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Counter-terrorism cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood

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Counter-terrorism cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood

ABSTRACT

Since the EU adopted its Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2005, it has focused on forging closer ties with third countries in the fight against terrorism. Cooperation with the Southern Neighbourhood in this field is particularly important. Every single country within this region is affected by terrorism to different degrees and terrorist attacks on European soil are increasingly linked with the Middle East and North Africa.

The EU adopted a wide-ranging counter-terrorism approach in the South including actions that go beyond the strictly military and security interpretations of counter-terrorism. In line with the UN's 4-pillar approach, the EU's counter-terrorism measures can be broadly subdivided into four fields: (i) building state capacity (particularly in the areas of border control, criminal investigation and prosecution, and countering the financing of terrorism); (ii) strengthening the rule of law and respect for human rights; (iii) fostering regional cooperation; and (iv) preventing and combating terrorism. This study outlines and contextualises current counter-terrorism activities in the region.

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1   Introduction

Terrorism and measures to counter it are not new to the European policy portfolio. Indeed, the 1970s and 1980s were the most violent decades for the European continent in terrorist terms, with more than 400 victims in peak years – declining in the 1990s.([1])

Terrorism in Western Europe 1970-2016*
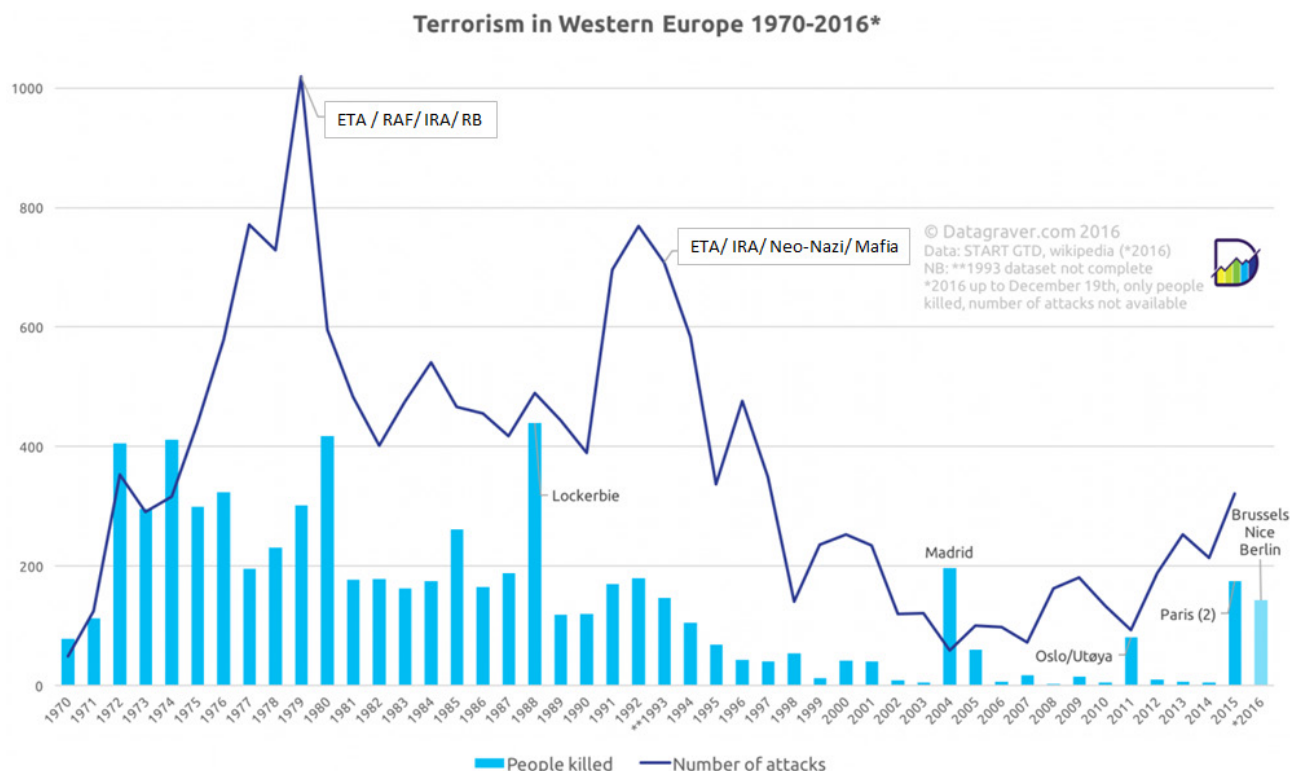
This trend was, however, reversed in the early 2000s with the terrorist attacks of Madrid and London. The European Council subsequently adopted the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy in 2005 in order to streamline European efforts, resting on the four pillars of Prevention, Protection, Pursuit and Response; it created the post of European Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, and moved to jointly define terrorist acts as 'a combination of objective elements (murder, bodily injuries, hostage taking, extortion, committing attacks, threat to commit any of the above, etc.); and subjective elements (acts committed with the objective of seriously intimidating a population, destabilising or destroying structures of a country or international organisation or making a government abstain from performing actions)'.([2])

But the change in European terrorism was not just numerical, but also in substance. While terrorist attacks in Europe had, until then, been perpetrated by separatist and revolutionary movements, there was now an increasing link with Europe's Southern neighbourhood (i.e. the 10 ENP South countries: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine, Syria and Tunisia)([3]). There had, of course, been terrorist attacks organised from the South before: the downing of an airliner over Lockerbie in Scotland in 1988 for instance bore a Libyan fingerprint, and attacks in Paris in 1995 were linked to the

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[1] National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism (START), 'Global Terrorism Database', [1970-2015].

[2] Council of the European Union, 'Council Framework Decision 2002/475 on Combating Terrorism, 13 June 2002, 2002/475/JHA'.

[3] Although not an EU Southern Neighbourhood partner, Iraq is also included in this study. Iraq has the highest incidences of terrorism in the world since 2003 and the EU is contributing to the fight against terrorism in the country since the establishment of its rule of law mission EUJUST LEX in 2005. More importantly, it is linked in terrorism-terms to most countries from the Southern neighbourhood as a source and multiplier of the threat. Similarly, Libya is not an EU Southern Neighbour as it never adhered to the framework, but is part of the wider Southern security space just as Iraq is.

Algerian conflict between government and Islamist groups. But since the attacks of Madrid, the interlinkages between regional and European security have become ever-more apparent, culminating in the mass-departure of up to 5,000 Europeans joining terrorist organisations in Syria and Iraq from 2013 onwards, and subsequently the terrorist attacks of Paris and Brussels organised by networks trained there. The logical extension of this development was the insight that terrorism needed to be countered increasingly along with Southern states.

The European Council has called for an effective counter-terrorism policy integrating internal and external aspects as early as June 2014. Technically, cooperation with and assistance to other states had been part and parcel of Europe's approach to countering terrorism even in the 2005 strategy. But in the wake of the Paris attacks of early 2015, EU heads of state and government highlighted cooperation with international partners as one of the three cornerstones European counter-terrorism should rest on. In addition to conflict resolution in the region, the heads of state called for more European engagement with countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), including capacity building projects (e.g. border controls) and dialogue.[4]

2   Terrorism in the Southern Neighbourhood

For the countries of the Southern neighbourhood, terrorism is an even greater concern than for European ones. While the global number of deaths from terrorist attacks has increased by 80 per cent between 2013 and 2014, the vast majority of these occurred in non-European countries, among which many Southern Neighbourhood partners. 48 % of the world's terrorism incidences are located in the Middle East and North Africa more generally; 72 per cent of all global terrorist attacks in 2015 took place in Iraq, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan and Syria. Countries that were also high on the terrorism index were Yemen, Egypt, Libya, Lebanon, the Palestinian territories, Israel, and Tunisia. But terrorism remained a concern also in states which reported lower lethality rates, such as Algeria. In 2015, more than 62 terrorist acts took place there.[5]

Although the numbers have somewhat declined compared to 2014 (largely due to military operations against the so-called Islamic State (IS) and Boko Haram), 2015 was still with nearly 30,000 casualties the second-deadliest year in terrorism terms in over 15 years. Three quarters of attacks were perpetrated by four groups only: IS, Boko Haram, the Taliban and al-Qa'ida.[6] The vast majority of the victims - between 82 and 97 per cent according to the US Counterterrorism Center - were consequently Muslims in Muslim-majority countries.[7]

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[4] European Council, 'Informal meeting of the Heads of State or Government Brussels, 12 February 2015 - Statement by the members of the European Council', 12 February 2015.
[5] U.S. Department of State, 'Country Reports on Terrorism 2015: Middle East and North Africa Overview', June 2016.
[6] Institute for Economics and Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2015', 'Global Terrorism Index 2016'.
[7] U.S. Department of State, 'National Counterterrorism Center: Annex of Statistical Information', 31 July 2012, p.14.

