



In Their Eyes: How European Security Services Look at Terrorism and Counter-Terrorism

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Introduction

How do counter-terrorism services assess the threat in Europe? What trends do they notice? What are their most pressing concerns? Experts and observers regularly discuss the evolution of the terrorist threat, but what do counter-terrorism professionals have to say about this? This report aims to bring to the fore the perspectives of those that are in the first line to assess or respond to terrorism.

Compared with some other initiatives focused on key terrorism trends (such as terrorism databases or indexes),¹ this report focuses more strictly on a counter-terrorism perspective. While some reports on counter-terrorism already exist, they are largely drafted by and for governments. This includes notably the assessments conducted by the UN Counter-Terrorism Executive Directorate (UN CTED), which are unfortunately not in the public domain. In Europe, Europol's TE-SAT annual reports constitute a very useful publicly available resource, although very much focused on a law-enforcement perspective.

This report constitutes, therefore, an innovative attempt to monitor counter-terrorism efforts, with a focus on European Union (EU) Member States. It focuses on original sources, such as reports published by security services, a treasure of information largely neglected by scholars. It covers various dimensions, namely:

1. National threat levels (related to terrorism and/or extremism);
2. Discussion on the main types of terrorist and extremist threats perceived;
3. National security contexts in which the aforementioned threat levels and threat assessments were produced;
4. New legislative efforts designed and introduced to help CT and P/CVE efforts;
5. Main challenges to CT or P/CVE activities encountered by the EU MS;
6. Major CT operations conducted in Europe;
7. Main efforts in countering the financing of terrorism by different EU MS;
8. Key developments with regard to terrorism sanctions and proscriptions;
9. Communication and transparency efforts related to CT and P/CVE;

To conduct this research, the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT) compiled and analysed more than 70 official counter-terrorism and security reports published by the EU Member States (MS) in 2024 and 2023, which it combined with a survey distributed among European counter-terrorism officials. More details on the methodology of this report are available in the appendix.

By combining practitioner perspectives gathered through the survey with detailed, structured narratives from national security documents, the report captures both operational realities and strategic priorities. These insights were used to develop specific themes for analysis, and to effectively describe the state of terrorism and counter-terrorism in Europe, as described by security services themselves.

¹ START (National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism). (2022). Global Terrorism Database 1970 - 2020 [data file]. <https://www.start.umd.edu/gtd>; Institute for Economics and Peace. (2023). Global terrorism index 2023: Measuring the impact of terrorism; Center for Research on Extremism (C-REX). "RTV Dataset." University of Oslo. (2025). <https://www.sv.uio.no/c-rex/english/groups/rtv-dataset/>.

Overall, this report, while combining new material with data from the aforementioned secondary sources, offers original insights into the secretive world of counter-terrorism and highlights interesting trends. Furthermore, it could serve as a basis for further investigations into counter-terrorism efforts, in Europe or elsewhere, including with a view to their being evaluated.

1. National Threat Levels

EU Member States use a variety of systems to quantitatively capture, or attempt to capture, the terrorist threat to a given country. Some develop a numerical scale indicating a certain threat level (some with four, others with five levels), other countries use the ALPHA-BRAVO-CHARLIE codes to characterise the level of vigilance needed rather than the threat, and finally some countries, such as Germany or Greece, refrain from using formal threat assessment systems.

The terrorist threat levels remain high in parts of Europe, particularly in Western Europe. In fact, several countries raised their threat levels in 2023 and 2024, as a result of several factors, including the Israel-Hamas war, growing jihadi activities online and in Europe, as well as elevated concerns regarding other forms of extremism, notably far-right. Sweden, for instance, raised its threat level in August 2023 to “high” due to heightened tensions around Quran desecrations and disinformation campaigns, which have made the country a priority target for certain extremist groups.² Similarly, Belgium has maintained a threat level 3 (out of 4) since October 2023, when it was increased in the aftermath of a terrorist attack in Brussels and of the Hamas terrorist attack in Israel.³ France, on the other hand, raised its threat level following the terrorist attack that occurred in Moscow in 2024.⁴ For the Netherlands, mobilising events such as the war in Gaza and Quran desecrations have contributed to the rise in the threat level in December 2023.⁵

Germany considers the terrorist threat to remain “persistently high,” and security measures increased in 2024.⁶ Like Germany, Greece and Italy do not have a public threat level, but acknowledge terrorism as a significant challenge.⁷

In contrast, countries, such as Portugal, Finland, Poland, Romania, and Slovakia, report moderate threat levels, largely because they have not experienced recent large-scale terrorist incidents. They consider a terrorist attack relatively unlikely in the short term, although they remain cautious due to their ties to the broader European security environment. Slovakia’s level, for example, has remained unchanged since 2017,⁸ reflecting a cautious stance influenced by broader European trends rather than domestic incidents.⁹ Poland employs an ALPHA-BRAVO-CHARLIE alert system which focuses on an increase of vigilance and preparedness, rather than the specifics of the threat itself. Currently, the threat level is set at 2/4, or BRAVO.¹⁰ The Czech Republic and Latvia stand out for reporting minimal threat levels, such as 1/3 or 1/4, viewing terrorism as a distant concern. In the Czech Republic, for instance, threat levels are considered to be raised only

2 “Terrorism and Deadly Force Attacks,” Krisinformation.se, <https://www.krisinformation.se/en/hazards-and-risks/terrorism>.

3 “Niveau 3 de menace pour Bruxelles et pour la Belgique [Threat Level 3 for Brussels and Belgium],” Organe de Coordination pour l’Analyse de la Menace (OCAM) [Coordinating Body for Threat Analysis], October 17, 2023, <https://ocam.belgium.be/niveau-3-de-menace-pour-bruxelles-et-pour-la-belgique/>.

4 “Le plan Vigipirate est rehaussé au niveau Urgence attentat [The Vigipirate Plan Raised to ‘Attack Emergency’ Level],” Service-Public.fr, March 25, 2024, <https://www.service-public.fr/particuliers/actualites/A14434>.

5 Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid (NCTV) [National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism], Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland – Juni 2024 [Terrorism Threat Assessment Netherlands – June 2024] (Den Haag: NCTV, 2024), 4, <https://www.nctv.nl>.

6 “Germany: Islamist Terror Poses Persistently High Risk,” Deutsche Welle, December 8, 2024, <https://www.dw.com/en/germany-islamist-terror-poses-persistently-high-risk/a-69921195>.

7 Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών [National Intelligence Service] (ΕΥΠ), Ετήσια Έκθεση 2023: Προτεραιότητες και Τομείς Δράσης της ΕΥΠ [Annual Report 2023: Priorities and Areas of Action of the NIS] (Athens: ΕΥΠ, 2023), 10; Edoardo Izzo, “Massucci: ‘in Italia Livello 2 Di Allerta per Terrorismo. E’ Quello Che Precede Un Attacco’” [“Massucci: ‘in Italy level 2 of alert for terrorism. It’s what precedes an attack’”] AGI, 2 oktober 2024, <https://www.agi.it/cronaca/news/2024-10-02/massucci-italia-livello-2-allerta-terrorismo-28088822/>.

8 “O nás, Slovenská informačná služba, <https://www.sis.gov.sk/o-nas/nbac-sto.html>.

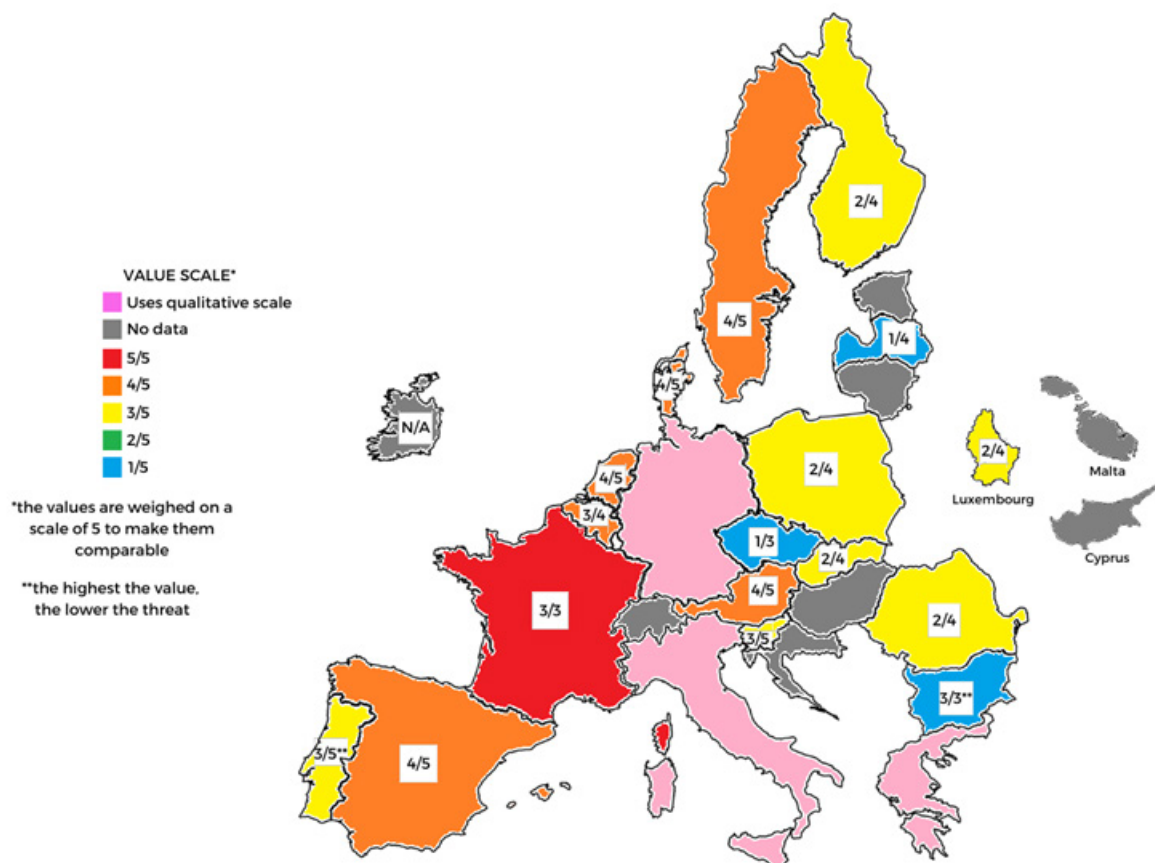
9 For more on how the Central-Eastern European (CEE) countries externalisation of terrorism threat levels see: Kacper Rekawek, “Referenced but Not Linear?: Counterterrorism in Central-Eastern Europe in Theory and in Practice,” East European Politics and Societies 31, no. 1 (2017): 179–200, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325416678657>.

10 “Przedłużenie obowiązywania stopni alarmowych do 30 listopada 2024 r. [Extension of the Validity of Alarm Levels Until November 30, 2024],” Rządowe Centrum Bezpieczeństwa [Government Centre for Security], August 31, 2024, <https://www.gov.pl/web/rcb/przedluzenie-obowiazywania-stopni-alarmowych-do-30-listopada-2024-r2>.

during major public events, such as the 2024 Ice Hockey World Cup.¹¹ Latvia similarly maintains a low profile as its reporting emphasises localised security without overextending resources on perceived distant risks.¹²

Respondents to our survey confirm that the terrorist threat remains high, and a majority believes that it is becoming more pressing. More specifically, 66.67 percent of our respondents believe that the likelihood of an attack occurring in the near future is high, and 60 percent assess that such a likelihood has increased in Europe compared to the previous year.

Figure 1. Terrorism Threat Levels Across the EU Member States



11 Vera Renovica, "Šéf Policie ČR Vondrášek o hrozbě terorismu: Co dříve vyřešila hádka, dnes končí noži a střelbou [Chief of Police of the Czech Republic Vondrášek on the Threat of Terrorism: What Used to Be Solved by an Argument Now Ends with Knives and Shootings]," Blesk, June 10, 2024, <https://www.blesk.cz/clanek/zpravy-hraci/787599/sef-policie-cr-vondrasek-o-hrozbe-terorismu-co-drive-vyresila-hadka-dnes-konci-nozi-a-strelbou.html>.

12 Latvian State Security Service, Annual Report 2023, (Riga: Latvian State Security Service, April 2024), 56, <https://www.vdd.gov.lv>.

