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OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 18 November 2014
To: Terrorism Working Party
Subject: Summary of discussions

1. Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted as set out in document CM 4949/14.

2. Information by the Presidency

The Presidency updated the meeting on the steps undertaken in different Council groups in implementing the measures regarding foreign fighters agreed by the Council on 9-10 October 2014. Some delegations pointed out that addressing the foreign fighters issue, which is cross-cutting, should be well coordinated and consistent across all sectors concerned and the TWP should have an overview of actions undertaken in other Groups.

The Presidency also mentioned that the draft Guidelines for the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism set out in document 13469/14 would be submitted to the Coreper/Council for approval.

3. Incidents of significant interest - Information from Member States

Delegations reported on recent terrorism-related incidents, operations and arrests which took place in their respective countries since the last TWP meeting. The FR delegation briefed about the adoption of new legislation reinforcing provisions for combating terrorism.

4. Enhancing the links between internal and external aspects of EU counter-terrorism work

The Chair presented the revised version of the document (14081/1/14 REV 1) the aim of which is to improve synergy between the TWP and COTER and noted that as regards the sharing of documents, the documents of the TWP are already largely available via Extranet and the room for improvements rests notably on the side of COTER. The Group supported the revised document and expressed its readiness to endorse it. Following its further possible update by COTER, its implementation should be started by the incoming Presidency.

5. Explosives and CBRN substances

The meeting took note of the presentation given by the ES delegation on the use of malicious devices in Spain which contained two case studies and elaborated on the lessons learned in tackling this threat.

6. Use of malicious means/methods to carry out acts of terrorism

- Findings of the Seminar held in Rome on 2-3 October 2014

The Group took note of the document presented by the Presidency (15378/14) containing a summary of replies from Member States to the questionnaire on the abovementioned subject as well as the conclusions from the Seminar held in Rome on 2-3 October 2014.

- Draft Council Conclusions on the use of malicious means/methods to carry out acts of terrorism

The meeting supported in general the draft Council conclusions presented by the Presidency as set out in document 15379/14. However, additional time was needed for studying the document. The Presidency therefore invited delegations to send their comments by 21 November 2014. A revised version of the document would then be prepared and JHA Counsellors might be convened to finalise the conclusions before its submission to Coreper/Council for approval.

7. Update on the initiatives to strengthen the counter terrorism capabilities of Western Balkans countries

The SI delegation provided an update on the initiative of EU actors supporting the CT activities in the Western Balkans (WB). Concrete proposals have been formulated and include the development of an Integrated Plan of Action and a follow-up to the EU initiative of sharing best practices with WB of 2010. At the Salzburg Forum Ministerial Meeting in Slovenia (11-12 November 2014), the Ministers supported the initiative and agreed to take an active part in its implementation. Regional Cooperation Council (Sarajevo) fully supported the integrative approach in the fight against terrorism and violent radicalisation.

SI proposed that as a next step, a meeting is organised in December involving JHA Counsellors of interested MS to prepare the ground for further action.

Furthermore, SI referred to the EU regional workshop on countering violent extremism in the WB which took place on 16-17 October in Ljubljana and was organised by the COM in cooperation with the EEAS and the US. The workshop, which brought together experts from all WB countries, EU actors and the US, helped establish the necessary networks for the sharing of expertise.

Recommendations agreed at the workshop were circulated to delegations (DS 1547/14).

A number of delegations as well as representatives of COM, EEAS and the CTC office welcomed the progress made and expressed their readiness to further support the initiative which is particularly acute in the context of the foreign fighters phenomenon. They also highlighted the outcomes of the workshop and noted that the work which has started already should be continued in a coherent way and in the spirit of synergy with the external dimension.

8. Strengthening the use of Multinational ad Hoc Team for gathering and exchanging information on terrorism

The Presidency presented a proposal for setting up a cooperation structure at Europol (DS 1532/14), in order to improve direct contacts between units dealing with foreign fighters. A network of CT contact points specialised in foreign fighters should be established on a voluntary basis to enhance operational cooperation among Member States concerned.

Delegations, while agreeing on the need to improve cooperation among law enforcement authorities and intelligence and making it more efficient, were hesitant about the creation of new structures. Existing channels of cooperation (such as the newly created Working Group Dumas, Police WG on Terrorism) should be exploited. It was also pointed out that different internal structures exist in Member States and appointing a single point of contact could in certain cases be problematic.

The Presidency concluded that it will further explore possible ways of setting up a cooperation structure among interested Member States to collect and exchange operational information on foreign fighters.

9. Terrorist threat from Lone Actors

– Presentation by IntCen

The meeting took note of the presentation on the terrorist threat from lone actors given by a representative of IntCen (EU CONFIDENTIAL).

– Findings of the Seminar on isolated actors held on 9 September 2014, Brussels

The Presidency drew the attention of delegations to a document summarising the mini-seminar on isolated actors which took place in the margins of the TWP meeting on 9 September (doc. 15255/14). A revised version of the document would be prepared to take into account recent developments.

10. Strategic Communication - Home Office's Research, Information and Communications Unit

A representative of the Research Information and Communications Unit (RICU) of the UK Home Office gave a presentation which showed the powerful role that communications can play in countering terrorism and especially reducing the foreign fighters threat and offered specific examples of RICU's delivery of influential communications to do that. Finally, RICU proposed to support the Syria Strategic Communications Advisory Team (SSCAT) by sharing their models and expertise.

The Chair acknowledged the presentation and highlighted notably RICU's unique expertise on researching, delivering and evaluating campaigns as well as its insight into developing civil society partnerships to reach messages right into communities. The importance of the project to be developed in implementing the Guidelines for the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism with a view to gathering, exchanging and making available expertise in the strategic communication domain to Member States was stressed.

The representative of the COM also emphasized the experience and techniques used by RICU and encouraged other Member States to take part in the SSCAT project in support of a comprehensive approach on preventing violent radicalisation.

11. Information by the incoming Latvian Presidency

The meeting took note of the brief introduction of the programme of the incoming LV Presidency. It would focus on foreign fighters including close coordination with other Working Groups on the wider use of SIS II, PNR and external borders issues. Initiatives on supporting the CT activities in the Western Balkans and enhancing internal and external aspects of CT will be continued. Particular attention will be paid to measures agreed by the Council in addressing the foreign fighters phenomenon.

12. Information on counter-terrorism activities

– Commission

The Commission representative briefed about the following events:

- meeting of the FIUs taking place on 18 November;
- launch of a call for tender for RAN Centre of Excellence;
- 6th EU-US explosives experts' seminar, 4-6 November 2014.

– Europol

The representative of Europol mentioned a recent workshop on Hezbollah as well as the annual CT week which took place on 12-14 November.

– EEAS

The EEAS representative referred to the past and upcoming political dialogues on CT as well as GCTF-related activities. The follow-up to the recently adopted EU's counter-terrorism/foreign fighters strategy for Syria and Iraq was also briefly mentioned.

– CTC

The representative of the CTC office briefed about the recent and upcoming visits of the CTC to third countries as well of his activities in preparation for the December meeting of the JHA Council.

13. AOB

No issues were raised under AOB.