Terrorist attacks and casualties (national)
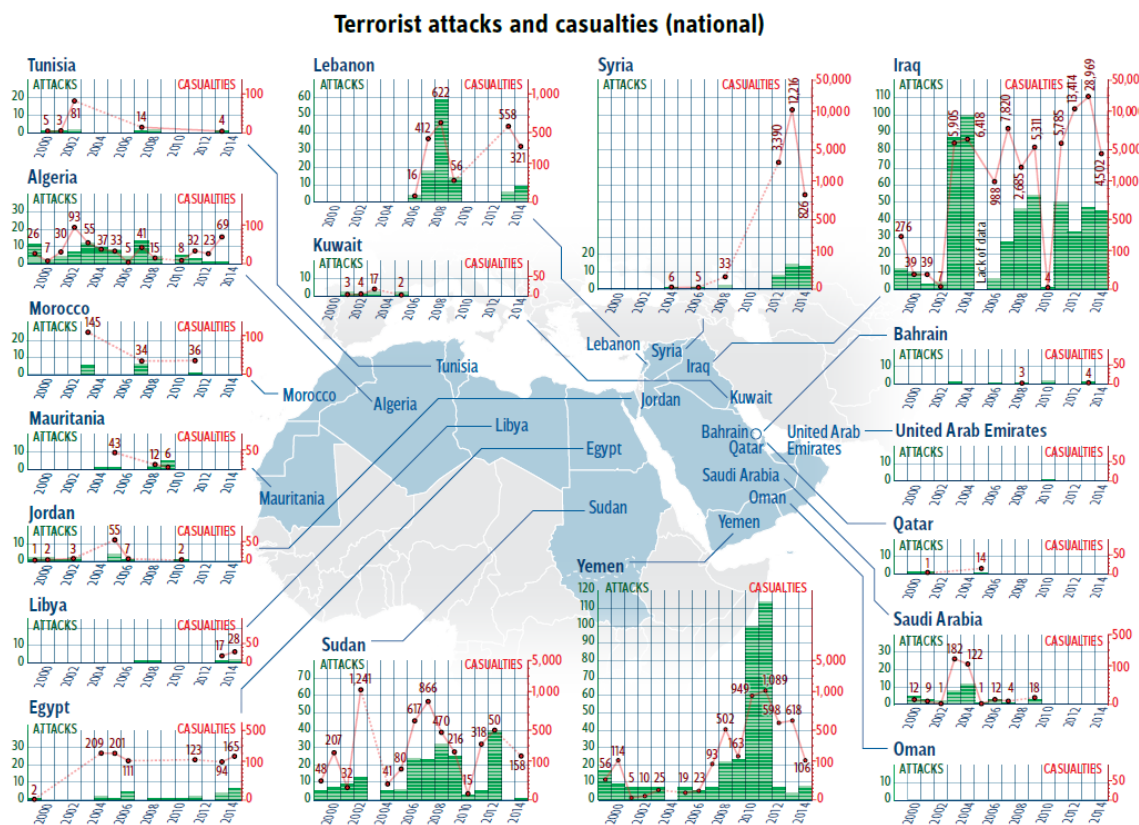
Sources for data: Global Terrorism Database (GTD) (1999 - 2010), media sources (2011 - 2014).

Although current levels of violence are unprecedented, terrorism has a sad history in the region. Both Algeria and Egypt for instance saw high levels of terrorism in the 1990s. Several hundred thousand Algerians died in the violence opposing several Islamist factions and the armed forces; in Egypt, Al-Gama'a al-Islamiyya and Islamic Jihad targeted police, tourists as well as political leaders in the 1990s and early 2000s. And Islamist terrorism has targeted otherwise stable countries such as Morocco and Jordan: terror attacks in Casablanca (2003) and Marrakech (2011) killed more than 50 civilians; the 2005 hotel bombing in Amman killed more than 60. Terrorism is a problem for every single country which is part of Europe's Southern neighbourhood, albeit to different degrees. Clearly, the region has much higher lethality rates than Europe, as well as not the same means available to counter terrorism. Still, the two sides of the Mediterranean share this threat.

3   Europe and counter-terrorism

Broadly speaking, the term counter-terrorism covers any activity designed to prevent terrorist acts or eradicate terrorist groups. But the measures effectively covered by this term depend entirely on the agency undertaking them. Military organisations, for instance, traditionally interpret counter-terrorist measures to be of highly operational and tactical nature, often involving the physical neutralisation of terrorist networks. Internal security forces in turn usually include law enforcement measures, whereas private business enterprises focus on the protection of infrastructure and assets from potential terrorist attacks.

At the global level, organisations such as the United Nations (UN) have used a much broader and longer-term approach to counter-terrorism than these, however. The UN's 2006 counter-terrorism strategy has focused on four pillars which go beyond the strictly military and security interpretations of counter-terrorism, including the addressing of conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism; the prevention of and combat against terrorism; the building of state capacity to prevent and combat terrorism; and

ensuring respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis for countering terrorism.([8]) In practice, this has ranged from studies on the foreign fighter phenomenon to the strengthening of border forces in the Sahel zone or youth engagement projects in South Asia.

Europe's approach to counter-terrorism is very much in line with the UN's one; in part, this has to do with the division of labour between the EU and its member states. Matters of law enforcement and military nature are by default member state area of responsibility. But in part, this wide-ranging approach is rooted in the European insight that terrorism is not a free-floating phenomenon but the result of specific causes – which however differ depending on the socio-economic context.

In non-OECD countries, armed conflict, state sponsored violence, corruption and a weak business environment are strongly correlated with terrorism – this appears to be the environment most conducive to terrorism, as 92 per cent of all terrorist attacks over the last 25 years took place in countries where state sponsored political violence was well established and 88 per cent in countries that were undergoing violent conflicts. In OECD countries, socio-economic factors such as youth unemployment, confidence in the press, belief in democracy, drug crime and attitudes towards immigration are the most statistically significant factors correlating with terrorism. Factors which correlate with both types of countries are lower respect for human rights, policies targeting religious freedoms, group grievances, political instability and lower respect for the UN or the EU.([9])

European counter-terrorism cooperation with the Southern neighbourhood has focused on four areas: building state capacity, strengthening rule of law and respect for human rights, fostering regional cooperation, as well as preventing and combating terrorism. As most European projects directly or indirectly address conditions conducive to the development of terrorism – such as high levels of poverty and low levels of education - they are not at the centre of the analysis here.

In 2015, the Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) analysed EU funding for external activities aimed at preventing or countering terrorism and violent extremism. The study was based on data from all relevant EU services (i.e. DG DEVCO, Service for Foreign Policy Instruments, DG Migration and Home Affairs, and DG Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations) and included actions that were on-going at the time or planned for immediate implementation. EU funding to counter-terrorism and preventing/countering violent extremism (P/CVE) at the end of 2015 amounted to approximately EUR 334 million and was predominantly focused on the Middle East and North Africa. This figure included both projects that explicitly aim to prevent or counter terrorism and violent extremism and activities that include counter-terrorism or P/CVE objectives. A second assessment in the end of 2016 revealed that the figure had increased to EUR 399 (a 20 per cent increase).

Taking a closer look at the 2016 figures reveals that there is an increase of 62 per cent in projects that specifically focus on counter-terrorism, and, to a greater extent, on P/CVE([10]). While in 2015 the EU funded EUR 139 million to counter-terrorism or P/CVE-specific projects, this figure had had risen to EUR 224 million in 2016. The increase is however accompanied by a shift in geographical focus towards either global activities or projects focusing on regions other than the MENA region, in particular the Western Balkans, Turkey, and Asia.

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[8] United Nations Counter-Terrorism Implementation Task Force, 'Resolution: The United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy', 8 September 2006.
[9] Institute for Economics and Peace, 'Global Terrorism Index 2015', November 2015.
[10] The increase in CVE funding in part reflects an amendment in early 2016 to the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, which rendered certain forms of CVE eligible for development assistance.

4 Building state capacity

Enabling other states to cope with terrorism is part and parcel of measures countering the phenomenon: in resolution 1373 (2001), the UN Security Council called on member states to 'afford one another the greatest measure of assistance in connection with criminal investigations or criminal proceedings relating to the financing or support of terrorist acts'. In resolution 1456, it stressed the assistance component further stating that 'states should assist each other to improve their capacity to prevent and fight terrorism, and notes that such cooperation will help facilitate the full and timely implementation of resolution 1373...'. It went on that states should 'assist each other, to the maximum extent possible, in the prevention, investigation, prosecution and punishment of acts of terrorism, wherever they occur' and 'to improve their capacity to prevent and fight terrorism', noting that 'such cooperation will help facilitate the full and timely implementation of resolution 1373 (2001)'.[11] Consequently, capacity building – particularly in the areas of border control, criminal investigation and prosecution of terrorism-related cases, and countering the financing of terrorism - is an integral part of European counter-terrorism cooperation with its Southern neighbours.