2. Primary Terrorism Types

Terrorism threat picture varies over time, and from country to country. However, jihadi terrorism is largely considered as the most serious terrorist threat to Europe. Ninety-three percent of the respondents to our survey perceive jihadism as the most pressing terrorist threat, both to Europe and to their own country. Eighty percent of the respondents ranked right-wing terrorism as the second most likely threat, and 47 percent ranked anti-government extremism (AGE) in third position.

Jihadi Terrorism

Jihadi terrorism remains the most commonly mentioned threat by EU MS.¹³ Countries of the Central and Eastern parts of the EU are, to some degree, an exception. For example, Slovakia considers it is “without a specific Islamist threat,”¹⁴ whereas Slovenia, Latvia, and Czech Republic underscore the fact that this type of terrorism is not a major concern domestically but is the most pressing concern to the neighbouring countries.¹⁵

The threat of jihadi terrorism is driven by both organised groups (most commonly mentioned are al-Qaeda and Islamic State) and self-radicalised individuals, with the latter constituting the most direct and potent short-term threat to European security.¹⁶ Sixty percent of the respondents to our survey believe that IS and al-Qaeda are still willing to plan coordinated attacks in the West but currently lack the means to do so.

Increasingly, however, the threat from Islamic State in the Khorasan Province (ISKP) is being reported by different European security services.¹⁷ They note their increased media activity, and the multilingual nature of their content, which could appeal to a broader audience,¹⁸ and the fact that the organisation, via its external operations department, is focusing more energy and resources on targeting Europe.¹⁹ This is perceived as increasing the risk of individuals in Europe radicalising and acting on behalf of ISKP. This concern is particularly manifested via online jihadi radicalisation,²⁰ a phenomenon which is increasingly associated with individuals from the so-called “Generation Z” (i.e. those born between 1995 and 2010). This group is increasingly becoming involved in the national jihadist threat landscape, largely due to the availability of “high

13 Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark 2024, (Copenhagen: PET, March 2024), 12-19, <https://pet.dk/en/-/media/mediefiler/pet/dokumenter/analyser-og-vurderinger/vurdering-af-terrortruslen-mod-danmark/vurdering-af-terrortruslen-mod-danmark-2024-eng.pdf>; Estonian Internal Security Service (KAPO), Annual Review 2023, 36-49 (Tallinn: KAPO, April 2024), https://kapo.ee/sites/default/files/content_page_attachments/Annual%20review%202023-2024.pdf; Departamento de Seguridad Nacional del Gobierno de España [Department of National Security of the Government of Spain], Informe Anual de Seguridad Nacional 2023 [Annual Report on National Security 2023] (Madrid: Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, March 2024), 43-57, <https://cpage.mpr.gob.es>; Bundesministerium für Inneres [Federal Ministry of the Interior], Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023 [Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution report 2023], (Wien: Bundesministerium für Inneres, Direktion Staatsschutz und Nachrichtendienst (DSN)), 2023, 70-95, <https://www.dsn.gv.at/501/start.aspx>; Veiligheid van de Staat Sureté de l'État [State Security] (VSSE), Intelligence report 2023, (Bruxelles: VSSE), 2023, 9-12.

14 Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky [Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic], Správa o bezpečnosti Slovenskej republiky za rok 2023 [Security Report of the Slovak Republic for 2023] (Bratislava: Ministerstvo vnútra SR, April 2024), 10, <https://www.minv.sk>.

15 Ministrstvo za obrambo Republike Slovenije [Ministry of Defence of the Republic of Slovenia], Ocena ogroženosti Republike Slovenije zaradi terorizma, verzija 1.1 [Terrorism Threat Assessment of the Republic of Slovenia, Version 1.1] (Ljubljana: Ministrstvo za obrambo, Uprava RS za zaščito in reševanje, November 2023), 56, <https://www.sos112.si>; Latvian State Security Service, Annual Report 2023, 54; BIS, Výroční zpráva, 33.

16 Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, Informe Anual de Seguridad Nacional 2023, 50; Swedish Security Service, Annual Report 2023/2024, (Stockholm: Swedish Security Service, 2024), 9, <https://www.sakerhetspolisen.se>; Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismebestrijding en Veiligheid (NCTV) [National Coordinator for Counterterrorism and Security], Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2023 [Terrorist Threat Assessment for the Netherlands 2023] (The Hague: NCTV, December 2023), 9, 15, <https://www.nctv.nl>; ДЪРЖАВНА АГЕНЦИЯ „НАЦИОНАЛНА СИГУРНОСТ“ [State Agency “National Security”] (DANS), ГОДИШЕН ДОКЛАД за дейността на Държавна агенция “Национална сигурност” [Annual report on the activities of the State Agency “National Security”], (Sofia : State Agency “National Security”), 2023, 31.

17 Veiligheid van de Staat Sureté de l'État [State Security] (VSSE), Intelligence report 2023, (Bruxelles: VSSE), 2023, 9.

18 L'Organe de Coordination pour l'Analyse de la Menace [Coordination Unit for Threat Assessment] (OCAM), Rapport Annuel 2023 [Annual Report 2023], 2023, 9 https://ocam.belgium.be/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/rapport-annuel_2023.pdf; Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Brief Summary 2023 Report on the Protection of the Constitution: Facts and Trends, (Berlin: Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, 2023), 48, <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de>.

19 Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brief Summary 2023, 77.

20 NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2023, 36.

quality” propaganda content online, notably resulting in a growing number of minors arrested.²¹ ISKP is also unique in its ability to infiltrate some of its operatives in Europe, for example, via the refugee flows, notably through Ukraine.²² However, respondents to our survey were divided on the threat from ISKP, with some considering it the most serious threat to Europe, whereas others considered it to be overrated.

Several security services assess jihadi movements to be gaining momentum using the current situation in Gaza for a mobilising tool for violence.²³ The Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counter-Terrorism (NCTV) considers the war in Gaza as a “major driving factor” of the jihadi threat in Europe.²⁴ A clear indication of this was the December 2023 terrorist attack in France, which was carried out by a radicalised individual who justified his attack in light of the situation of Muslims in Palestine.²⁵

Prison radicalisation and terrorist recidivism is another clear concern of the services in the context of the jihadi terrorist threat.²⁶ This becomes especially poignant in light of the aforementioned December 2023 attack in France, carried out by a radicalised former prisoner.²⁷

Far-Right Extremism

The threat of terrorism from the far-right extremists is largely seen as persistent. Although often secondary to the jihadi threat, some countries see it as the primary potential source of political violence (such are the cases of Austria or Germany), or reaching a similar level as jihadi terrorism (Finland). Eighty percent of the respondents to our survey believe far-right extremism is becoming a very serious threat to Europe.

The threat is considered sufficiently serious to receive a special focus in various reports released by security services, notably devoted to neo-Nazism, white supremacy and accelerationism in general.²⁸ Such reports also include references to attacks and plots carried out by lone-actors motivated by nationalism and anti-immigration.²⁹ Moreover, German security reports also note the existence of an “informal” network of groups, individuals, and organisations, from nationalist-conservative to right-wing extremists, that work together to promote their sometimes anti-liberal and anti-democratic positions in society.³⁰ This is also attempted via, for example, organisation of music or combat sports events (also known as ‘Active Clubs’) by such networks.³¹

21 Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 74.

22 Federal Ministry of the Interior, Brief Summary 2023, 48; Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 77; NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2023, 14; Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, Security Report of the Slovak Republic for 2023, 10.

23 Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, Security Report of the Slovak Republic for 2023, 10; Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Brief Summary 2023 Report on the Protection of the Constitution: Facts and Trends, 47.

24 NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2024.

25 AP News. “The Fatal Stabbing of a German Tourist by a Suspected Radical Puts Sharp Focus on the Paris Olympics.” EL PAÍS, December 3, 2023. <https://english.elpais.com/international/2023-12-03/the-fatal-stabbing-of-a-german-tourist-by-a-suspected-radical-puts-sharp-focus-on-the-paris-olympics.html>; VSSE, Intelligence report 2023, 11.

26 Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, Annual Report on National Security 2023, 51; National Intelligence Service, Annual Report 2023: Priorities and Areas of Action, 11; Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), National Risk Assessment of Terrorist Financing 2024, (Copenhagen: PET, January 2024), 16, <https://pet.dk/en/about-pet/news-list/pet-releases-an-english-version-national-risk-assessment-of-terrorist-financing/2024/04/12>.

27 VSSE, Intelligence report 2023, 11.

28 Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Brief Summary 2023 Report on the Protection of the Constitution: Facts and Trends, 21; Swedish Security Service, Annual Report 2023/2024, 25; VSSE, Intelligence report 2023, 18; PET, Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark 2024, 22.

29 PET, Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark 2024, 24; Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat (BMI) [Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community], Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023 [2023 Report on the Protection of the Constitution] (Berlin: BMI, 2024), 67, <https://www.verfassungsschutz.de>.

30 Brief Summary 2023 Report: Facts and Trends, 24.

31 Brief Summary 2023 Report: Facts and Trends, 23; Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 20, 28; General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD), Annual Report 2023, (The Hague: AIVD, 2023), 18; PET, Assessment of the Terrorist Threat, 22; DANS, ГОДИШЕН ДОКЛАД, 34.

Some reports also discuss the likes of online radicalisation and the difficulty of its detection, especially among the youth,³² in the context of potential far-right extremist violence. Interestingly, youth radicalisation is not limited to the online realm, with Slovakia, for instance, reporting that two-thirds of the country's high school students have reported encountering extremism in a school environment.³³

Finally, some countries such as Romania and Estonia, do not mention the threat of terrorism/political violence from the far-right extremist at all³⁴ or treat it as “marginal” and dominated by “socially vulnerable individuals, whose primary motive for hateful expressions is not ideology but rather a fascination with violence [...]. Except for a few exceptions, these individuals are active only on the internet.”³⁵

Far-Left Extremism

Far-left violence and terrorism is a subject discussed in the reporting of the security services of the EU MS. However, it is not considered of urgency comparable to the threat emanating from the jihadi or far-right terrorism. Only 20 percent of the respondents to our survey consider that far-left extremism is becoming a serious threat to Europe (47 percent disagree, 33 percent are neutral). Violence from the far-left is not always persistent or structural, as argued by the authorities in Belgium,³⁶ Denmark,³⁷ and the Netherlands.³⁸ Furthermore, Czech, Romanian, Slovak, Spanish, and Dutch security reports do not mention militant violence or political violence from such groups as a concern at all. Some countries are nonetheless more concerned than others with far-left extremism, notably Greece and Italy. According to Greek services, “the extremist actions that have taken place in our country in the last decades come from both the far-left and anarchist world, as well as from the violent far-right.”³⁹ Italy's annual security report does not provide a specific section on far-left terrorism but notes that “libertarians,” due to their “anti-imperialist and anti-colonialist” attitudes, might direct propaganda toward institutions with interests in the “occupied territories” (i.e. Palestine) such as Italian banks.⁴⁰

The militant far-left groups often appear fragmented⁴¹ while attempting to find a common cause with others via anti-capitalist, anti-imperialist, and pro-environmental messaging. The Austrian security services underscore that such messaging provides far-left groups with a potent platform for recruitment of new and mobilisation of old members.⁴² This sometimes leads to far-left groups' involvement in property damage under the banner of climate protection, such as in Austria and

32 VSSE, Intelligence report 2023, 19; PET, Assessment of the Terrorist Threat, 23; DSN, Informe Anual de Seguridad Nacional 2023, 53; Regeringen, Nationell strategi mot våldsbejakande extremism och terrorism – förebygga, förhindra, skydda och hantera [National Strategy against Violent Extremism and Terrorism – Prevent, Counter, Protect, and Manage], (Stockholm: Regeringen), 2024, 20, <https://www.government.se/reports/2024/sweden-counterterrorism-strategy.pdf>.

33 Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, Security Report of the Slovak Republic for 2023, 11.

34 DIRECȚIA DE INVESTIGARE A INFRAȚIUNILOR DE CRIMINALITATE ORGANIZATĂ ȘI TERORISM [Directorate for the Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism] (DIICOT), Raport de Activitate 2023 [Activity Report 2023], (București: Ministerul Public, Parchetul de pe lângă Înalta Curte de Casație și Justiție), February 2024.

35 Bezpečnostní informační služba [Security Information Service] (BIS), Výroční zpráva 2023

[Annual report 2023], (Praha: Bezpečnostní informační služba), 2023, 34, <https://www.bis.cz/public/site/bis.cz/content/vyrocní-zpravy/2023-vz-cj.pdf>.

