in this regard, including to foster innovative solutions in border management, AI tools, big data analytics, decryption technologies, biometric data analyses and digital forensic tools.

55. Lawful retention of and access to data, including legally and technically sound solutions to access electronic communication in readable format, is essential for the successful detection, prevention, investigation, and prosecution of terrorist activities. Therefore, **law enforcement and counterterrorism authorities must have the ability to access digital data**[41] **effectively and with a sufficient retention period in respect of fundamental rights and the relevant data protection laws, while upholding the principles of necessity, proportionality and subsidiarity and without generally weakening encryption** which is recognised as an important means for protecting the cybersecurity of individuals, society, governments, and industry.

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38 Council Conclusions on the protection of public spaces (9545/21).

39 13484/17. See also: Council conclusions on strengthening the European Union response to CBRN related risks, reducing access to explosive precursors and protecting public spaces (7 December 2017), 15648/17 and 10934/24: 'Tackling chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear (CBRN) threats'.

40 For example, through Horizon Europe and the Internal Security Fund (ISF).

41 In the manner outlined in the conclusions of the High Level Group report on access to data (15941/24) and the corresponding conclusions of the Justice and Home Affairs Council of 12 December 20024 (16448/24)

56. There is a need to improve the understanding of the role that climate change and environmental concerns play in the ideologies and motivations of violent extremist actors, by gathering and analysing more data. This analysis should help to avoid wrongly labelled peaceful environmental activists as violent extremists or terrorists. In most Member States, concerns about climate change and environmental concerns have led to civil disobedience and public order disturbances (blocking highways, art vandalism, etc.). Some EU Member States have also seen acts of sabotage, sometimes paired with acts of violence that may require further attention. The use of environmental concerns in terrorist and violent extremist discourse online should be addressed through existing instruments, such as the EU Internet Forum and the EU Internet Referral Unit at Europol.

57. Potential new forms of violent extremism not attributable to specific ideologies and potential overlaps with Satanist groups and other crime areas are assessed to be of concern and should be closely monitored. This kind of emerging movements, often fuelled by online platforms, conspiratorial ideologies, and antiestablishment sentiments, sometimes blur the lines between extremism and organised crime.

58. **The relevant JHA preparatory bodies should, where appropriate, and in cooperation with relevant external security preparatory bodies, continue their efforts to translate these recommendations - where necessary and appropriate - into operational measures and address any practical needs, as part of the reflection process on the future priorities and way forward in this area[42]. Further synergies between the Council preparatory bodies could be explored in order to address the terrorism threat in a more holistic manner.**

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42 As mentioned, a new Commission Agenda for Preventing and Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism will be issued in autumn 2025.