4.1 Border control

Borders and their management play an important role in the fight against terrorism – particularly in the Southern Neighbourhood. UN resolution 1373 recognised this when it singled out border controls as the perhaps most important component of state capacity building in the fight against terrorism, calling on member states to 'prevent the movement of terrorists or terrorist groups by effective border controls and controls on issuance of identity papers'.

Terrorist networks take advantage of the challenges of border management in the region not only to escape law enforcement authorities in their country of origin or operation, but also to procure themselves with weapons and other material, and to generate income through the smuggling of drugs and other illicit material.

The prime example for this is Libya: following the fall of the Gaddafi regime, most of the country's weapons arsenal was unsecured and consequently seized – either by militias using them inside the country, or by smugglers selling them to terrorist groups. 10-15 million light weapons arrived on Libya's uncontrolled weapons market with a few years and have ended up now in at least 14 other countries.[12] Eastwards, these weapons transited through Egypt into the Gaza Strip, to Syrian rebels and Jihadi groups in the Sinai; westwards and south, they ended up in Mali as well as Algeria and Tunisia in the hands of terrorists. In late 2012, the Egyptian military seized at least 8,000 guns, several hundred rockets, and 400,000 rounds of anti-aircraft ammunition.[13] The majority of smuggled weapons are machine guns, but, more worryingly, shoulder-fired recoilless weapons and rocket launchers have increased in the hands of non-state actors in the region. Guided light weapons such as man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS) and anti-tank guided weapons (ATGWs) are now in the hands of more than 20 non-state groups in the region – more than half of those are in Syria. IS, but also four other groups in Syria can now reach targets which are 6km away. MANPADS from Libya have also appeared in Lebanon, which itself has turned into an important nerve centre for regional weapons.

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[11] United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 1373 (2001)', 28 September 2001. United Nations Security Council, 'Resolution 1456 (2003)', 20 January 2003.
[12] United Nations Security Council, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts established pursuant to resolution 1973 (2011) concerning Libya', 19 February 2014.
[13] Egypt Independent, 'Authorities intercept weapons smuggling from Libya', 21 November 2012

Just as weapons, drugs play a crucial role in current regional terrorism, and are equally trafficked across borders. Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) smuggled cocaine from Latin America for financial purposes, whereas Hezbollah grew poppy and marihuana to fund itself. New synthetic drugs can be manufactured nearly anywhere. Both Captagon (an amphetamine) and Tramadol (an opioid painkiller which equally has an uplifting effect) are used by IS and other militias to increase fighting power – they also traffic it for financial purposes, and seek to produce it themselves to increase their income from the drug trade. In contrast to AQIM, IS and its counterparts targets Arab markets for sale rather than European ones. Main countries for Captagon consumption are now Syria, Libya, Saudi Arabia and the Gaza Strip; Lebanon and Jordan are important transit points and also host sites of production.

Lastly, borders in the region have been equally ill-equipped to manage the flow of fighters traveling to and from Syria and Iraq. In IS, Arab fighters (excluding Syrians and Iraqis) are now by far the largest component of the foreign fighters with more than 16,000. Most of the sending countries have a higher absolute output than any of the European countries. The largest contingents are from Tunisia (6,500), Saudi Arabia (2,500), Jordan (2,250), Morocco (1,350), but smaller contingents (800 – 900) stem from Lebanon, Egypt and Libya. In proportional terms, the picture is even more worrying: where one in 104,000 European citizens of all ages has joined IS to fight, one in every 18,750 citizens from Arab countries has. For some countries, proportions are significantly higher: one in 1,830 Tunisians, one in 2,600 Jordanians, one in 11,600 Saudi citizens have gone to fight with IS. Since the international campaign against the terrorist organisation has begun in 2014, there has been a noted reverse flow of these fighters, particularly to Tunisia and Libya. Both countries, already in crises, now face the return of radical and battle-experienced young men – and do not have the mechanisms in place to apprehend them at the border.[14]

The European Union has addressed these issues with several projects increasing state capacity in border control and border management matters.

The first of this kind was (and still is) European support to Lebanon in border matters. In the context of the 2006 war between Israel and Hezbollah, the government of Lebanon had been called upon in UN Security Council Resolution 1701 to secure its borders in order 'to prevent the entry in Lebanon without its consent of arms or related materiel'.

Following the Germany-led Northern Border Pilot Project in Lebanon (to which the EU contributed nearly a quarter with EUR 2 million between 2007 and 2008), the EU launched a more substantial programme on Integrated Border Management (IBM), providing EUR 4.6 million between 2012 and 2015. IBM is defined as 'national and international coordination and cooperation among all the relevant authorities and agencies involved in border security and trade facilitation to establish effective, efficient and coordinated border management'. The second phase of this project was launched in 2016 (to end in 2018) with an additional envelope of EUR 9 million, and covers several crucial aspects of border management until then only insufficiently covered by Lebanese authorities: while fostering cooperation amongst different agencies involved directly or indirectly in border control (Internal Security Forces (ISF), the Lebanese Army, General Security, Customs), it enhances securing and controlling green borders, document identification, standards operating procedures and contingency planning, amongst other things. An EU-funded Border Data Management System (supported with EUR 3 million) and an IBM training center complement these measures.

Although originally launched to stabilise regional security by denying weapons to Hezbollah (whose military wing is listed as a terrorist organisation by the European Union since 2013), these programmes

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[14] The Soufan Group, 'Foreign Fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq', December 2015

have contributed also to the protection of Lebanon from infiltration by Islamist fighters from neighbouring Syria. Since the Syrian civil war has begun, Lebanon has seen ten bombings in the border towns of Arsal and Hermel, perpetrated from Syria. Nevertheless, Lebanon managed to decrease its terrorist deaths by 49 per cent in 2014.

Another European contribution to border management are two projects launched in 2015 in Tunisia. Both are the result of a 2013 peer review conducted by the Tunisian Ministry of Interior (and funded by the EU) which assessed the country's needs in terms of border management, control and surveillance, document fraud and migrant protection.

The larger project, worth EUR 23 085 million (financed with EUR 23 million by the EU and EUR 85 600 by Tunisia) includes (along with two other components elaborated further down) a component focusing on the strengthening of Tunisian borders against infiltration and terrorist attacks. Both terror attacks in Tunisia – on the Bardo National Museum in Tunis in March 2015 and a tourist resort near Sousse three months later - had been prepared and equipped in neighbouring Libya, and perpetrators, along with their weapons, managed to slip through the border on their return. In addition, Tunisia's border posts have encountered more than 13 attacks over the last two years. Its 104 border posts are each manned with only a few members of the National Guard, and do not have the necessary equipment for transmission and surveillance for either day- or night-time.

Since then, the National Guard has developed a strategy to counter this threat, which would delineate the borders into different zones, creating a command centre (including operational support) for each zone. This could, for instance, include mobile search and surveillance brigades capable of monitoring larger areas. In addition, Tunisia would benefit from training measures enabling its border personnel to detect fraudulent documents.

A second project, funded with EUR 3 million by the EU, focuses particularly on the modernisation and strengthening of Tunisia's border management capacities. This includes the development of Standard Operating Procedures, training of personnel and the provision of material, but also the establishment of a 'model land border post' as well as a 'model maritime border post'.

In addition, two CSDP missions in the region include a border management capacity building component.

The EU Integrated Border Management Assistance Mission Libya (EUBAM Libya) was launched in 2013 and currently runs until August 2017. Its mission is to assist the Libyan authorities in border management. This occurs primarily through training, advising and mentoring of several hundred Libyan officials. For instance, the mission was instrumental in the creation of a cross-ministerial working group and the improved use of border management equipment. The mission's annual budget currently stands at EUR 17 million. The deteriorating security situation in Libya since 2014 has slowed the mission's operations down (its headquarters are now in Tunis), but its goals are now even more important than when it was first launched: several terrorist groups (including IS) have established a presence in the country, and use its porous borders to move fighters, weapons and resources in and out.

The EU Border Assistance Mission at Rafah Crossing Point (EUBAM Rafah) between the Gaza Strip and Egypt was not launched with a counter-terrorist approach in mind in 2005, but its capacity building goals are nevertheless in line with the EU's other border management projects. Currently, the mission is however suspended due to ongoing tensions between Israel, Hamas and the Egyptian government. Since the border can only be opened when all sides agree, it has been subject to regular vetoes by at least one of the parties.

4.2   Rule of law: criminal justice

As border control, an effective and rule of law compatible criminal justice system plays a crucial role in counter-terrorism. However, the military model of counter-terrorism (i.e. the use of military force and strategies to eradicate terrorism) often directly undermines this role by ranking operational urgency over the rule of law.