36 OCAM, Rapport Annuel 2023, 26.

37 PET, Assessment of the Terrorist Threat, 33.

38 NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2024, 37.

39 Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών, Ετήσια Έκθεση 2023, 11.

40 Sistema di informazione per la sicurezza della Repubblica, Relazione sulla politica dell'informazione per la sicurezza 2023 [Report on the Information Policy for Security 2023], (Roma: Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, Dipartimento delle Informazioni per la Sicurezza), 2023, 93 <https://www.sicurezzanazionale.gov.it>.

41 OCAM, Note Stratégique, 5.

42 Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 49.

Germany.⁴³ In France, particularly, such groups are also involved in violent expressions of anti-police sentiment.⁴⁴

German reporting dwells on the violent offences by the far-left militants and the complex structure of the milieu.⁴⁵ One of the stand-out tactics is sabotage against critical infrastructure where far-left extremists target sectors such as energy and telecommunications, viewing these as symbolic of capitalist oppression.⁴⁶ Campaigns such as Germany's *Switch Off*⁴⁷ show how climate activism and anti-capitalist movements can blend together, with groups aiming to disrupt what they see as tools of capitalist and state control.

Interestingly, France has recently experienced a fair share of incidents related to the far-left, elements of which allegedly attempted to disrupt the 2024 Olympic Games or propagate their cause while attempting to make the most of the publicity surrounding this global event. The suspected far-left militants targeted the French railway system 'SNCF' – "a symbol of state power and its collusion with capitalism."⁴⁸ On 28 July 2024, a student was arrested for preparing the sabotage of TGV fibre optic cables just before the Olympics' opening ceremony.⁴⁹ Three days earlier, near Toulouse, far-left activists took credit for destroying a relay antenna in a fire, which cut internet services for thousands of households. A message reading "No JO" (JO – Jeux Olympiques, or Olympic Games) was discovered on a pylon.⁵⁰

Moreover, far-left militants have also been involved in transnational solidarity actions such as supporting the Kurds, but also the far-left Turkish sympathisers from DHKP-C (*Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi-Cephesi* - Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front). Such actions are dominated by the far-left's involvement in or organisation of rallies by militants in Germany, Denmark, Belgium, and the Netherlands.⁵¹

"Other" Types of Terrorism or Extremism

As discussed in previous ICCT publications,⁵² European governments have recently "devised a plethora of terms used to describe" another potentially extremist phenomenon, which seemed to have fully emerged during the COVID-19 pandemic: anti-government extremism (AGE). Germany prefers the term "delegitimisation of the state relevant to constitutional protection," Austria recently introduced the category of "hostile to the state", and the Netherlands opted for "anti-institutional extremism," which is defined as the belief in a world "ruled by an evil elite", consisting of the government, media, researchers, and scientists who want to oppress, enslave, and even kill part of "the ordinary people." The Swedish Security Service refers to "anti-government rhetoric" and Sweden's National Centre for Terrorist Threat Assessment discusses "anti-establishment

43 Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 49; Centre de Recherche de l'École des Officiers de la Gendarmerie Nationale (CREOGN), *Terrorisme en France – Panorama des Mouvements Radicales en 2023* [Terrorism in France – Overview of Radical Movements in 2023], (Paris: CREOGN, 2024), 3, <https://www.gendarmerie.interieur.gouv.fr>; BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 168; DANS, ГОДИШЕН ДОКЛАД, 34.

44 CREOGN, *Terrorisme en France – Panorama des Mouvements Radicales en 2023*, 3.

45 BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 37, 68-73.

46 CREOGN, *Terrorisme en France – Panorama des Mouvements Radicales en 2023*, 3; BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 168.

47 BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 169-170.

48 "Sabotages des lignes SNCF et réseaux télécoms avant les JO : l'ombre de l'ultragauche plane sur les opérations commandos." *La Dépêche*, August 4, 2024. <https://www.ladepeche.fr/2024/08/04/sabotages-des-lignes-sncf-et-reseaux-telecoms-avant-les-jo-lombre-de-lultragauche-plane-sur-les-operations-commandos-12120272.php>; "Édito : attaque massive sur le réseau TGV, la relative prudence des politiques," *France Info*, July 27, 2024, https://www.francetvinfo.fr/replay-radio/l-edito-politique/edito-attaque-massive-sur-le-reseau-tgv-la-relative-prudence-des-politiques_6645423.html.

49 "Seine-Maritime: un militant d'ultragauche arrêté sur un site de la SNCF," *Le Figaro*, July 29, 2024, <https://www.lefigaro.fr/demain/societe/sabotage-du-reseau-sncf-un-militant-d-ultragauche-interpelle-dimanche-sur-un-site-de-seine-maritime-20240729>.

50 Sabotages des lignes SNCF et réseaux télécoms avant les JO," *La Dépêche*.

51 BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 151; PET, *Assessment of the Terrorist Threat*, 9; NCTV, *Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2024*, 37; OCAM, *Rapport Annuel 2023*, 11.

52 Bàrbara Molas, Anne Craanen, Sabrina Tripodi, Kacper Rękawek, and Thomas Renard, *Anti-Government Threats and Their Transnational Connections*, The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), March 2024, DOI: 10.19165/2024.3834

narratives.”⁵³ Not all of these anti-state, anti-establishment, and anti-mainstream extremists are violent, and many would dispute the extent to which they can even be called extremists.⁵⁴

In the Netherlands, the General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD) published a report⁵⁵ specifically focused on this new threat, whereas the national fusion centre (NCTV) noted that

*several thousand people [...] consider Dutch laws and regulations as invalid and refuse, for example, to meet the financial obligations imposed on them from there, such as paying taxes and fines. In December 2023, several instigators from the movement were arrested [...] Several others were arrested for threats, one of whom is also suspected of incitement and calling for violence through social media. Interestingly, such arrests and convictions do not yet lead to increased activities and (large-scale) mobilization of other sovereigns.*⁵⁶

However, “several hundred of the self-proclaimed sovereignists” have been said to be preparing for violent confrontation with the government.⁵⁷

A similar focus on anti-state and sovereign entities began to appear in other European countries. For example, this has been noted by the Austrian⁵⁸ or German services, which zoom in on the so-called “Reichsbürger” and “Selbstverwalter” (literally, “citizens of the Reich” and “self-administrators”).⁵⁹ The AGE-like sentiment is also noticed in Italian reporting. There it overlaps with the anarchist movement and its opposition to state power and institutions, such as the prison system (especially in relation to prison conditions of the former anarchist bomber, Alfredo Cospito, convicted to 23 years of imprisonment) and broader societal structures like economic and technological systems, the military-industrial complex institutions.⁶⁰⁶¹

Some other forms of extremism are also mentioned by some countries, such as “special interest terrorism” perpetrated by climate-oriented militants, considered as a new type of violence, distinct from far-left militancy.⁶² Moreover, Slovenian services also feature “cyberterrorism” as one of the potential sources of threat to EU MS.⁶³ Specifically, this is referred to as attacks on computer systems and data aimed at disrupting essential services and damaging infrastructure such as the energy sector or communications.

Finally, several services point to a growing convergence trend amongst the extremists of Europe.⁶⁴ Ideology seems less prominent among new recruits of different forms of extremism, who seem more driven by their anger and a fascination for violence.⁶⁵ Belgium’s CUTA stressed the evolutionary nature of the threat of terrorism, which has become less clear-cut ideologically and is nowadays fuelled by “all kinds of conspiracy theories, anti-establishment sentiments anti-establishment sentiments, but also personal or psychological problems often form a cocktail hard-to-define cocktail of motives.”⁶⁶ This reality contributes further to the blurring of the lines between extremism and terrorism, as well as between different types of ideologies.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ For a good overview of the issue see: EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, “Violent Anti-System Extremism”, The Council of the European Union, 10 October 2022, 13177/22.

⁵⁵ General Intelligence and Security Service (AIVD). Anti-institutional Extremism in the Netherlands: A Serious Threat to the Democratic Legal Order? (The Hague: AIVD), 2023.

⁵⁶ NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2024, 34.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 35.

⁵⁸ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 36-37.

⁵⁹ Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, Brief Summary 2023 Report on the Protection of the Constitution: Facts and Trends, 30.

⁶⁰ Sistema di informazione per la sicurezza della Repubblica, Relazione sulla politica dell'informazione per la sicurezza 2023, 92–94.

⁶¹ Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (BfV). “Reichsbürger und Selbstverwalter [Reich Citizens and Self-Adherents].” Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution. https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/EN/topics/reichsbuerger-and-selbstverwalter/reichsbuerger-and-selbstverwalter_node.html#doc725690bodyText2.

⁶² Ministry of Defence, Assessment of the Threat Posed by Terrorism to the Republic of Slovenia, 16–17.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 75.

⁶⁵ AIVD, Annual Report 2023, 15.

⁶⁶ OCAM, Rapport Annuel 2023, 4.

Cross-Cutting Issues

Beyond the issue of ideologies, our survey highlights some important trends in terrorism. All respondents consider that a low-cost attack (i.e. primarily stabbing) by a lone actor is more likely than complex, coordinated attacks. Ninety-three percent of the respondents also confirm the trend noted in several reports from services that people are getting involved in terrorist activities at a younger age compared to previously. Furthermore, all but one respondent consider that radicalisation is more likely to occur online than offline, which a majority believes it can also lead to offline violence. Finally, 73 percent of the respondents also agree that immigration can increase the risk of terrorism under certain circumstances.

3. National Security Contexts

Terrorist threats and perceptions, as well as CT responses, are shaped by a variety of factors and events, domestically and internationally. For instance, Sweden's services noted a change in the perception of their country amongst extremist groups following the public burnings of the Quran. These drew widespread international reactions and led to the country being portrayed as "anti-Islamic" and a direct target for "revenge" attacks.⁶⁷ In other cases, factors influencing a given country's CT could be connected to its history, as is the case with Germany which stresses a "responsibility" to ensure that "the Nazi era," as favoured by the country's right-wing extremists, "never happens again."⁶⁸

Throughout the last year, however, the key contextual event shaping CT amongst EU MS has been the eruption of the conflict between Hamas and Israel. Several countries, including Belgium, Spain,⁶⁹ Netherlands,⁷⁰ Austria,⁷¹ France,⁷² Slovakia,⁷³ and Romania⁷⁴ have specifically mentioned the conflict as a potential driver of domestic extremism and violence. The conflict provided an opportunity for jihadi groups "to encourage sympathisers to carry out attacks in the West."⁷⁵ This could lead to individuals or small groups being inspired to conduct terrorist attacks, including against Jewish institutions.⁷⁶ The Belgian CUTA estimated that "a significant part of the population clearly feels concerned by the conflict,"⁷⁷ which allows for a development of seemingly unusual extremist alliance between Islamists, pro-Palestinians but also Turkish right-wing and left-wing extremists who had mobilised along anti-Semitic and anti-Israeli lines.⁷⁸ The German security bureaucracy noted that in their view and on the basis of intelligence collected, some of these extremists developed a conspiratorial outlook on the events of 7 October 2023. In their view, the attack was in fact an Israeli or Jewish plot aimed at, paradoxically, obtaining or cementing "world domination" for the Jews. Allegedly, this was to be ensured by staging such a horrific event to elicit worldwide sympathy for Israel and the Jews. This narrative was accompanied by a typical reversal of the roles of victim and perpetrator, blaming "the Jews" and ultimately Israel for antisemitism in the world and especially in the Middle East."⁷⁹

As expected, such stances won the approval of some of the most rabidly antisemitic extreme-right groups such as the Nordic Resistance Movement.⁸⁰ The impact of the conflict has not been limited to ideological shifts but has also manifested in street-level violence in European cities. In Amsterdam, tensions escalated ahead of a UEFA Europa League football match between Israeli club Maccabi Tel Aviv and Dutch club AFC Ajax. Maccabi fans were seen tearing down Palestinian flags from buildings, chanting anti-Arab slogans, and engaging in violence, while online messages circulated calling for physical attacks on Israeli fans, calling for a "Jew hunt." Clashes erupted

67 Swedish Security Service, Annual Report 2023/2024, 13.

68 Bundesministerium des Innern und für Heimat (BMI) [Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community], *Rechtsextremismus mit Entschlossenheit bekämpfen: Die wehrhafte Demokratie nutzen* [Combating Far-Right Extremism with Determination: Using the Instruments of Defensive Democracy], (Berlin: BMI, Februar 2024), 2.