The importance of criminal justice reform should not be downplayed. The Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) – a body including 29 member states worldwide as well as the European Union - stressed in its 2011 Cairo Declaration that 'an effective criminal justice system, fully respectful of human rights and fundamental freedoms, including effective prevention, investigative, and prosecutorial, and judicial capacity' is highly important in the deterrence, disruption as well as prevention of terrorist acts. The declaration equally called on the Forum's members to 'develop good practices on an effective and rule of law-based criminal justice sector response to terrorism, including those aspects related to international cooperation; and to identify existing and develop new capacity building programs to support the implementation of these practices.' Even before 2011, the European approach to counter-terrorism had focused on the law enforcement rather than the military model, but it has since increased this component in its cooperation with the Southern neighbours.

One of its projects in this regard, Counter-Terrorism in the Middle East and North Africa Region (CT MENA) funds extensive training for lawmakers, police, prosecutors, judges, corrections officials and other justice sector stakeholders at the Malta-based Institute for Justice and the Rule of Law. The institute was established in 2014 in order 'to allow countries to provide justice, security, and liberty to their citizens, based on the respect for and promotion of human rights and the rule of law, placing a particular focus on countries seeking to turn their backs on repressive approaches to addressing security challenges such as terrorism and other transnational criminal activities'. The EU and 15 states (including Morocco, Tunisia, and Jordan) make up the institute's board.

The EU supported the Institute's initial assessment of the training needs in the region and beyond with EUR 300 000 between 2013 and 2014; in early 2016, it launched an extensive capacity building of law enforcement and judiciary project funded with EUR13 million implemented at the Institute. Under the same umbrella, the EU has funded, from 2014 onwards, with EUR 300 000 each fora for exchanges of best practices amongst judicial officials involved in terrorism cases, as well as amongst parliamentarians involved in the development and oversight of counter-terrorism legislation. It has also launched a training partnership at the European Police College worth EUR 2.5 million in 2015 with the same objectives.

The EU has also been involved on a bilateral level in capacity building in this regard; in Egypt, its Modernisation of the Administration of Justice project (launched in 2016 with a EUR 10 million portfolio) seeks to improve the rule of law based on several components: build capacity in the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, and amongst court professionals and establish a judicial system for minors. It thereby aims at reducing the rather substantial delays in Egypt's justice system.

The Egyptian project highlights, however, the EU's limits of counter-terrorism cooperation, amongst other things, in the judicial sector. Since the ousting of President Morsi in 2013, Egypt's judiciary has played a rather destructive role in the curbing of terrorism – visible in the many mass trials which have sentenced several hundred defendants at a time to prison or convicted them to death, including minors and even infants.

But not just judges have been undifferentiated in their approaches to terrorism and ways to curb it. Parliament, too, has created the legal conditions for this to occur. In 2015, Egypt approved a new anti-terror law which defined terrorist acts very broadly as any act committed 'for the purpose of disturbing public order, endangering the safety, interests, or security of the community; harming individuals and

terrorizing them; jeopardizing their lives, freedoms, public or private rights, or security, or other freedoms and rights guaranteed by the Constitution and the law; harms national unity, social peace, or national security or damages the environment, natural resources, antiquities, money, buildings, or public or private properties or occupies or seizes them; prevents or impedes public authorities, agencies or judicial bodies, government offices or local units, houses of worship, hospitals, institutions, institutes, diplomatic and consular missions, or regional and international organisations and bodies in Egypt from carrying out their work or exercising all or some of their activities, or resists them or disables the enforcement of any of the provisions of the Constitution, laws, or regulations.' The law consequently applies to acts which broadly threaten the interests of the community, social peace, or prevent government officials from going to work. It also makes no distinction between the actual crime of committing the act and inciting to it, and imposes harsh penalties ranging from seven years detention to the death penalty. The law also covers the hacking of government websites (punishable with no less than ten years hard labour) and the promotion of news on terrorist attacks in contradiction with the Ministry of Defence as terrorist acts. After the terror attack on a Coptic Church in Cairo in December 2016, President Sisi called for even tougher laws on the issue, as 'there are some laws that restrict justice. Judiciary will not be able to deal with such cases with the required decisiveness given the current laws. We need laws that completely uproot terrorism.' The next day, Egypt's parliament called for a constitutional amendment moving terrorism cases generally to the military judiciary.

Perhaps more worrying, Egypt's current approach to counter-terrorism appears to make matters worse. Militant networks managed to increase their attacks from 30 per day throughout 2014 to 100 per day between January and August 2015, although the Egyptian military claims to have killed more than 3,000 militants the same year in the Sinai. Between 2014 and 2015, Egypt's Interior Ministry has arrested at least 34,000 on terrorism charges according to its own accord. Since January 2011, Egypt has built 19 new prison facilities, increasing the total number by a third to 62. These detention centres house between 80,000 and 110,000 prisoners – more than half of which are effectively political prisoners. Conditions in these prisons are appalling and comply not even with the most basic criteria for detention. Inmates are denied contact with their families, food and even medical supplies.

In this highly politicised environment, the EU's work is not so much hindered by a lack of capacity – what its programmes are designed for – but rather political unwillingness.

An opposite example is Lebanon, where criminal justice is overwhelmed – particularly with the current challenge of terrorism. Here, European support can focus on improving a system weak in capacity but not obstructive ideologically. Although the EU has funded programmes to modernise Lebanese criminal justice since 2008, it highlighted the improvement of Lebanese criminal justice in its 2016 partnership priorities. Over the last few years, conditions in Lebanese prisons have improved: inspections have been introduced, prisoners have new options for registering complaints, detailed information about the prison population is now publically available and more civilians are involved in prisons. In 2015, both the ministers of justice and interior took a strong stand against torture after the Roumieh prison population rioted in protest against the conditions of their detention.

In Jordan, the EU's work in the criminal justice sector has focused, amongst other things, on improving the juvenile justice system. 70 per cent of Jordan's population are below 24 years old, and juvenile delinquency has been constantly on the rise as much as their risk for radicalisation. In addition, the EU has promoted increased integration amongst key players in the judicial field and greater operational independence of the relevant institutions.

In Iraq, the EU's contribution to counter-terrorism focuses on two areas: the Office of the National Security Adviser as well as the criminal justice system. In the first instance, it assists the office in the development of a national counter-terrorism strategy compliant with human rights (a similar project also exists in Lebanon). This project is funded with EUR 3.5 million. In the second, funded with EUR 8.3 million

and running for three years, Iraqi justice authorities are to be strengthened in their capacity for policy planning and coordination, as well as law enforcement and criminal investigations. The main reason for this is that Iraq's justice system has been unable to cope with the high levels of violence since 2003 (it was already politicised and inefficient before that). As Human Rights Watch noted, 'the criminal justice system is plagued with arbitrariness and opacity… Security officers and judges alike use confessions as the cornerstone of criminal prosecutions, and frequently charge detainees with terrorism with no actual evidence'. Confession-based justice systems encourage the use of torture as a method to secure confessions. In addition, Iraqi law enforcement agencies have carried out mass and arbitrary arrests, often without warrants – always in the name of fighting terrorism. As in Egypt, this approach has not produced the desired results.

In Algeria, the EU has funded a substantial justice reform project as early as 2004; funded with EUR 17 million by the EU and EUR 2 by Algeria, the project aimed at building capacity, modernising the justice sector as well as improving the living conditions of inmates.

4.3   Anti-money laundering and countering financing of terrorism

Over the last decade, terrorist groups in the Southern Neighbourhood have increasingly diversified their financial revenues. This is in stark contrast with Al-Qaeda at its peak 15 years ago, who strongly depended upon Bin Laden's personal wealth and donations by individuals from Gulf States. Terrorism and transnational organised crime are increasingly interconnected and terrorist groups now have better access to illicitly derived resources.

IS, for instance, manages a highly diversified financial portfolio. Its main revenues are derived from theft and extortion from the territories under its control (e.g. bank robberies), kidnapping for ransom, illicit trafficking (e.g. oil and gas produces, cultural heritage), fundraising through modern communication networks, and material support from Foreign Terrorist Fighters. Similarly, AQIM closely cooperates with some of the organised criminal networks active in the Sahel and Maghreb region and makes money through smuggling activities (e.g. contraband, cigarettes, and narcotics) and ransom payments for the release of hostages.

The work of law enforcement bodies active in countering the financing of terrorism is additionally inconvenienced due to recent technological advances (e.g. virtual currencies and prepaid instruments as payment methods) and the emergence of new trends, such as the increasing use of cash by terrorist groups.

Crucial in this field is the international anti-money laundering and countering financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime, which is based upon relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the Recommendations from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF). This international body was established, under the lead of the United States, in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks and has since been leading the international efforts on CFT. In the Southern Neighbourhood this body is represented by the MENA FATF.

Following the new FATF Recommendations of February 2012, the EU adopted its 4th Anti-Money Laundering Directive in May 2015. The Directive mainly focuses on preventing the EU's financial system from being used for money laundering and terrorist financing purposes, but also encourages member states to provide technical assistance to third countries to help them comply with international AML/CFT standards.([15]) Following the adoption of the Directive, the EU established a blacklist containing high-risk

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[15] Directive (EU) 2015/849 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 20 May 2015 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing, amending Regulation (EU) No 648/2012 of the European Parliament and of the Council, and repealing Directive 2005/60/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council and Commission Directive 2006/70/EC, Official Journal of the European Union, 5 May 2015.

third countries with deficiencies in fighting money laundering and terrorist financing. Countries on the list (Syria is the only Southern Neighbour) will be subject to enhanced due diligence measures, which require banks to carry out additional checks on financial transactions originating from these countries.

In February 2016, the European Commission presented its Action Plan to strengthen the fight against the financing of terrorism. The Plan calls for the targets of action 'to go beyond terrorist organisations as such. It needs to include affiliates, such as foreign terrorist fighters, financial backers and fundraisers, and anyone who knowingly helps terrorist activities. It also requires action both inside the EU and in external relations: drawing on the work of the FATF is of particular importance'.[16] The Action Plan identifies two main courses of action: to disrupt the revenue sources of terrorist organisations by targeting their capacity to raise funds in the first place, and to detect and prevent these organisations from moving funds and assets, ensuring that such movements can be traced and disrupted. Among its various concrete measures, the Action Plan also specifically mentions assistance to countries in the Middle East, North Africa and South East Asia to monitor and disrupt terrorist financing.

The EU is currently setting up the AML/CFT Global Initiative, a EUR 16 million project to support countries in the MENA region (and South/South East Asia) to monitor, disrupt and deny the financing of terrorism and money-laundering, especially related to FTFs and designated terrorist organisations. The project would include capacity building on asset tracing, seizure and confiscation, assistance with the implementation of AML/CFT legislation, update of legislation linked to inter-state cooperation, and enhancing capacities for cross-border investigations.

This project will build upon a previous EU-funded initiative (EUR 2.7 million), which was launched in 2014. This project, implemented by the UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (UNICRI), aimed at building effective asset recovery capacity in Egypt, Tunisia, and Libya to recover the assets of former leaders and other high-ranking officials accused of widespread corruption. The recovery of stolen assets was deemed important to restore a sense of justice and accountability, but also to recover funds to help stabilise economies and create jobs and growth.

UNICRI's asset recovery project demonstrated the need to further build capacity in the region. Although a legal and institutional framework for the fight against money laundering is in place in the three recipient countries, insufficient law enforcement responses and an overall lack of capacity continue to hamper the effective implementation of these instruments. The project demonstrated that even with adequate legislation, challenges as a result of a combination of legal, operational and institutional factors remain: knowledge gap of the laws and legal systems of each other's jurisdictions, insufficiently prepared formal requests, lack of informal contact between officials from the requesting and requested states, and lack of cohesion between domestic agencies. The project also pointed out an important need for confidence building measures between the acting magistrates of requested and requesting States.

Additional challenges are related to specific characteristics of the region's economic and banking systems. Examples are the widespread use of Islamic charities and the importance of *hawalas* or informal money-transfer schemes, which both have been used to finance terrorism.([17]) MENA countries also have a strong cash economy, which facilitates the laundering of money derived from corrupt activities into the legitimate economy. Moreover, it should be mentioned that governments in the region are not always willing to engage in anti-corruption activities. In 2015, the countries in the Southern Neighbourhood

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[16] European Commission, 'Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on an Action Plan for strengthening the fight against terrorist financing', 2 February 2016.
[17] C. Kaunert, S. Léonard, 'EU Counterterrorism and the European Neighbourhood Policy'.

(with the exception of Palestine) received a Corruption Perceptions Index of merely 35.7 on a scale of 100.([18])

5   Rule of law: protection of human rights

Efficient and effective counter-terrorism measures and the protection of human rights are not conflicting goals. Rather, 'international and regional human rights law makes clear that States have both a right and a duty to protect individuals under their jurisdiction from terrorist attacks. This stems from the general duty of States to protect individuals under their jurisdiction against interference in the enjoyment of human rights. More specifically, this duty is recognised as part of States' obligations to ensure respect for the right to life and the right to security.' In other words, states have not only the duty to protect the life of their citizens (the right to life being a human right, too), but also to protect other human rights of said citizens. In practice, measures countering terrorism have at times undermined human rights – ranging from torture to the politicisation of the judiciary and more. Taken together, these measures have a corrosive effect not only on the status of human rights in a given country, they also are counterproductive: terrorist acts are more frequent in states with low standards of human rights.

The EU addresses this aspect in several of its cooperation programmes with the Southern Neighbourhood.

In Tunisia, the EUR 23 million support program for security sector reform launched in late 2015 seeks, amongst other things, to streamline the respect for human rights. The modernisation aspect of the internal security forces for instance is in line with human rights as they are laid out in Tunisia's constitution.

A similar project funded with EUR 2.7 million aims to improve the strategic and operational capacity of the Jordanian security agencies. For example, in 2012 Jordanian border control possessed one computer to access international databases (at Amman airport); it has since been able to increase the number of border posts equipped with the relevant technology to 20. By strengthening the working methodologies of law enforcement agencies to effectively protect the citizens, particularly those in need of differentiated treatment, the project enhances the protection of human rights and therefore the accountability of Jordan's security sector.

Another example of the EU's limits in enforcing such projects is Syria; here, the EU as well as other actors keen to improve a highly corrupt and abusive justice system were stopped by the ongoing violence in the country.

In Morocco, a EUR 75.5 million project allotted to justice sector reform aims to improve not only judicial independence, but also increase protection of rights and liberties. Although the Moroccan government has declared its intentions to reform the justice system along those lines, it failed to make significant progress – in 2013, Morocco's judiciary system was considered one of the most corrupt according to the World Corruption Index.

6   Fostering of regional cooperation

The strengthening of regional cooperation is an indirect measure to counter terrorism: where states do not cooperate on the threat, terrorists can move freely from country to country, smuggle weapons and launder money undetected. This is a particular concern in the Southern Neighbourhood, where cooperation generally, but particularly in the security sector, has been traditionally poor. The EU has

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[18] Transparency International, 'Corruption Perceptions Index 2015', 27 January 2016.

sought to improve this lack of cooperation in a number of ways since 2005. Euromed Justice – a project that is now in its fourth cycle (2016-2019) – has consistently aimed at not just improving institutional and administrative capacity in the field of justice; it has done so with a regional approach. This creates not only a judicial network across the Mediterranean but also amongst the Southern states, and leads to the sharing of best practices. A similar project for the police, Euromed Police, has the same objective but focuses on personnel from the internal security sector. In total, the EU has contributed EUR 17 million between 2005 and 2019 to each Euromed Justice and Euromed Police. Topics both frameworks have addressed range from cooperation and international judicial mutual assistance in criminal matters related to terrorism, human trafficking, drug trafficking, financial crimes, weapons trafficking, money laundering and computerisation.

The latter point is of particular concern in the region, as Southern states make very limited use of international cooperation tools such as the Interpol databases. Its nominal database, used for international alerts, currently contains less than 4,000 entries from law enforcement agencies in the Southern Neighbourhood (compared to 90,000 from Europe); its database on stolen and lost documents (crucial in the fight against forged travel documents, often used by terrorist suspects) contains 300,000 entries from the South compared to 30 million from Europe.

With a view to further extend its relations with third countries on counter-terrorism, the EU has appointed since February 2015 counter-terrorism and security experts to EU delegations in, amongst other states, Tunisia, Morocco, Jordan, and Lebanon. The deployment of such interlocutors is an important step forward in counter-terrorism cooperation, and can be particularly useful to develop trust with local military and law enforcement authorities due to most of the experts' military background and know-how.

Another valuable instrument is the concept of enhanced Counter-terrorism Political Dialogues. These bilateral high-level meetings with strategic countries aim to strengthen cooperation on counter-terrorism and build capacity to deal better with terrorist threats, including foreign fighters. In the Southern Neighbourhood, the EU already held similar dialogues with Tunisia and Lebanon, and is initialising the process with Jordan.

Following the two major terrorist attacks in Tunisia in 2015, the Council agreed in its July 2015 Conclusions to intensify the EU's support to Tunisia's fight against terrorism.([19]) The dialogue, which was held two months later in September 2015, reviewed existing security cooperation and envisaged possible additional actions to counter terrorism and radicalisation. At the meeting, both interlocutors agreed on a set of strategic principles for EU-Tunisia counter-terrorism cooperation. In particular, the EU agreed to support Tunisia in developing a national counter-terrorist strategy and a comprehensive strategy to prevent radicalisation, enhancing the country's judicial responses to terrorism, and improving the protection of critical infrastructures and soft targets from terrorist threats. In spring 2016, the EU presented to the Tunisian Government a comprehensive Counter-terrorism Assistance Package, which facilitated the implementation of several programmes (e.g. the EUR 23 million security sector reform programme) and capacity building activities (e.g. CEPOL counter-terrorism training).