69 "The deterioration of the security situation in the Sahel, the burning of copies of the Koran in Europe throughout the year and the outbreak of the conflict in Israel and Gaza as a result of the Hamas attacks of October 7, 2023 are elements of intense mobilization of jihadist environments and could lead to processes of radicalization and the commission of terrorist attacks globally and on national territory." (Annual sec report, 2023, p. 50).

70 NCTV, *Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2023*, 4.

71 Bundesministerium für Inneres, *Verfassungsschutzbericht*, p. 81.

72 CREOGN, *Terrorisme en France – Panorama des Mouvements Radicales en 2023*, 3.

73 "In the territory of the Slovak Republic, an elevated terrorist threat level 2 remained in force, which took into account the risk of terrorist threat in some European states, in particular in connection with activities defaming the Islamic faith (burning of the Koran) and the conflict in the Gaza Strip. [...] In the context of Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip, the risk of a spontaneous terrorist attack in Europe primarily against Jewish/Israeli targets by radicalised Islamist individuals was quite high" (English sec report, 2023, p. 10).

74 DIICOT, *Raport de Activitate 2023*, 38.

75 NCTV, *Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2023*, 4.

76 Bundesministerium für Inneres, *Verfassungsschutzbericht*, 81.

77 OCAM, *Rapport Annuel 2023*, 14.

78 Federal Ministry of the Interior and Community, *Brief Summary 2023 Report on the Protection of the Constitution: Facts and Trends*, 12.

79 Ibid, 15.

80 Kacper Rekawek and Morgan Finnsjö, "An Interview with Morgan Finnsjö on the Nordic Resistance Movement (NRM)," International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), August 13, 2024, <https://icct.nl/publication/interview-morgan-finnsjo-nordic-resistance-movement-nrm>.

across the city, with fireworks fired at people, physical assaults, and ambushes in the city centre.⁸¹ The attacks, condemned by Dutch and European officials, reignited debates about security at cultural and sporting events and the ease with which international conflicts can be exploited for political violence. Interestingly, Germany also notes the possibility of the Israeli-Gaza conflict being used by the likes of Iran to increase its intelligence gathering activities in Germany and Europe, also with a view towards planning violent actions: intimidation of opposition members, but also the punishment of “traitors” or “defectors.”⁸²

The Russian war of aggression against Ukraine is another powerful contextual event which frames different EU MS counter-terrorism analysis. As mentioned previously, some security services have pointed out the risk of infiltration of ISKP operatives into Europe, via the refugee flows from Ukraine.⁸³ The theme of war on the EU’s borders as a catalyst for extremist or terrorist infiltration has also been picked up in CT messaging from, for example, Spanish⁸⁴ and French⁸⁵ authorities.

Various security reports point out to the fact that state actors have been actively involved in asymmetrical attempts aimed at individual EU MS. This is mostly concerning foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) or disinformation attempts, notably aimed at weakening social cohesion and trust in government, but at times also veers into the domain of political violence or even terrorism. To some extent, this is a novelty in the European perception of political violence, which throughout most of the 21st century was focused on a bottom-up or sub-state sources of political violence in general, and terrorism in particular.

Three countries, (People’s Republic of China, Iran, and the Russian Federation), are mentioned by the European security services in their reports in relation to the aforementioned activities. For instance, Russian diversionary and sabotage operations did get a mention in the Latvian report,⁸⁶ the Bulgarian Intelligence report,⁸⁷ and the Czech Security Information Service Report⁸⁸ as an element of the overall Russian threat to the West, alongside “efforts to polarize the public, spread disinformation,” disrupt campaigns focused on provision of aid to Ukraine (from a disinformation perspective),⁸⁹ and hack “the information infrastructure of various Czech institutions and organizations.”⁹⁰ The Dutch NCTV stated in its reporting that:

*there are indications that state actors are using cyber attacks to call on Muslims to take revenge for the violations of the Quran. A recent example is a hack of telecom providers, which resulted in a text message being sent to several Norwegian telephone numbers urging them to take revenge. The text message appeared to have come from the leader of Hezbollah, but the Norwegian security service PST has determined that a foreign hacker group was behind the sending of the text message. This group used the same platform as Russian hacker groups before.*⁹¹

81 NOS, “Maccabi-fans hadden planken en riemen, politie neemt beelden mee in onderzoek” [Maccabi Fans Had Planks and Belts, Police Include Footage in Investigation], NOS, November 10, 2024, <https://nos.nl/artikel/2544021-maccabi-fans-hadden-planken-en-riemen-politie-neemt-beelden-mee-in-onderzoek>.

82 BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 326–327.

83 Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, Security Report of the Slovak Republic for 2023, 10; Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 77; BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 480; NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2023, 14.

84 “The situation in the Sahel and its geographical proximity to Spain constitutes a real threat, both because of the possible outflow of fighters to that territory and because of the possible arrival of terrorists who can make use of structures and transit routes used by organized crime.” (annual sec report, 2023, p. 47).

85 “The war in Ukraine also threatens a return to State terrorism. It can be assumed that given Russia’s unrestrained actions, weapons of all kinds can be sourced from the Ukrainian theatre to serve proxy or terrorist groups. These weapons could be used against our interests, alongside a disinformation campaign” (but this is from 2022 strategic review, p. 13).

86 Latvian State Security Service, Annual Report 2023, 4, 15, 20.

87 DANS, ГОДИШЕН ДОКЛАД, 30.

88 BIS, Výroční zpráva, 8.

89 Ibid, 11.

90 Ibid, 150.

91 NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2023, 17.

This hack arrived on top of a concerted Russian online disinformation campaign which blamed the Swedish government for the violations of the Quran and thus exposed Sweden to “legitimate” violent actions as means of retribution.⁹²

Other types of state-driven attacks fall somewhere between the categories of hybrid warfare and state terrorism. For instance, Latvia highlighted the Russian state-backed disinformation campaigns and propaganda as part of broader hybrid warfare strategies, aiming to destabilise the country and promote anti-Western narratives.⁹³ Similarly, in 2023, Estonian online systems controlling heating and water supplies have been broken into by, allegedly, Iranian attackers. The attacks also reverberated outside of Estonia and even reached Ireland, knocking out water supplies to 180 homes in Ireland.⁹⁴ The Dutch AIVD report also mentions that Iranian cyber sabotage attacks also reached Albania,⁹⁵ although this might have been designed as “punishment” for Albania hosting a camp for the Iranian Mujahedin-e Khalq (MKO) opposition group on its territory.

Regarding political violence perpetrated, inspired, or organised by malign external state actors in the EU, the Danish assessment is indicative of growing concerns among CT services. It mentions past activities in this field, such as Libya’s involvement in the bombing of the airliner over Scotland in 1988, or the 2012 attack on an Israeli tourist bus in Bulgaria, carried out by Iran-backed Hezbollah.⁹⁶ The report also notes a general increase in the willingness of certain states to back targeted acts of violence in Western countries, though it does not specify which states (“there is an increased intent among certain states to support targeted use of violence in the West”).⁹⁷ State-sponsored terrorism also received a mention in a Belgian report and is directly referenced alongside Russian disinformation campaigns aimed at destabilising Western Europe and manipulating public sentiment.⁹⁸

Finally, it is worth mentioning that various malign state activities can overlap and reinforce their mutual effects. Consider the case of Sweden, where Iran has allegedly been using proxies for intelligence gathering, possibly even with the view of conducting attacks on the Swedish soil in retaliation to the Quran burnings, with both China and Russia simultaneously amplifying disinformation campaigns portraying Stockholm as an “anti-Islamic country,” and, henceforth, bolstering far-right extremists.⁹⁹

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Latvian State Security Service, Annual Report 2023, 4, 10, 15, 40.

⁹⁴ Estonian Security Service, Annual Report 2023, 26.

⁹⁵ AIVD, Annual Report 2023, 32.

⁹⁶ Danish Security and Intelligence Service (PET), Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark 2024, (Copenhagen: PET, March 2024), 38 <https://pet.dk/en/-/media/mediefiler/pet/dokumenter/analyser-og-vurderinger/vurdering-af-terrortruslen-mod-danmark/vurdering-af-terrortruslen-mod-danmark-2024-eng.pdf>

⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁹⁸ OCAM, Note Stratégique, 4.

⁹⁹ Swedish Security Service, Annual Report 2023/2024, 6, 12, 28.

4. New Legislation

Throughout the last two decades, EU MS adopted different approaches to CT and P/CVE legislation, ranging from the introduction of new terrorism bills, to the modification of their criminal codes or other legal acts. Below is a brief and non-exhaustive review of key recent legislative developments in Europe.

Austria introduced the Crisis and Security Act aimed at strengthening interdepartmental co-operation in crisis situations in 2023, due to the rise of antisemitic incidents related to the ongoing Israel-Gaza war.¹⁰⁰ This followed the introduction of “the second anti-terror package” in 2022, including key measures such as a mandatory weapons ban for convicted terrorists, enhanced inter-agency cooperation, and immediate firearms restrictions for individuals under domestic violence restraining orders.¹⁰¹ Similarly, France, in the context of the then-upcoming Olympic Games and the increased threat of terrorism, authorised the use of artificial intelligence in video surveillance. The move was designed to enhance security during major public events while also balancing privacy concerns by limiting the use of biometric data.¹⁰² Initially intended as a temporary measure until March 2025, authorities have since extended its use beyond the Olympics, applying it to other events such as the Strasbourg Christmas market.¹⁰³

Denmark, fearing terrorist acts in retaliation for the Quran burnings,¹⁰⁴ introduced a law prohibiting the improper treatment of religious texts.¹⁰⁵ Slovakia, which witnessed an assassination attempt against its prime minister in May 2024, introduced a package of measures attempting to augment security and protection conditions for elected officials.¹⁰⁶

Finland, which has no standalone counter-terrorism law¹⁰⁷ (with the exception of the Act on Detecting and Preventing Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing of 2017¹⁰⁸), initiated a reform of its CT legislation in 2023.¹⁰⁹ This reform aims to address gaps in existing criminalisation processes, strengthen penalties for terrorist offences, and ensure coherence in how these offences are defined. A key focus is on expanding liability to include acts that significantly contribute to terrorism, such as assisting family members in terrorist-controlled territories.

100 Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 151.

101 Bundesministerium für Inneres (BMI) [Federal Ministry of the Interior], “Zweites ‘Anti-Terror-Paket’” [Second ‘Anti-Terror Package’], BMI Magazin, January 2, 2022, https://www.bmi.gv.at/magazin/2022_01_02/Recht.aspx.

102 Vie Publique, “Chronologie de la législation antiterroriste depuis 1986” [Chronology of Anti-Terrorist Legislation Since 1986], Vie Publique, accessed February 17, 2025, <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/18530-chronologie-de-la-legislation-antiterroriste-1986-2024>.

103 Le Dernière Heure, “La France a étendu les mesures de sécurité olympiques aux marchés de Noël” [France has extended Olympic security measures to Christmas markets], Le Dernière Heure, December 23, 2024, <https://www.lederniereheure.com/la-france-a-etendu-les-mesures-de-securite-olympiques-aux-marches-de-noel/>; Radio France Internationale (RFI), “Privacy fears grow as France extends AI surveillance beyond Olympics,” RFI, October 11, 2024, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20241011-privacy-fears-grow-as-france-extends-ai-surveillance-beyond-olympics-av5>; Boursorama, “France: Des mesures de surveillance décrétées durant les JO étendues au marché de Noël de Strasbourg” [France: Surveillance measures decreed during the Olympics extended to the Strasbourg Christmas market], Boursorama, December 23, 2024, <https://www.boursorama.com/actualite-economique/actualites/france-des-mesures-de-surveillance-decretees-durant-les-jo-etendues-au-marche-de-noel-de-strasbourg-74d657f4fd521cd850f5488f1a587b1c>.

104 Jan M. Olsen, “Denmark’s parliament adopts a law making it illegal to burn the Quran or other religious texts,” AP News, December 7, 2023, <https://apnews.com/article/denmark-deseccation-law-holy-texts-quran-931120e5463a3e15c372a13c862aa775>.

105 Danish Ministry of Justice, “Regeringen vil sætte ind over for systematiske forhånelser af religiøse skrifter” [The government will take action against systematic desecration of religious texts], Danish Ministry of Justice, October 27, 2023, <https://www.justitsministeriet.dk/pressemeddelelse/regeringen-vil-saette-ind-over-for-systematiske-forhaanelser-af-religioese-skrifter/>.