A similar dialogue was held with Lebanon in January 2016. The EU-Lebanon Counter-terrorism Dialogue led to the adoption of a roadmap, which should guide cooperation in the field of justice and law enforcement, airport and aviation security, countering the financing of terrorism (e.g. the establishment of specialised anti-corruption bodies), border management (e.g. cooperation with Frontex), and countering violent extremism (e.g. cooperation with the Radicalisation Awareness Network's (RAN)

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[19] Council of the EU, 'Council conclusions of 20 July 2015 on Tunisia', 20 July 2015.

centre of excellence). A major focus point in the roadmap is the development of a national counter-terrorism strategy, which has been a challenge thus far, due to, amongst other reasons, different interpretations of what such a comprehensive strategy to counter terrorism should look like, conflicting views on which actors should be involved (e.g. inclusion of actors other than law enforcement authorities), and inter-operability issues of Lebanon's ministries. The EU is currently exploring how to implement the roadmap with a Counter-terrorism Assistance Package.

Over the last year, the European External Action Service's Deputy Secretary General Pedro Serrano and the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator Gilles de Kerchove have visited other Southern Neighbours to explore avenues for closer counter-terrorism cooperation, such as Algeria (February 2016), Egypt and Israel (both September 2016). Nevertheless, enhancing this kind of cooperation does not always run smoothly. Partner countries often don't see the EU's added value on counter-terrorism (in particular due to the EU's limited expertise on hard counter-terrorism measures, but also its modest financial support when compared to some other international actors) and do not always agree with the its comprehensive approach to counter terrorism.

Algeria and Morocco, for instance, have often relied heavily on the military to combat terrorism, for which the EU cannot offer support. Hence, both countries have shown a consistent preference for bilateral cooperation. Also the EU's push to establish a tripartite forum which engages also civil society does not convince all neighbouring states, which are often signed by mistrust between government and civil society actors. For some Southern Neighbours diplomatic tensions also play a role in their slow responses to the EU's advances. EU-Morocco relations for instance have suffered a setback following an EU Court of Justice ruling that suspended an agricultural trade agreement with Morocco due to the country's inclusion of the Western Sahara within its territorial scope.

The EU's agencies that have a play in counter-terrorism have also undertaken measures to step up cooperation with MENA states. Eurojust for instance actively works towards enlarging its network of contact points in the Southern Neighbourhood. Since July 2015, such contact points have been appointed in the Palestinian Authority, Lebanon, Jordan, Algeria, and Iraq, in addition to those already appointed in Egypt, Israel and Tunisia. Nevertheless, Eurojust's cooperation with third countries is often impeded by a lack of trust in their criminal system, in particular with regards to data protection.

Data protection is also an obstacle to Europol's cooperation with third countries. So far, the agency has not signed any strategic nor operational agreements with any of the Southern Neighbours. Nevertheless, Europol and also CEPOL are actively engaged in enhancing law enforcement connections and building capacity of peers across the Mediterranean. Frontex as well is exploring cooperation on border management with third countries (in accordance with its recently extended mandate, the European Border and Coast Guard can set up joint operations with third countries) and the RAN Network is making its first steps in engaging third countries.

7 Prevention and combat of terrorism

A broad section of the EU's counter-terrorism work falls under the UN's second pillar of prevention and combat of terrorism. Since member states retain responsibility of matters of law enforcement and military nature, the EU is mainly engaged in preventive measures to terrorism.

The basis of the EU's preventive measures is the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism. In addition to its internal focus, the strategy, which was most recently revised in May 2014, calls for support to vulnerable countries in addressing the push and pull factors of terrorist recruitment. The strategy acknowledges that 'countering radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism

effectively requires a balanced approach between security-related measures and efforts to tackle those factors that may create an environment conductive to radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism'.[20]

This security-development nexus led to the emphasis on counter-radicalisation in development programming. For instance, the European Neighbourhood Policy, which was reviewed in November 2015, now prioritises tackling terrorism and preventing radicalisation and addresses several aspects related to tackling radicalisation, by giving priority to youth, education and socio-economic development. The EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa also includes a focus on resilience strengthening, one of the core aspects of P/CVE.

The EU's programmes aimed at preventing terrorism are either P/CVE-specific or P/CVE-relevant. As mentioned previously, this study does not include general development activities, although they might help reduce overall push factors of radicalisation.

The EU's engagement in the Southern Neighbourhood in this field can be broadly divided into the following categories: P/CVE capacity building of governmental and non-governmental actors, research on root causes of radicalisation, communication outreach, targeted interventions to vulnerable communities, and improving intercommunal understanding. The EU also provides support to a number of multilateral P/CVE initiatives.

7.1 P/CVE research and capacity building

The EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism prioritises capacity building abroad and encourages member states 'to assist third countries to form and implement their own policies for preventing and countering radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism and how to address messages supporting terrorism'. Capacity building extends also to the local level, in particular local institutions and grass-roots organisations. In Jordan, a EUR 10 million programme is currently being implemented with a two-fold objective: to strengthen the capacities of the Jordanian Ministry of Interior to counter violent extremism and to provide support to local grassroots-level interventions which work with vulnerable youth and communities.

The RAN plays an important role in capacity building to CVE practitioners and governments. Although the network mainly focuses on providing assistance within the EU, its recently extended mandate (and budget increase of EUR 25 million) allows it to export know-how and good practices to neighbourhood countries (particularly Turkey, MENA, and Western Balkans). So far, a first introductory meeting with Tunisia was held in December 2016 aimed at inquiring for the national government's support and identifying local practitioners who could eventually benefit from capacity-building activities.

In 2015, the EU funded EUR 5 million to prevent and counter radicalisation and violent extremism in the Maghreb and Sahel region. The objective of this 4-year project (launched in July 2015 under the coordination of UNICRI) is to amplify the efforts of local civil society actors which can work with governments across the region to tackle the causes of violent extremism. The project builds upon the outcomes of a preliminary project, to which the EU contributed EUR 1.675 million, aimed at enhancing research and sharing knowledge on root causes of radicalisation in the region.

7.2 Strengthening resilience of vulnerable communities to radicalisation

Radicalisation is a context-specific phenomenon and, hence, requires locally-tailored responses; one needs to look into the local context in order to identify the specific underlying factors of radicalisation in a certain region. Nevertheless, inequality, feelings of alienation and exclusion, experiences with state-

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[20] Council of the EU, 'Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism', 19 May 2014.

sanctioned violence, and religious, ethnic and identity-related tensions appear to be, amongst others, recurring push factors for radicalisation across the Southern Neighbourhood. Therefore, the EU focuses extensively on strengthening the resilience of vulnerable individuals and communities to the appeal of radicalisers and extremism, promoting moderation and tolerance and improving social cohesion in the region.

An EU-funded project (EUR 1 million) to promote social cohesion and moderate voices in Syria is currently ongoing. The implementing organisation 'Search for Common Ground', from their regional office in Lebanon, provides support (through capacity building, networking, sub-grants, and mentoring) to new and existing initiatives that promote social cohesion, non-violent mobilisation, and moderate narratives. A similar programme in Lebanon looks at strengthening the capacity of Sunni Institutions (in particular, the Sunni High Council, Dar el Fatwa) to address the root causes of Islamic radicalism and to promote religious tolerance. The EU also contributes EUR 370 000 to a project aimed at promoting intercommunity interaction (through sports and education) between Israeli and Jordanian societies and between Arab and Jewish communities within Israel.

Youth in the MENA region are increasingly vulnerable to marginalisation and radicalisation. Middle Eastern societies are experiencing youth booms of staggering proportions: approximately 20 per cent of the total population is aged 15-24. At the same time, 30 per cent of MENA's young people are unemployed, which is the highest rate in the world.[21] In addition to socio-economic exclusion, many youngsters feel disillusioned with the failed 2011 uprisings, lack trust in their country's institutional framework, and are frustrated with their inability to shape their own future. The combination of these factors increases their vulnerability to radicalisation and recruitment to terrorist groups. It is not a coincidence that the average age of IS' foreign recruits is 27.4.[22]

Two projects targeted at vulnerable youth (both with a budget of EUR 600 000) have been set up in Lebanon under the funding mechanism European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR). 'Beyond Radicalisation: Youth in Lebanon Speak Up!' hopes to increase the capacities of Lebanese youth to promote deradicalisation via public platforms and media. The project 'Engaging Youth for Human Rights and Social Cohesion' tries to engage 1,200 Syrian, Palestinian and Lebanese youth and municipal authorities in 10 high-risk communities to address radicalisation through youth-led sport/arts-based behaviour-change activities and community initiatives, which are to be amplified by social media.

Some of the MENA's peripheral communities also fall risk to marginalisation and exclusion. Tunisia's border regions represent a good example. While smuggling by border communities was somehow approved by the Ben Ali regime, after the regime overthrow the country's security forces enhanced their fight against terrorism, including toughened controls on smuggling networks.[23] For many border communities in the MENA region, smuggling is a legitimate means of subsistence due to lacking alternative livelihood opportunities. Stigmatisation and law enforcement crackdowns risk alienating these communities. The Kasserine governorate near the Algerian border and the town of Ben Guerdane, close to the border with Libya, have seen many of their young people recruited by Jihadi networks in Iraq, Syria and Libya, or commit terror attacks in their home country.[24]

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[21] The Economist, 'Arab youth. Look forward in anger', 6 August 2016.
[22] This age average is based upon a sample database. See S. Devarajan, L. Mottaghi, et al, 'Economic and social inclusion to prevent violent extremism', World Bank Middle East and North Africa Economic Monitor, October 2016.
[23] H. Meddeb, 'Young people and smuggling in the Kasserine region of Tunisia: Stories of dispossession and the dynamics of exclusion', International Alert, May 2016.
[24] V. Colombo, 'Multiple Layers of Marginalization as a Paradigm of Tunisian Hotbeds of Jihadism', in Jihadi hotbeds. Understanding local radicalization processes, ISPI, July 2016.

Under the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the EU recently funded EUR 2 million to projects (implemented by the Danish Refugee Council/Danish Demining Group and International Alert) in Tunisia aimed at increasing community engagement in border security and border management and promoting realistic livelihoods alternatives in marginalised border communities.

The EU targets with some of its P/CVE activities also radicalisation among prison population. Lebanon, for instance, is facing serious challenges in this regard in particular due to a significant increase in its prison population over the past years. This reflects an increase in the country's population (as a result of the refugee crisis) and a worsening security situation in the region and has put an additional strain on the already poor social services, resources and technical capacities of Lebanon's judicial and penitentiary system. Recurring issues are lengthy pre-trial detentions, lack of judges and specialised personnel, inability to respond effectively to specific cases concerning juveniles, limited resources, and poor infrastructure.

Lebanon's prisons are overcrowded (at 185.8 per cent of detention capacity), 56 per cent of the prison population are awaiting trial, only 10 per cent are charged with or convicted of terrorism activities, and 30 per cent have declared abuse by police (although the actual number is suspected to be much higher). The prisoners are all mixed; no separation is made with respect to the nature of the criminal charges (for instance, distinction between radicalised/at-risk/offenders) or to age. For instance, at-risk youth are not detained separately, which exposes them to recruitment of terrorist and criminal groups. While rehabilitation programmes and vocational training do exist, the offer needs to be enhanced.

The Roumieh prison, Lebanon's largest detention facility, represents a good example of how Lebanon's penitentiary system appears to contribute more to the proliferation than to the curbing of terrorism. The prison plays an infamous role in the recruitment of terrorists. In 2015, a suicide attack perpetrated in North Lebanon appears to have been organised from within the prison. A raid two days later exposed mobile and satellite phones, computers and even video conferencing capabilities. Interior Minister Nohad al-Machnouk stated that 'Roumieh prison is an operations room for ISIS'.[25]

The EU cooperates with Lebanon to improve these conditions in two ways: increase the capacity of the Lebanese justice system and improve living conditions in prison. The EU has, among other projects, provided $2,6 million funding to a UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) project on prison reform between 2011 and 2014. Actions in the project included capacity building to relevant ministries, policy and legislative reform, and support to both NGOs and government bodies working in prisons. The EU has also improved medical and sanitary conditions and infrastructure in Roumieh and Kobbeh prisons for EUR 1.2 million.[26]

More recently, and based upon the lessons learnt of these project, the EU adopted a programme to support rule of law and governance aspects in relation to juvenile and criminal justice in Lebanon. A contribution of EUR 9 million to UNODC and the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) should strengthen juvenile justice, promote a protective environment for children in line with international standards, and enhance the capacity of law enforcement services to address terrorist-related cases with a human rights-based approach.

One of the main target groups of the EU's P/CVE initiatives are Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and refugees that are living in the Southern Neighbourhood. In 2015, the MENA region accounted for more than 30 per cent of global displacement, including 2.7 million refugees, 13.9 million IDPs and an

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[25] F. van Tets, 'Lebanon's Isis prison: A rare glimpse inside the jail from which terror attacks have been directed', The Independent, 8 March 2015.
[26] United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 'Reinforcing Human Rights and Democracy in Lebanon - Penal Reform', December 2014.

estimated 374,200 stateless individuals. In particular the conflicts in Syria, Yemen and Iraq continue to trigger high levels of displacement in the region.([27])

The sudden increase in population caused by large refugee groups challenges national governments' ability to protect these often vulnerable groups and risks leading to tensions with the surrounding host communities. A number of factors expose refugees, IDPs and host communities to radicalisation. Examples are inadequate living conditions and security gaps in refugee camps, local resentment due to limited economic opportunities, legal restrictions to rights and opportunities for refugees (e.g. employment, education, and citizenship), external influences from political and militant groups, and refugees' feelings of desperation for a better future.([28])

In December 2014, the EU set up the EU Regional Trust Fund in Response to the Syrian Crisis (the so-called 'Madad Fund') to assist Syria's neighbouring countries with the large refugee flows. The fund merges various EU financial instruments and contributions from member states into one single flexible and quick mechanism with a target volume of EUR 1 billion. So far, the Madad Fund has been used to improve various facilities and provisions in the refugee camps, such as education and training, healthcare, and water and waste-water infrastructure.

The EU also focuses on preventing radicalisation within the refugees and host communities. Such a risk of radicalisation became evident when in June 2016 a terrorist attack took place just outside Jordan's informal refugee camp known as 'the berm', located in the no-man's land between the Jordanian-Syrian borders. A car originating from the camp exploded and killed six border guards.

Lebanon and Jordan in particular are heavily burdened by the current refugee crisis. Both countries host the highest number of refugees per capita in the world: there are currently more than 1 million registered refugees in Lebanon and more than 700.000 in Jordan. Additionally, both countries also host high numbers of Palestinian refugees from Syria and 'historical' Palestinian refugees, which continue to suffer from large structural circumstances of 'isolation, exclusion and dispossession'.([29])

In April 2014, the EU launched a two-year project aimed at increasing trust between Syrian and Lebanese youth through peace-building narrative activities (e.g. summer camps, dedicated workshops, and virtual interaction for those unable to travel), with the objective that participants will deflect existing narratives of prejudice and extremism within their respective communities. A similar initiative was launched in November 2015 in the Danniye governorate, which is characterised by a high proportion of refugee populations. With an EU contribution of EUR 2 million this project aims to mitigate local tensions by providing capacity building and assigning grants to municipalities in vulnerable areas.

The current conflict in Iraq as well has caused the displacement of many: an estimated 3.1 million people are currently displaced within Iraq (a number which might not include many of the IDPs that are still living in displacement following the sectarian conflict in 2006-2008).([30]) In November 2015, the EU funded EUR 3.5 million to a project run by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) to support conflict reduction between IDPs and host communities. The project also integrates a research component on radicalisation factors.

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[27] UNHCR, 'Global report 2015 - Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regional summary', June 2016.
[28] B. Sude, D. Stebbins, S. Weilant (2015), 'Lessening the Risk of Refugee Radicalization. Lessons for the Middle East from Past Crises', RAND Corporation, 2015.
[29] United Nations News Centre, 'Palestinian refugee crisis a 'time bomb' for Middle East region, warns UN official', 17 June 2015.
[30] Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre - IDMC, 'Iraq IDP Figures Analysis', May 2016.

7.3 Communication outreach

At the February 2015 Foreign Affairs Council, the Council expressed its commitment to 'improving its strategic communication, developing an outreach strategy to the Arab world, including developing counter-narratives to terrorist propaganda, promoting fundamental rights, and taking into account the increasingly frequent use of the internet in radicalisation, engaging through social media and enhancing communication in Arabic'.[31] In particular, the EU works to offer a more positive narrative through targeted communication to young audiences that may be vulnerable to radicalisation.

In April 2015 the Strategic Communication Task Force for Outreach and Communication in the Arab world was set up. The so-called Arab StratCom Task Force, which relies on a EUR 3.3 million budget, aims to foster dialogue and cultivate mutual respect between Arabic-speaking and European communities, especially among their youth, and focuses on producing positive messages about the EU's involvement in the region.

The Task Force does not have a dedicated team of experts, but relies rather on interinstitutional cooperation between the EEAS, the Council's Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, and all relevant Commission DGs, including the Spokesperson's Service. Nevertheless, its main implementing actors are the EU Delegations in Arab countries. They focus on strengthening their social media presence in the region, creating translation hubs, polling young people to establish their concerns and to explore which narratives would work best where, and establishing a number of pilot outreach projects. The EU delegations in Egypt, Jordan and Morocco are currently running pilot projects in order to help the Arab StratCom Task Force streamline tools and messages. Despite the considerable increase in their press and information budget, some of the delegations in the region could benefit from additional resources and personnel to increase their impact on the local population.