106 Associated Press (AP), “Slovakia plans to boost politicians’ protection after assassination attempt on populist premier,” AP News, June 12, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/slovakia-protection-politicians-assassination-attempt-fico-9d5c7cdbe03536b0c182185c5682a1e2>; Topky, “Polícia zaviedla po atentáte mimoriadne bezpečnostné opatrenia!” [Police implemented extraordinary security measures after the assassination attempt!], Topky, May 20, 2024, <https://www.topky.sk/cl/10/2763417/AKTUALNE-Policia-zaviedla-po-atentate-mimoriadne-bezpecnostne-opatrenia-FOTO-Tieto-budovy-a-ludi-strazia-Non-Stop>.

107 Antti Peltari, “Director’s column: Finland counters terrorism, regardless of ideology,” Finnish Security and Intelligence Service (Supo), June 21, 2022, <https://supo.fi/en/-/director-s-column-finland-counters-terrorism-regardless-of-ideology>.

108 Finlex, “Laki rahanpesun ja terrorismin rahoittamisen estämisestä 444/2017” [Act on Preventing Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing 444/2017], Finlex, <https://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/2017/20170444>.

109 Valtioneuvosto, “Terrorismilainsäädännön kokonaisuudistus käynnistyy” [Comprehensive Reform of Terrorism Legislation Begins], Valtioneuvosto, accessed February 17, 2025, <https://valtioneuvosto.fi/-/1410853/terrorismilainsaadannon-kokonaisuudistus-kaynnistyy>.

In October 2024, Germany introduced an amendment to the Residence Act enabling swifter deportation of “anyone who does not have a German passport” and who publicly approves of terrorist acts, including on social media.¹¹⁰ Additionally, following the attack in Solingen, in August 2024, the same bill included an amendment to the Weapons Act, which expanded the prohibition on carrying knives to public events, public transportation, and designated restricted areas such as certain squares and roads or educational institutions.¹¹¹

In 2023, Sweden amended its Terrorist Crime Act¹¹² in order to criminalise participation in terrorist organisations and financing terrorist groups. The same year, the Netherlands increased the penalty for participation in a terrorist organisation.¹¹³ Similarly, in 2024, Italy criminalised the possession of materials intended for terrorist purposes, such as instructions for making explosives or handling dangerous substances.¹¹⁴

Bulgaria’s Anti-Financing of Terrorism Act¹¹⁵ originally enacted in 2003, was amended in 2023 so that mechanisms are enhanced for inter-agency cooperation by mandating information exchange between the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Finance, and the State Agency for National Security, even overriding banking and professional secrecy in terrorism-related cases. Along with that, the law expanded the definition of entities subject to sanctions, including individuals acting on behalf of sanctioned organisations.

In 2024, Spain introduced a law to support individuals affected by terrorism. The law emphasises preserving the dignity and memory of victims while providing comprehensive support, including psychological aid, economic reparations, and educational assistance.¹¹⁶

Figure 2. Counter-Terrorism Legislation – New or Updated – 2023-2025

	Recognition, Tribute, Memory and Dignity to the Victims of Terrorism - New Law 2024
	Terrorist Crime Act - Amended 2023
	Maximum penalty for participation in a terrorist organization - Amended 2023
	Prohibition of improper treatment of writings of religious significance [...] - New 2023
	Residence Act - Amended 2024 Weapons Act - Amended 2024
	Law on the Olympic and Paralympic games 2024 - Amended 2023
	Anti-financing of terrorism Act - Amended 2023
	Crisis and security Act - New Law 2023
	Package of (consolidation) measures for 2025 - Amended 2024
	Provisions for the prevention and counteract of terrorism and organised crime - Amended 2024

110 Bundesgesetzblatt, Gesetz zur Verbesserung der inneren Sicherheit und des Asylsystems [Law to Improve Internal Security and the Asylum System], Teil I, Nr. 332 (October 30, 2024), 3-5 <https://www.bgbl.de>.

111 Bundesgesetzblatt, Gesetz zur Verbesserung der inneren Sicherheit und des Asylsystems [Law to Improve Internal Security and the Asylum System], Teil I, Nr. 332 (October 30, 2024), 5-10 <https://www.bgbl.de>.

112 Elin Hofverberg, “Sweden: New Terrorist Crimes Legislation Enters into Force,” Global Legal Monitor, June 13, 2023, <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2023-06-13/sweden-new-terrorist-crimes-legislation-enters-into-force/>.

113 Nederlands Juristenblad (NJB), “Wetsvoorstel: Strafmaksimum deelneming terroristische organisatie,” NJB, 22 november 2023, <https://www.njb.nl/wetgeving/wetsvoorstellen/strafmaximum-deelneming-terroristische-organisatie/>.

114 Carlo Canepa, “Tutti i nuovi reati introdotti o ampliati dal ddl ‘Sicurezza’” [All the new crimes introduced or expanded by the ‘Security’ bill], Pagella Politica, September 23, 2024, <https://www.pagellapolitica.it/articoli/tutti-reati-disegno-legge-sicurezza>.

115 Bulgarian Parliament, “Закон за мерките срещу финансирането на тероризма” [Law on Measures Against the Financing of Terrorism], State Gazette, No. 16, February 18, 2003, amended and supplemented in State Gazette, No. 31, April 4, 2003, <https://lex.bg/laws/ldoc/2135463446>.

116 Boletín Oficial del Estado (BOE), “Ley 1/2023, de 5 de abril, de Reconocimiento, Homenaje, Memoria y Dignidad a las Víctimas del Terrorismo,” BOE núm. 98, 25 de abril de 2023, <https://www.boe.es/buscar/act.php?id=BOE-A-2023-9958>.

5. Existing Challenges to CT or P/CVE Activities Encountered by EU MS in the Process of Mitigating Terrorist or Extremist Threats

Although counter-terrorism services are unlikely to advertise their weaknesses or core struggles publicly, they do occasionally voice some challenges they are confronted with.

A common theme is the challenge for the counter-terrorist services to keep track of the technologies deployed by their terrorist adversaries. The Dutch NCTV highlights the challenges posed by AI, 3D printing, and commercial drone usage in this respect.¹¹⁷ Some countries are more nuanced in their analysis, indicating concerns but not for the immediate future.¹¹⁸ Some services also emphasise that basic technology remains more popular among terrorists, with knives (“cold weapons”), and vehicles, and explosives as the most commonly used terrorist weapons by e.g. the jihadis.¹¹⁹

In contrast to this, Romania discusses technology in the light of national security as a lack of investment and modernisation hinders the development of more robust surveillance and crisis response capabilities,¹²⁰ which could affect the country’s resilience and security in the longer term.¹²¹

The Dutch authorities are also concerned about the dissemination of online extremist material within private digital spaces and alternative communication platforms, which may include invite-only forums or less visible online communities, where detection and intervention are more difficult.¹²² In this context, the Dutch, the Greek, and the Swedish services stress the need to maintain a delicate balance between the need to monitor and disrupt such channels/platforms and the respect for fundamental freedoms such as freedom of speech.¹²³

Another common challenge raised by CT services relates to the effective treatment and sharing of operational data on potential terrorist activities, such as tracking financial flows and travel patterns of known suspects. The widening of the extremist threats described above, involving potentially ever more individuals, and the growing amount of data collected by (or available to) the CT services further exacerbate the challenges of properly prioritising, analysing, and sharing relevant information in times of “infobesity.”¹²⁴ In this regard, respondents to our survey consider that Artificial Intelligence could become increasingly useful over time for CT services, although “not yet” as suggested by some respondents.

Beyond this, there is a recurring challenge of reaching a common understanding of trends and cooperation among all levels and partners.¹²⁵ Swedish reporting confirms this challenge in a national context, outlining the difficulty of cooperation among authorities at different levels (local, regional, national).¹²⁶ This challenge is worsened by the growing awareness of

117 Nationaal Coördinator Terrorismedbestrijding en Veiligheid (NCTV), Nationale Contraterrorisme Strategie 2022-2026: Het voorkomen en aanpakken van terrorisme en gewelddadig extremisme [National Counterterrorism Strategy 2022-2026: Preventing and Combating Terrorism and Violent Extremism], (Den Haag: Rijksoverheid, May 2022), 17, https://www.nctv.nl/22-26_CTSTRATEGY.pdf.

118 Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 12-13; Ministry of the Interior, National Risk Assessment 2023, Publications of the Ministry of the Interior 2023:6 (Helsinki: Ministry of the Interior, 2023), 45, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-324-610-2> and DSN, Informe Anual de Seguridad Nacional 2023, 54.

119 Estonian Internal Security Service (KAPO), Annual Review 2023, (Tallinn: KAPO, April 2024), 69 https://kapo.ee/sites/default/files/content_page_attachments/Annual%20review%202023-2024.pdf.

120 DIICOT, Raport de activitate 2023, 33.

121 Ibid

122 NCTV, Nationale Contraterrorisme Strategie 2022-2026, 15.

123 Ibid; Ελληνική Κυβέρνηση [Hellenic Government], Αξιολόγηση Κινδύνου Τρομοκρατίας 2023, 15; Regeringen, Nationell strategi mot våldsbejakande extremism och terrorism, 20.

124 VSSE, Intelligence report 2023.

125 NCTV, Nationale Contraterrorisme Strategie 2022-2026, 11.

126 Regeringen, Nationell strategi mot våldsbejakande extremism och terrorism, 29.

vulnerabilities in critical infrastructure as entities often “find it difficult to identify their critical assets, vulnerabilities, and threats they face.”¹²⁷ France also underlines the critical importance of protecting infrastructure, particularly underwater and space communication system, which are in need of advanced detection, assessment, and deterrence capabilities, and also require more coordination between departments.¹²⁸

Other challenges mentioned by services include the need to invest in societal resilience so that violent extremist narratives do not further undermine democratic values¹²⁹ which is particularly relevant in the context of the rise of AGE; the issue of collection and admission of evidence for terrorism crimes committed in conflict zones or a constant need to update national security legislation, especially in the light of disinformation¹³⁰ and other hybrid threats.¹³¹

127 Swedish Security Service, Annual Report 2023/2024, 18.

128 Ministry of Defence, National Strategic Review 2022 (Paris: Secrétariat Général de la Défense et de la Sécurité Nationale, 2022), 48-49.

129 NCTV, Nationale Contraterrorisme Strategie 2022-2026, 15.

130 Ibid, 18.

131 DIICOT, Raport de activitate 2023, 33.

6. Major CT Operations

Respondents to our survey are largely convinced (75 percent) that counter-terrorism is more effective today compared to five years ago, notably due to a more proactive approach and to more interagency cooperation. To be sure, there have been clear counter-terrorism successes in the past months, as illustrated by a number of operations leading to the arrest of individuals or cells involved in terrorist activities across Europe. It should not come as a surprise that certain trends amongst these operations emerge:

- as the threat is transnational in nature, so is the response with different sets of countries pooling resources to, inter alia, dismantle terrorist cells and arrests suspects of different ideological backgrounds;
- as could have been expected, organisations such as Hamas, Hezbollah, ISIS, and ISKP have been targeted in these operations and their activities were disrupted as a result of these;
- certain state activities, especially conducted by France, were designed to ensure the safe conduct of the 2024 Paris Olympics and other sports events.
- Russia-connected alleged state terrorist activities were also at the forefront of some of the CT operations, especially amongst Eastern EU MS, such as Poland. The international response to this emphasises ongoing vigilance.

In July 2023, Belgium, Croatia, Germany, Lithuania, Romania, and Italy coordinated an operation to arrest a right-wing terrorist network with support from Eurojust and Europol.¹³² According to the Dutch NCTV, the suspects allegedly belonged to the accelerationist group Sturmjäger Division. They distributed “right-wing terrorist propaganda and manuals for 3D printing weapons” but its members were also said to have “had access to weapons and were already writing manifestos,” normally published in the aftermath of an attack.¹³³

In the same month, nine people with ties to the ISKP were arrested in Germany and The Netherlands. Most of them were Tajik nationals, along with one Kyrgyz and one Turkmen individual, and had arrived via Ukraine in 2022. By mid-2022, the group had reportedly formed with plans to carry out major attacks, staying in touch with ISKP for support.¹³⁴

On 5 November 2023 Poland, Germany, and Austria arrested eight members of the far-right group ‘Saxony Separatists.’ This group is accused of promoting conspiracy theories and conducting paramilitary training in anticipation of a perceived collapse of state order and a “conquering of areas of former communist East Germany.”¹³⁵ Its alleged leader was among the arrested individuals, who were caught in a city at the Polish border. Additionally, 450 police officers were involved in the joint operation.¹³⁶

In December 2023, ISKP members were arrested in Austria and Germany for planning attacks targeting Christmas and New Year’s Eve celebrations.¹³⁷ Denmark likewise saw an arrest of three

¹³² Europol. “Five Right-Wing Terrorists Arrested Throughout Europe with the Support of Eurojust and Europol.” Europol, November 10, 2023. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/five-right-wing-terrorists-arrested-throughout-europe-support-of-eurojust-and-europol>.

¹³³ NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2024, 27.

¹³⁴ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 77.

¹³⁵ Al Jazeera. “Eight Members of Far-Right Group Arrested in Germany and Poland.” Al Jazeera, November 5, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/11/5/eight-members-of-far-right-group-arrested-in-germany-and-poland>.

¹³⁶ More, Rachel. “Germany Arrests Suspected Members of Neo-Nazi Group Plotting Revolt.” Reuters, November 5, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germany-arrests-eight-suspected-members-right-wing-group-plotting-revolt-2024-11-05/>.

¹³⁷ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 88.

people who were said to have been preparing a terrorist attack.¹³⁸ The arrests occurred on the same day as four Hamas members were arrested in Germany and The Netherlands in a joint operation. There is no indication that this was a joint operation between the three countries, however.¹³⁹ The arrested four allegedly had orders from to plan an attack on Jewish institutions across Europe.¹⁴⁰

Between December 2023 and February 2024, Estonia's Internal Security Service detained ten individuals suspected of involvement in a coordinated hybrid operation organised by Russian special services. The operation allegedly aimed to spread fear and create societal tension within Estonia. Among the detainees were individuals accused of vandalising properties, including breaking the car windows of Interior Minister Lauri Läänemets and a local journalist.¹⁴¹

Two Afghan nationals were arrested in Germany in March 2024 on suspicion of supporting the Islamic State and planning an attack on the Swedish parliament. Authorities alleged the men were motivated by Quran-burning incidents in Sweden, which they aimed to retaliate against through a firearms attack targeting police and civilians near the Swedish parliament. The suspects researched the area online and tried to unsuccessfully acquire weapons. The suspects are also accused of collecting EUR €2,000 to support imprisoned Islamic State members in Syria.¹⁴²

April 2024 saw a few arrests in both Germany and France. Three teenagers in Germany, two girls aged 15 and 16, and a 15-year-old boy were suspected of planning Islamist-motivated terror attacks. They had discussed plans to attack churches and synagogues in cities such as Dortmund, Düsseldorf, Cologne, and Iserlohn. Their plans allegedly included the use of Molotov cocktails and knives, with some members expressing intentions to acquire firearms. The arrests were initiated after authorities discovered that one of the suspects intended to travel to the Middle East to join the Islamic State group.¹⁴³ Two German-Russian nationals were likewise arrested for allegedly plotting sabotage attacks on military and industrial sites, including a US base training Ukrainian soldiers. Linked to Russia's GRU intelligence agency, they scouted targets and gathered materials like maps and photos. It is believed that they planned attacks aimed to undermine Germany's military support for Ukraine. One suspect had previously fought with pro-Russian separatists in Ukraine.¹⁴⁴ In France, another 16-year-old youth inspired by jihadist propaganda sought material to create an explosive belt to "die as a martyr for the Islamic State" at the Paris Olympics and was arrested.¹⁴⁵

In June 2024, Europol and forces from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Germany, Iceland, Moldova, Romania, the Slovak Republic, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom conducted Operation HOPPER II which targeted websites used to disseminate propaganda and to radicalise

138 "Seven Arrested in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands Over Suspected Terrorism Plots." Reuters, December 14, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/copenhagen-police-danish-intelligence-make-arrests-suspicion-preparations-attack-2023-12-14/>.

139 Vock, Ido. "Germany Arrests Over Alleged Hamas Anti-Jewish Plot." BBC News, December 14, 2023. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-67715120>; Le Monde with AFP. "Denmark and Germany Arrest Terror Suspects Planning Attacks in Europe." Le Monde, December 14, 2023. https://www.lemonde.fr/en/europe/article/2023/12/14/denmark-germany-arrest-hamas-suspects-planning-attacks_6344720_143.html; Camut, Nicolas. "4 Hamas Members Arrested in Germany, Netherlands Over Suspected Terror Plot Against Jews." Politico, December 14, 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/hamas-members-arrested-in-germany-netherlands-over-suspected-terror-plot-against-jews/>.

140 Anadolu Agency. "Germany Arrests 4 Hamas Members Over Alleged Attack Plans." Anadolu Agency, December 14, 2023. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/germany-arrests-4-hamas-members-over-alleged-attack-plans/3082873>; "Seven Arrested in Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands Over Suspected Terrorism Plots." Reuters, December 14, 2023. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/copenhagen-police-danish-intelligence-make-arrests-suspicion-preparations-attack-2023-12-14/>.

141 "Estonia Detains 10 Russians Suspected in 'Sabotage' Plot." DW, February 20, 2024. <https://www.dw.com/en/estonia-detains-10-russians-suspected-in-sabotage-plot/a-68312742>.

142 Leven, Denis. "Germany Arrests 2 Afghans Over Swedish Parliament Attack Plot." Politico, March 19, 2024. <https://www.politico.eu/article/germany-arrests-two-afghan-people-allegedly-planning-attack-sweden-parliament/>.

143 "Germany Arrests Three Teenagers on Suspicion of Attack Plot." Al Jazeera, April 12, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/12/germany-arrests-three-teenagers-on-suspicion-of-terror-attack-plot>.

144 "Germany Arrests Two Dual Nationals Over Alleged Russian Sabotage Plot." Al Jazeera, April 18, 2024. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2024/4/18/germany-arrests-two-dual-nationals-over-alleged-russian-sabotage-plot#:~:text=Germany%20has%20arrested%20two%20German-Russian%20dual%20nationals%20on,country%20to%20undermine%20Western%20military%20support%20for%20Ukraine>.

145 Spaaij, Ramón, and Andrew Zammit. "Terrorism Threat 2024: Paris Olympics - Learning from the Past to Understand the Present." International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2024. <https://icct.nl/publication/terrorism-threat-2024-paris-olympics-learning-past-understand-present>.

and recruit potential members of unnamed terrorist organisations. Thirteen websites spreading terrorist content were referred for removal.¹⁴⁶ In the same month, Spain and Germany dismantled a network suspected of supplying drone components to Hezbollah (three individuals were arrested in Spain, one in Germany). The components matched those found in downed drones in Israel, highlighting the cross-border trade.¹⁴⁷

In May, the French authorities detained an 18-year-old Chechen man who allegedly planned to target spectators and police at a soccer match in Saint-Étienne. Then, in July 2024, police arrested an 18-year-old far-right extremist in the Bas-Rhin region. He was running a Telegram group called French Aryan division, and was suspected of planning attacks during the Olympics.¹⁴⁸ Polish authorities also arrested nine individuals, citizens of Poland, Ukraine, and Belarus, suspected of conducting sabotage operations on behalf of Russian intelligence services. These acts included arson and physical assaults, targeting critical infrastructure, and attempting to destabilise the region.¹⁴⁹

In August 2024, Austrian authorities, with assistance from US intelligence agencies, foiled a significant terrorist plot targeting Taylor Swift's concerts in Vienna. The suspects had been radicalised online and were inspired by ISIS. They planned to execute a mass-casualty attack using explosives and bladed weapons, aiming to kill "tens of thousands" of the attendees. Following the arrests and confirmation of the plan, the three scheduled concerts were cancelled.¹⁵⁰

In October 2024, a collaborative effort between law enforcement agencies from Poland, Lithuania, Germany, and the UK, alongside the Polish Internal Security Agency (ABW) and Poland's National Public Prosecutor's Office, investigated incidents attributed to the Russian military Intelligence service (GRU). These included a fire at a transport hub in Jablonow, near Warsaw, and a similar event at Leipzig Airport in Germany, where an incendiary device was hidden in between other products. Shortly after, a fire in Birmingham led the UK authorities to suspect a coordinated terrorist attack with Russia's support.¹⁵¹

146 "Europol-Coordinated Operation Tackles the Threat of Terrorist-Operated Websites." Europol, June 14, 2024. <https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/newsroom/news/europol-coordinated-operation-tackles-threat-of-terrorist-operated-websites>.

147 "Spanish, German Police Detain Four Suspected of Trafficking Drone Parts to Hezbollah." Reuters, July 18, 2024. <https://www.reuters.com/world/spanish-german-police-detain-four-suspected-trafficking-drone-parts-hezbollah-2024-07-18/>; "Spain and Germany Arrest 4 People for Supplying Hezbollah with Parts for Drones Used Against Israel." Associated Press (AP), July 18, 2024. <https://apnews.com/article/spain-germany-arrests-hezbollah-drones-parts-israel-2f7a5f68b0d275521c6a66fe57583700>.

148 Nesser, Petter, and Wassim Nasr. "The Threat Matrix Facing the Paris Olympics." CTC Sentinel 17, no. 6 (June 2024). <https://ctc.westpoint.edu/the-threat-matrix-facing-the-paris-olympics/>; "French Security Services Arrest Far-Right Extremist Over Suspected Paris Olympics Plot." France 24, July 17, 2024. <https://www.france24.com/en/france/20240717-french-security-services-arrest-far-right-extremist-suspected-paris-olympics-plot-france>.

149 Żak, Karol. "Tusk o rosyjskich sabotażach w Polsce: Aresztowano dziewięć osób" [Tusk on Russian Sabotage in Poland: Nine People Arrested]. RMF 24, May 20, 2024. https://www.rmfm24.pl/fakty/polska/news-tusk-o-rosyjskich-sabotazach-w-polsce-aresztowano-dziewiec-osob,7522796#crp_state=1.

150 Lillis, Katie Bo. "US Intelligence Helped Stop Terror Plot Targeting Taylor Swift Concert, CIA Deputy Director Confirms." CNN, August 29, 2024. <https://edition.cnn.com/2024/08/29/politics/taylor-swift-concert-plot-cia-us-intelligence/index.html>; Dazio, Stefanie. "The Plot to Attack Taylor Swift's Vienna Shows Was Intended to Kill Thousands, a CIA Official Says." Associated Press (AP), August 29, 2024. <https://apnews.com/article/taylor-swift-cia-vienna-concerts-foiled-attack-7e454af63efc2a3ab0a20c718aba8d>.

151 "Medijs: Krievijas izlūkdienests iesaistīts sabotāžā Eiropā" [Media: Russian Intelligence Involved in Sabotage in Europe]. Apollo, 2024. <https://www.apollo.lv/8122300/medijs-krievijas-izlukdienests-iesaistits-sabotaza-eiropa>; Kirby, Paul, and Frank Gardner. "Mystery Fires Were Russian 'Test Runs' to Target Cargo Flights to US." BBC News, November 6, 2024. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/c07912lxx33o>.

7. Countering Terrorism Financing

The following countries either have a counter-terrorism financing strategy or have developed a written terrorism financing risk assessment: France, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, Latvia, Luxembourg, and Malta. At the same time, cases related to financing of terrorism are included in the general threat/security assessments or CT strategies of a broader group of EU MS. These cases concern, for example, the financing of:

- Hamas: Alleged Hamas affiliates are said to have been found in Austria exploiting digital assets as funding channels.¹⁵² Estonia reported suspicions of alleged aid donations to Gaza, which might unwittingly result in financing Hamas.¹⁵³ A board member of a charitable foundation in the Netherlands is under suspicion of financing Hamas, and another member of this foundation has been in custody since June 2023 for alleged violation of sanctions laws by allegedly directing funds to Hamas.¹⁵⁴ France is equally concerned about Hamas financing and hosted an international meeting on 13 December 2023, to enhance coordination, reinforce sanctions, and tighten oversight of crypto-related risks.¹⁵⁵
- PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê, Kurdistan Workers' Party): Austrian services notice the activities of PKK-linked groups in Austria, which went into a fundraising overdrive after the 2023 devastating earthquakes in Turkey. This raised suspicions that some of these funds could finance PKK terrorist activities.¹⁵⁶ Germany reports that PKK is able to raise up to EUR €16 million in the country, on an annual basis, and has been assisted in this process by the "cover" of fundraising for the 2023 earthquake's victims. This is mostly gathered through cash donations, or during PKK-connected events.¹⁵⁷

Other notable trends include:

Right-wing extremists (especially in Germany) are said to be financing their activities through sales generated at music events.¹⁵⁸ Violent lone actors, who, as noted by the Spanish security services,¹⁵⁹ rely on seemingly innocuous crowdfunding via social media platforms, but also criminal acts, to finance themselves. Estonian,¹⁶⁰ German, and Spanish authorities are also noticing the misuse of the informal financing networks, such as the Islamic Hawala, for terrorism purposes.¹⁶¹ On some occasions, the money sent via such means allegedly comes from illicit activities (illicit trade, extortion, or even kidnapping).¹⁶²

There is also a growing trend amongst CT authorities to focus on cryptocurrencies and their potential for donations made in these, which are later misused to finance terrorism.¹⁶³ Sweden has taken measures to tighten the oversight of the crypto sector by forcing currency exchange and money transfer services to register with its financial supervisory authority. Since 2023, Swedish law has also enabled closer cooperation between law enforcement, banks, and financial

¹⁵² Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 80.