A similar initiative that focuses on strategic communications to counter violent extremism is currently being implemented by the British Council and the Research, Information and Communications Unit of the UK's Home Office (RICU). With a EUR 3.5 million budget, this project focuses on Tunisia, Morocco and Lebanon. The BBC Media Action relies on EUR 3.5 million EU funding to build resilience and social cohesion in Syria through mass media programming and platforms. This project develops and produces radio series relevant to the topic of radicalisation in Syria and entertains dynamic debate programmes lined to the series.

7.4 Support to international efforts on CVE

The EU actively works with the UN, Council of Europe and OSCE in their efforts to counter violent extremism. For example, the EU is a founding member of the GCTF and funds some of its initiatives working on preventing and countering violent extremism. Hedayah, for instance, serves as a global hub of expertise and experience in CVE training, methods, dialogue and research. With EUR 5 million funding to Hedayah, the EU aims to support local partners to design, implement, and develop approaches against radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism.

Another GCTF-inspired institution is the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). The EU is part of the GCERF's governing board and provides financial support. This multi-stakeholder global fund supports local initiatives to build community resilience against violent extremism and focuses in particular on community engagement, which is at the core of P/CVE efforts. In fact, the GCERF enables the EU to fund smaller grassroots organisations that might not have the institutional capacity to

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[31] Council of the European Union, 'Outcome of the Council Meeting, Foreign Affairs', 9 February 2015.

apply for huge EU grants. In this regard, the GCERF also aims to encourage and attract active investment from the private sector to reach out to more communities.

7.5   Other initiatives

Another aspect of the EU's prevention work focuses on building trust between the two regions by encouraging direct contacts between Europeans and nationals from Southern Neighbourhood states. A good example is eTwinning, a virtual platform enabling school staff to communicate and collaborate. The EU is looking into extending further the platform to third countries that are facing problems related to violent radicalisation and where intercultural dialogue is most needed. At the moment, eTwinning Plus is already active in Tunisia, where more than 300 teachers and 89 schools are registered.

Erasmus+ also connects students and other young people from the EU and the Southern Neighbourhood. The programme funds EU organisations to work on projects with partners in other countries and gives priority to projects fostering inclusion and promoting fundamental values. Additionally, the EU aims to launch a feasibility project for Erasmus+ Virtual Exchanges to connect young people from Europe and the MENA region and provide a structured platform for cross-cultural awareness, understanding and cooperation.

8   Conclusion: an assessment

The EU's recent focus on the external dimension of counter-terrorism brought along the establishment of numerous EU security-related programmes in the Southern Neighbourhood. These encounter a number of challenges: their success is difficult to measure, they are by default limited by the political will of the partner country, and they are regularly undermined by violence recreating the conditions conducive to terrorism in the first place. In general, the EU's measures to counter terrorism are criticised for lack of impact or measurability of success. But although over the past decade the EU has adopted extensive monitoring mechanisms to evaluate its projects, several challenges still often obstruct the assessment of counter-terrorism initiatives.

Academics and policy-makers worldwide have been confronted with the lack of comprehensive, systematic and consistent metrics when measuring success and failure in counter-terrorism. Indeed, different measuring approaches are being applied world-wide. The US Department of Justice, for instance, adopted mainly a quantitative approach in its 2003 report aimed at outlining the successes of the Patriot Act measures, which had been introduced shortly after the 9/11 attacks. The report referred to figures of identified and disrupted terrorist networks, arrests and killings of (suspected) members of terrorist organisations, and frozen financial assets in relation to counter-terrorist investigations.

Clearly, these data offer a partial and inaccurate picture of the outcomes of the Global War on Terror. The mainly absolute figures that were represented can hardly be considered reliable markers of success. For instance, as a 2011 evaluative study on US counter-terrorism measures demonstrates, the increase in collected threat-related intelligence information, enabled through the Patriot Act's expended search and surveillance tools, did not lead to an increase in convictions (the evidence often did not meet prosecutorial standards) and did not amount to any plot detections.

Similarly, increasing arrests or killings of terrorists may on the long-term actually promote terrorist recruitment if the repressive measures generate a backlash. For instance, Israel's campaign against terrorist attacks during the Second Intifada (2000-2005) may well have led to less terrorist attacks, but it did not limit Palestinian civilian deaths nor did it diminish Palestinian support to Arafat.

A similar body-count approach only gives a partial picture of the situation. Over the years, more valuable approaches have emerged, which offer a qualitative interpretation of those hard figures and include also softer criteria. More sophisticated parameters to measure success and failure of counter-terrorism efforts

would include, for instance, casualties in military and civilian population, cost effectiveness of terrorist operations, economic impact of terrorism, perception and fear of the terrorist threat, reputational costs for the state/terrorist group, appeal of terrorist narrative, resilience and social cohesion of a society, and internal stability of the government.

Overall, a growing acknowledgement has emerged among policymakers that counter-terrorism programmes would benefit from the introduction of a system able to monitor and evaluate their (longer-term) impacts. Nowadays, M&E tool kits elaborated by development communities (e.g. formal evaluation questions, theory of change, monitoring through ongoing operations to allow mid-term adjustments) are more often included in CT and CVE projects. Most probably, this can be considered a side-effect of the shifting focus towards a more human security-centred approach to combat terrorism (e.g. the emergence of CVE, which exactly embodies the growing security-development nexus). Additionally, new indicators and outcomes (e.g. number of people impacted, perception surveys, and behavioural change) have been established over the years to enable monitoring of CT and CVE projects.

Nevertheless, programming bodies still come across a number of repeating challenges when they evaluate the outcomes of counter-terrorism and CVE projects. Examples are the absence of clear, defined objectives and performance measurements, which are necessary to measure both intermediate and final outcomes and generate lessons learned. A lack of reliable data (both at the development, intermediate and evaluating phases) also hinders numerous projects. Obtaining data from trustworthy sources has long-time been a challenge in terrorism studies. For instance, disparity or even contradictions between databases occurs quite often and is due to many factors, including missing (or multiple) claims of responsibility for a terrorist attack, diverging approaches towards counting casualties, and law enforcement secrecy on foiled attacks. Not to mention that there is a general ambiguity on what exactly should be understood as 'terrorism'. Neither is there a consensus on a definition of violent extremism or radicalisation and its drivers.

Moreover, establishing benchmarks and indicators for success in counter-terrorism programmes is not facilitated by the limited visibility of certain counter-terrorism outcomes. Counter-terrorism activities still often have an ad-hoc character both with regards to time and space, which is in stark contrast with the durable and transnational nature of the main terrorist threats today. Effects of CT and CVE efforts are often visible only after a long time or may not even be visible at all (for instance, how to determine a person did *not* radicalise?). The terrorist threat may also simply shift to another region. For instance, effective Algerian counter-terrorism efforts in the 1990s pushed Jihadist groups southwards into the Sahel, whereas two decades later, the French military operation Barkhane drove them up north again, out of Mali and into Libya. Similar geographical shifts of the terrorist threat may clearly contribute to an inaccurate assessment of the outcomes of counter-terrorism operations or programmes.

A significant step forward in this field is the establishment of the Counter-terrorism Monitoring, Report and Support Mechanism (CT MORSE). This EU project, set up in January 2015 and implemented by a consortium of four of the leading independent institutes on transnational security, provides monitoring and support for the IcSP actions in countering terrorism and violent extremism in third countries. The monitoring mechanism aims to ensure that EU counter-terrorism and CVE actions benefit from the best of international policy and global lessons learned. CT MORSE also provides expertise to EU actions on CT/CVE throughout the programme cycle of research, design, implementation and evaluation and supports the EEAS and DevCo to ensure the value-added and coherence of EU policy and practice are maximised. European engagement in counter terrorism should however not be measured in numbers, and certainly not in short time-frames.

In addition, the EU cannot go further than its partner countries in its approaches to counter terrorism, as cooperation is built on the premise of will. One such example is Egypt, with which cooperation in that regard has been particularly challenging. Cairo refused, for instance, to clear the security expert to be

posted to the EU delegation in Egypt. In general, Egypt displays a preference for the military model of counter-terrorism as defined by the American armed forces[32] and has, as other states in the region, been more interested in equipment than in capacity-building. The EU does not provide lethal equipment, however – if at all, equipment must have no negative impact on human rights, such as technology serving the detection of explosives for instance.

In addition, states in the South – for instance Syria or Libya – have been absorbed in large-scale violence making capacity building efforts secondary to other priorities. This, in turn, perpetuates the cycle of poor state delivery leading in turn to conditions conducive to terrorism. The EU's projects all seek to break this cycle – but they cannot do so without the partner country being in the lead.

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[32] Joint Publication 3-26. 'Counter terrorism', 24 October 2014, Washington DC

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