¹⁵³ KAPO, Annual Review 2023, 41.

¹⁵⁴ NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland 2024, 15.

¹⁵⁵ Tracfin, Ministère de l'Économie, des Finances et de la Souveraineté Industrielle et Numérique, L'Activité de Tracfin: Bilan 2023 [Tracfin Activity Report: 2023 Overview], (Paris: Tracfin), 2023, www.economie.gouv.fr/tracfin.

¹⁵⁶ Bundesministerium für Inneres, Verfassungsschutzbericht, 58.

¹⁵⁷ BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 266.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 87.

¹⁵⁹ Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, Informe Anual de Seguridad Nacional 2023, 54.

¹⁶⁰ KAPO, Annual Review 2023, 54.

¹⁶¹ BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 213.

¹⁶² Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, Informe Anual de Seguridad Nacional 2023, 53.

¹⁶³ Ibid.

regulators, bypassing confidentiality to share information that could help identify terrorist financing.¹⁶⁴ The risk associated with virtual currencies has also been noted by the Estonian¹⁶⁵ and Slovak CT officials.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁴ Regeringen, Nationell strategi mot våldsbejakande extremism och terrorism, 34.

¹⁶⁵ Eesti Vabariik. Estonian Ministry of the Interior. Siseturvalisuse arengukava 2020–2030 [Development Plan for Internal Security 2020–2030], (Tallinn: Siseministeerium), 71.

¹⁶⁶ Slovenská republika, “Správa o bezpečnosti Slovenskej republiky za rok 2023,” (Bratislava: Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky), April 2024, 3.

8. Sanctions in CT

EU MS can rely on both the UN and the EU terrorism designation lists while formulating policy responses in the fields of CT and P/CVE. However, individual MS can also go beyond these lists to proscribe additional militant/violent organisations, as was the case with the Base, an entity first proscribed in the Netherlands¹⁶⁷ and then added to the list of proscribed entities at the EU level in July 2024.¹⁶⁸ This was a significant development as it was the first right-wing group added to the EU's terrorism list.

Germany sanctions and effectively bans other extremist groups beyond the EU terrorism list. An example is the Samidoun Group, which is linked to pro-Palestinian activism and was banned in November 2023. German authorities considered the group's influence particularly concerning as it heightened tensions, encouraged anti-Semitic rhetoric, aimed to escalate protests into violent confrontations, and stood accused of connections with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), which is featured on the EU terrorism list.¹⁶⁹ The Netherlands followed suit in February 2024 by banning Samidoun Group, citing similar concerns regarding the group's activities and its links to extremist actors.¹⁷⁰

In July 2024, Germany banned the Islamic Center Hamburg e.V., citing its links to the Iranian government and its role in promoting Islamist extremism within Germany.¹⁷¹ In 2023, similar bans were also meted out to Hammerskins Deutschland, along with its chapters and sub-organisation Crew 38 and Die Artgemeinschaft – both extreme right organisations. The last far-right organisation to have been banned in Germany was the newspaper, 'COMPACT-Magazin', accused of antisemitism and spreading hate against foreigners.¹⁷²

France has similarly taken measures to dissolve extremist organisations. On 26 June 2024, the French government officially dissolved several groups linked to far-right and Islamist extremism. This included the far-right student organisations *Groupe Union Défense (GUD)*, *Les Remparts*, *La Traboule*, and *Top Sport Rhône*, which were recognised as violent extremist networks. Additionally, the Islamist association *Jonas Paris* was also dissolved due to concerns over its radical activities.¹⁷³ These dissolutions reflect France's broader approach to tackling both far-right and Islamist extremism within its borders.

In a less directly CT-related manner, other countries stress the need for sanctioning entities that could encourage extremism through disinformation. This is the case, for example, with Estonian reporting, which underscores the need to maintain the bans on the Russian state media.¹⁷⁴

167 Ministerie van Buitenlandse Zaken, Besluit van de Minister van Buitenlandse Zaken in overeenstemming met de Minister van Veiligheid en Justitie en de Minister van Financiën van 18 januari 2024, nr. MinBuZa-2023.20277-43, tot aanwijzing van The Base als organisatie waarop de Sanctieregeling terrorisme 2007-II van toepassing is, Staatscourant 2024, 2386, gepubliceerd op 26 januari 2024, <https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/stcrt-2024-2386.html>.

168 Thomas Renard and Kacper Rekawek, The Base, and the Basis for Listing Far-Right Terror Groups, The Hague: International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), July 26, 2024, <https://icct.nl/publication/base-and-basis-listing-far-right-terror-groups>.

169 BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023, 55.

170 Mathilda Heller, "Dutch Parliament Votes to Designate Samidoun as Terror Organization," The Jerusalem Post, October 10, 2024, <https://www.jpost.com/diaspora/article-824116>.

171 Ibid, 262.

172 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz [Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution], Verbotsmaßnahmen: Verbotene Organisationen und Kennzeichen im Rechtsextremismus [Banning Measures: Prohibited Organizations and Symbols in Far-Right Extremism], accessed February 17, 2025, https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/DE/themen/rechtsextremismus/verbotsmassnahmen/verbotsmassnahmen_artikel.html.

173 Diane Jeantet and Angela Charlton, "La France interdit les groupes d'extrême droite et islamiques radicaux avant des élections polarisantes" [France Bans Far-Right and Radical Islamic Groups Ahead of Polarizing Elections], Morocco Mail, June 27, 2024, <https://www.moroccomail.fr/2024/06/27/france-groupes-dextreme-droite-et-islamiques-radicaux-elections-anticipees/>; Tribune de Geneve, "Des groupes de l'ultra droite dissous par le gouvernement français", TdG, June 26, 2024, <https://www.tdg.ch/dissolution-en-france-des-groupes-de-lultra-droite-dissous-541278268108>.

174 KAPO, Annual Review 2023, 12.

9. Communication/Transparency

Transparency in counter-terrorism reporting is a crucial measure of how security institutions engage with the public and convey their priorities. Though all EU Member States acknowledge terrorism as a threat in their annual security reports or risk assessments, fewer than half provide specialised documents solely dedicated to counter-terrorism. In contrast, many countries group terrorism within broader categories, such as hybrid threats¹⁷⁵ or have it featured in their defence and security reports or strategies.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, some EU MS focus on sub-elements of the terrorist threat in their outward communication – for example, France reports on cyber threats but not on the larger threat of terrorism itself.¹⁷⁷ Similarly, the Czech Republic, Finland, Bulgaria, and Germany publish reports concentrating on more minute subjects related to terrorism, such as its financing or far-right terrorism.

Beyond annual reports or strategic documents, public threat level communication varies widely among EU MS. Many countries supplement or replace their official threat levels with qualitative explanations to provide the public with a broader context on why a given country maintains a certain level at any moment. This approach helps justify government responses and promote public awareness. However, this approach also poses challenges in terms of public communication and transparency, as the lack of a clear system might obscure or miss the severity of risks as far as the public is concerned. Germany, Greece, and Italy stand apart by opting for qualitative assessments and no numeric or ALPHA-BRAVO-CHARLIE quantitative systems. Germany justifies this by emphasising that fixed levels may alarm the public unnecessarily and fail to account for regional variations within the country.¹⁷⁸

While countries like Finland,¹⁷⁹ Latvia,¹⁸⁰ Germany,¹⁸¹ or France¹⁸² provide summaries or full reports in English, others like Greece¹⁸³ or Spain¹⁸⁴ restrict their publications to national languages. Moreover, even among those publishing in English, the level of details made available varies widely. Germany, for instance, publishes a brief summary of its annual report in English, while the full version, containing detailed data and analysis, is available only in German.¹⁸⁵ In most countries, counter-terrorism efforts are typically documented and published by ministries of the interior or foreign affairs websites.¹⁸⁶ However, specialised intelligence agencies or dedicated platforms, such as centres focused on counter-terrorism and hybrid threats like the Coordination Unit for Threat Analysis (CUTA) in Belgium or the Dutch National Coordinator for Security and Counterterrorism (NCTV), also serve as key sources of information. France, for instance, maintains a comprehensive online presence, with frequent updates on legislation,¹⁸⁷ policy changes, and counter-terrorism operations but no single overarching national report on the “phenomenon of terrorism,” to quote

175 Novosiolova and Georgiev, Countering Hybrid Threats in Bulgaria: Enhancing Policy, Regulatory, and Institutional Resilience in Support of Weapons of Mass Destruction Nonproliferation, Center for the Study of Democracy, 2022.

176 Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, Security Strategy of the Czech Republic 2023, (Prague: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, June 2023), 11-13, ISBN 978-80-7441-100-7; Sistema de Seguranza Interna [Internal Insurance System], Relatorio Anual De Seguranza Interna [Annual Internal Insurance Report], 2023; KAPO, Annual Review 2023.

177 Agence Nationale de la Sécurité des Systèmes d'Information (ANSSI), Cyber Threat Overview 2023, (Paris: ANSSI, 2023), <https://www.cert.ssi.gouv.fr/cti/CERTFR-2023-CTI-010/>.

178 Tagesschau, “Warum es in Deutschland keine Terrorwarnstufen gibt” [Why There Are No Terror Alert Levels in Germany], March 26, 2024, <https://www.tagesschau.de/inland/gesellschaft/terror-warnstufen-100.html>.

179 Sisäministeriö, Kansallinen riskiarvio 2023.

180 Latvian State Security Service, Annual Report 2023.

181 Brief Summary 2023 Report: Facts and Trends.

182 Ministry of Defence, National Strategic Review 2022 (Paris: Secrétariat Général de la Défense et de la Sécurité Nationale, 2022).

183 Εθνική Υπηρεσία Πληροφοριών, Ετήσια Έκθεση 2023.

184 Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, Informe Anual de Seguridad Nacional 2023.

185 BMI, Verfassungsschutzbericht 2023.

186 Ministerstvo zahraničních věcí České republiky [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic], Boj proti terorismu [Fight Against Terrorism], https://mzv.gov.cz/jnp/cz/zahranicni_vztahy/bezpecnostni_politika/boj_proti_terorismu/index.html; Sisäministeriö [Ministry of the Interior], “Terrorismin torjunta” [Counter-Terrorism], <https://intermin.fi/poliisiasiat/terrorismin-torjunta>; Министерство на външните работи на Република България [Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria], “Борба с тероризма” [Fight Against Terrorism]. Accessed February 17, 2025. <https://www.mfa.bg/bg/3103>.

187 Vie publique, “Chronologie de la législation antiterroriste (1986-2024)” [Chronology of Antiterrorism Legislation (1986-2024)], <https://www.vie-publique.fr/eclairage/18530-chronologie-de-la-legislation-antiterroriste-1986-2024>.

Europol's TE-SAT. Similarly, Denmark's Security and Intelligence Service (PET) website provides monthly updates on court cases, legislative developments, and arrests.¹⁸⁸ Estonia is another example that also demonstrates a strong online presence and a commitment to inform while publishing frequent updates related to counter-terrorism legislation and investigations.¹⁸⁹ On the other hand, countries like Greece¹⁹⁰ or Romania provide very limited information on the aforementioned topics online.

Including quantitative data like number of arrests, prosecutions, or monitored individuals is key to assessing transparency. The latest TE-SAT report¹⁹¹ has expanded on these trends, compiling the number of individuals arrested for terrorist offenses across Europe, the most common charges, and the shifting dynamics of terrorist activity in the region. Belgium, Germany, and Austria stand out by providing detailed tables and statistics that make it easier to analyse trends and understand counter-terrorism operations in a national context. Belgium's CUTA and Austria's Ministry of the Interior share comprehensive data on monitored individuals and investigations, Germany's reports as well as website offer detailed figures on arrests, prosecutions,¹⁹² and international collaboration.¹⁹³ Countries like Spain also include data on arrest figures;¹⁹⁴ however, the presentation lacks the level of detail and specificity found in the reports from Belgium, Germany, and Austria.

The table below attempts to take stock of this complicated picture of EU MS (not) reporting transparently to the public on terrorism, CT, or P/CVE.

188 Politiets Efterretningstjeneste [Danish Security and Intelligence Service], "Center for Terroranalyse: Terrortruslen mod Danmark er skærpet" [Center for Terror Analysis: The Terror Threat Against Denmark is Heightened]. Published March 21, 2024, <https://pet.dk/pet/nyhedsliste/terrortruslen-mod-danmark-er-skaerpet/2024/03/21>.

189 Siseministerium [Ministry of the Interior]. "Terrorismi tõkestamine" [Combating Terrorism], <https://www.siseministerium.ee/en/combating-terrorism>.

190 Ελληνική Αστυνομία [Hellenic Police], "Διεύθυνση Αντιμετώπισης Ειδικών Εγκλημάτων Βίας (Δ.Α.Ε.Ε.Β.)" [Counter-Terrorism Service], <https://www.astynomia.gr/elliniki-astynomia/eidikes-ypiresies/diefthynsi-antimetopisis-eidikon-egklimatou-vias-d-a-e-e-v/>.

191 Europol, European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2024 (TE-SAT 2024), Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2024, <https://www.europol.europa.eu>,

192 OCAM, Note Stratégique.

193 Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz [Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution], "Zahlen und Fakten" [Numbers and Facts], https://www.verfassungsschutz.de/DE/themen/islamismus-und-islamistischer-terrorismus/zahlen-und-fakten/zahlen-und-fakten_node.html.

194 Departamento de Seguridad Nacional, Annual Report on National Security 2023, 55.

Table: Transparency in Counter-Terrorism and P/CVE Reporting Across EU Member States

COUNTRY	TERRORISM WITHIN GENERAL SECURITY REPORT	SEPARATE DOCUMENT FOR TERRORIST THREAT ASSESSMENT	COMMUNICATES ON CT OR P/CVE	LANGUAGE
AUSTRIA	✓	X	✓	English and Austrian
BELGIUM	✓	✓	✓	English, French and Dutch
BULGARIA	✓	For hybrid threats	✓	English and Bulgarian
CROATIA ¹⁹⁵	X	X	X	
CYPRUS ¹⁹⁶	X	X	X	
CZECH REPUBLIC	✓	For terrorism financing	✓	Czech
DENMARK	✓	✓	✓	English and Danish
ESTONIA	✓	X	X	English and Estonian
FINLAND	✓	For terrorism financing	✓	English and Finnish
FRANCE	✓	For cyber threats	✓	English and French
GERMANY	✓	For far-right extremism	✓	English and German
GREECE	✓	X	X	Greek
HUNGARY ¹⁹⁷	X	X	X	X
IRELAND	✓	X	X	English
ITALY	✓	X	X	Italian
LATVIA	✓	X	✓	English and Latvian
LITHUANIA ¹⁹⁸	X	X	X	
LUXEMBOURG	✓	For cybersecurity	X	English
MALTA ¹⁹⁹	X	X	X	
NETHERLANDS	✓	✓	✓	English and Dutch
POLAND	✓	X	X	Polish
POTUGAL	✓	X	✓	Portuguese
ROMANIA	✓	✓	For cybersecurity	Romanian
SLOVAKIA	✓	X	✓	Slovak
SLOVENIA	✓	✓	X	Slovenian
SPAIN	✓	X	✓	Spanish
SWEDEN	X	✓	✓	English and Swedish

Note: ✓ indicates the presence of information or documentation; X indicates its absence.

¹⁹⁵ This Member State is included for completeness but not covered due to lack of available public data, as detailed in the annex

¹⁹⁶ This Member State is included for completeness but not covered due to lack of available public data, as detailed in the annex

¹⁹⁷ This Member State is included for completeness but not covered due to lack of available public data, as detailed in the annex

¹⁹⁸ This Member State is included for completeness but not covered due to lack of available public data, as detailed in the annex

¹⁹⁹ This Member State is included for completeness but not covered due to lack of available public data, as detailed in the annex

Appendix: Methodology

For this report, ICCT first tracked annual reports published by national CT and P/CVE services. However, not all EU member states communicate openly (or annually) on counter-terrorism. As a result, more reports were covered to provide a fuller picture of the world of CT and P/CVE from the eyes of CT professionals. To glean the CT and P/CVE knowledge, we included 70+ documents in our sample, which could be categorised into six groups:²⁰⁰

1. CT and P/CVE focused documents in which the agency or the ministry tasked with overseeing of such efforts reports on its activities from the past year.²⁰¹
2. Annual reports of intelligence agencies and ministries, which offer yearly assessments of their activities related to national security, counter-terrorism, intelligence, or all of these together.²⁰²
3. Strategic documents, such as national security strategies, outlining overarching approaches to all security threats, or counter-terrorism specific strategies that focus on prevention and adaptation to evolving threats (e.g. Defence strategies, while mostly focused on military preparedness, were also included due to their content overlap with aforementioned documents).²⁰³
4. Action plans: More operational than the strategies and provide specific steps or timelines to addressing terrorist or extremist threats.²⁰⁴
5. Risk assessments: Inform the strategic frameworks and operational plans on current terrorist threats whether from specific groups, ideological movements, or global geopolitical changes.²⁰⁵
6. The final category includes unique or one-off documents, such as Germany's report on combating right-wing extremism,²⁰⁶ or Slovenia and Poland's cybersecurity reports.²⁰⁷

200 ICCT research team was able to read documents in 10 EU languages and relied on DeepL translations on the remained of the reports. On some occasions, however, EU MS of which English is not the official language would still provide e.g. their annual intelligence or terrorism assessments in English.

201 NCTV, Dreigingsbeeld Terrorisme Nederland; PET, Assessment of the Terrorist Threat to Denmark 2024; Ministrstvo za obrambo [Ministry of Defence], Ocena ogroženosti Republike Slovenije zaradi terorizma, verzija 1.1 [Terrorism Threat Assessment of the Republic of Slovenia, Version 1.1], (Ljubljana: Uprava RS za zaščito in reševanje), November 2023; Direcția de Investigare a Infracțiunilor de Criminalitate Organizată și Terorism (DIICOT), Raport de Activitate 2023 [Annual Activity Report 2023], (Bucharest: Ministerul Public, Parchetul de pe lângă Înalta Curte de Casație și Justiție), February 2024;

202 AIVD, Annual Report 2023; VSSE, Intelligence report 2023; DANS, ГОДИШЕН ДОКЛАД ; KAPO, Annual Review 2023; Latvian State Security Service, Annual Report 2023; Sistema di informazione per la sicurezza della Repubblica, Relazione sulla politica dell'informazione per la sicurezza 2023.

203 Administrația Prezidențială a României [Presidential Administration of Romania], Strategia Națională de Apărare a Țării pentru perioada 2020-2024 [National Defence Strategy for the Period 2020-2024], (Bucharest: Administrația Prezidențială), 2020; Federal Government of Germany, National Security Strategy: Robust. Resilient. Sustainable. Integrated Security for Germany, Berlin: Federal Chancellery, 2023, page number.<https://www.bundesregierung.de/breg-de>; Finnish Government, Government Report on Finnish Foreign and Security Policy, Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, June 2024, <https://urn.fi/URN:ISBN:978-952-383-929-8>.

204 L'Organe de Coordination pour l'Analyse de la Menace [Coordination Unit for Threat Assessment] (OCAM), Het Actieplan Radicalisme: Een Multidisciplinaire Aanpak van Terrorisme en Gewelddadig Extremisme & Radicalisme [The Action Plan on Radicalism: A Multidisciplinary Approach to Terrorism and Violent Extremism & Radicalization], (Brussels: OCAM, 2023); Nationwide Network for Extremism Prevention and Deradicalization (BNED), Austrian Action Plan for the Prevention and Countering of Violent Extremism and De-radicalisation, (Vienna: Federal Ministry of the Interior & Directorate State Protection and Intelligence Service), 2024, https://www.dsn.gv.at/216/files/BNED_NAP_English_web_bf_20240527.pdf; Secrétariat général de la défense et de la sécurité nationale (SGDSN) [General Secretariat for Defence and National Security], Plan d'Action contre le Terrorisme 2018 [Action Plan Against Terrorism 2018], (Paris: SGDSN, July 2018).

205 Ministry of the Interior, National Risk Assessment 2023; Ministerstvo financí České republiky [Ministry of Finance of the Czech Republic], Zpráva o druhém kole procesu národního hodnocení rizik praní peněz a financování terorismu [Report on the Second Round of the National Risk Assessment of Money Laundering and Terrorism Financing], (Prague: Ministry of Finance), June 2021; National Coordinating Committee on Combating Money Laundering and Funding of Terrorism, Malta's National Risk Assessment 2023: Money Laundering, Terrorist and Proliferation Financing and Targeted Financial Sanctions, (Valletta: National Coordinating Committee), December 2023.

206 BMI, Rechtsextremismus mit Entschlossenheit bekämpfen.

207 Nacionalni odzivni center za kibernetško varnost SI-CERT [Slovenian National Computer Emergency Response Team], Poročilo o kibernetiski varnosti 2023 [Cybersecurity Report 2023], (Ljubljana: SI-CERT), 2023, www.varninainternetu.si; Zespół CSIRT GOV [CSIRT GOV Team], Raport o stanie bezpieczeństwa cyberprzestrzeni RP 2023 [Report on the State of Cybersecurity in Poland 2023], (Warsaw: Agencja Bezpieczeństwa Wewnętrznego), 2023, <https://www.csirt.gov.pl>.

Despite this approach, not all countries and categories are equally represented. Some countries have multiple detailed documents across all categories, while others contributed fewer or less comprehensive materials. Moreover, in many cases, the relevant documents were outdated and thus not included in our sample of secondary sources. This report covers documents published in 2023 and 2024 only, with a few exceptions deemed relevant.

In certain cases, such as discussions of major CT operations by different EU countries, the research team went outside the list of sources provided above and decided to use other published and widely available sources such as media articles. This was done to ensure the widest and most up-to-date coverage of CT-related events in the EU MS.

To complement these findings, the ICCT research team was able to circulate an anonymous survey to the European members of the Cooperation on Terror Threat Analysis (CTTA) “Madrid Group”, which gathers representatives from European CT services (mostly so-called “fusion centres”). The survey was designed to gather key insights from CT officials into their perspectives on terrorism threats, emerging trends, and operational priorities. To gather these insights, we utilised Lime Survey, a platform that allows surveys to be hosted on your own private server, ensuring full control over data protection measures. Respondents were only able to access the survey through a unique access key code that was sent alongside the survey link to approximately 40 individuals, of whom fifteen responded. Twenty-eight structured as well as open-ended questions were included, with elaborations on key topics being optional to encourage respondents to share detailed insights at their discretion. By integrating robust security measures and ensuring anonymity, the survey facilitated feedback on sensitive counter-terrorism issues, enriching this analysis. Anonymity was a crucial feature of the survey design to ensure that respondents could provide open and unbiased responses without concerns about professional or institutional implications, particularly on sensitive topics such as perceived gaps in counter-terrorism policies, ideological threats, or challenges in intergovernmental cooperation. While it ensures authenticity in the responses, it limits the study’s ability to attribute specific insights to individual countries. As such, the findings from the survey are presented separately as aggregated trends and perspectives.

About the Authors

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Laura Winkelmuller Real joined ICCT in August 2024 as an intern in the Current and Emerging Threats Programme, and was appointed Junior Research Fellow in 2025. Her research primarily focuses on the involvement of Western foreign fighters in the Russo-Ukrainian war, disinformation in Europe by malign state actors, and the rise of anti-Semitism in the online sphere. Before joining ICCT, Laura worked as the Spanish Policy Lead for a European political party, focusing on policy development and stakeholder engagement and collaboration. She holds a BA in Political Science with a specialization in International Law and is currently pursuing an MSc in Crisis and Security Management, focusing on the Governance of Radicalism, Extremism, and Terrorism, from Leiden University.

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