



**Brussels, 30 October 2015
(OR. en)**

13506/15

**JAI 796
ENFOPOL 317
COTER 137**

OUTCOME OF PROCEEDINGS

From: General Secretariat of the Council
On: 22 October 2015
To: Joint meeting of the Terrorism Working Party and COTER
Subject: Summary of discussions

- 1. Adoption of the agenda**
- 2. Information by the Presidency on ongoing Counter-Terrorism Activities**
 - Update by the Presidency (TWP)

The chairwoman of the TWP gave a summary of the decisions taken at Council meeting since the previous TWP meeting.

- the adoption of Council Conclusions on strengthening the use of means of fighting trafficking of firearms;
- the five short-term priority areas identified in the CTC's and the Presidency's papers on the follow-up to the statement of Heads of State and Government of 12 February 2015, requiring immediate action from Member States, as set out in document 12551/15. A report of the state of play would be given at the December JHA Council;
- the adoption on 18 September 2015 of the Decision to sign, on behalf of the EU, the Council of Europe Convention on the prevention of terrorism (CETS No. 196) and the Additional Protocol there to incriminating travel of Foreign Terrorist Fighters (implementing the requirements regarding FTF related offences as laid down in the UN Security Council Resolution 2178(2014));

- on EU-PNR, delegations were informed about the start of the informal trilogues at the end of September and the aim to reach an agreement within the end of the year;
- and finally, as a follow-up to the averted attack on the Thalys train on 21 August 2015, the Commission would conduct a study on how to further enhance the operational cooperation in relation to security and transport.
- Update by the Presidency (COTER)

The Chair of COTER presented the work programme of COTER by underlining that the discussions within the Working Party focus on the implementation of the Council conclusions on the fight against terrorism as adopted on 9 February 2015. The Chair indicated that the Presidency aligned its priorities with the Council conclusions. The Chair highlighted some of the main priorities of the conclusions, mentioning that the Council decided to intensify the external dimension of the fight against terrorism, notably in North of Africa and in the Middle East. The Chair further recalled that the conclusions launched the idea of targeted and upgraded security and counter-terrorism political dialogues with a number of priority countries.

The Chair reported on the outcome of the first targeted and upgraded security and counter-terrorism political dialogue held with Tunisia on 21 September 2015. The Chair stressed that this dialogue was of particular importance as it was organised swiftly after the Bardo and Sousse attacks. This was the first enhanced and targeted CT political dialogue involving all competent services, including representatives from EU agencies.

The Chair reported on progress relating to the activities of the Strategic Communication Task Force, praised in particular the efforts of the EU to increase communication in Arabic and recalled that the secondment of EU counter-terrorism experts to key EU Delegations is ongoing. The Chair mentioned that the fight against the financing of terrorism is one of the key priorities of the Council conclusions. Furthermore, the Chair recalled that cooperation is increasingly carried out in International Fora, particularly in the framework of the United Nations, in the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum and the Anti-ISIL Coalition.

The Chair explained that each COTER meeting is devoted to a stock-taking exercise on a specific geographic or thematic subject along the lines of the priorities of the Council conclusions on counterterrorism of 9 February 2015.

The working parties were informed about the seminar on the gender dimension of violent extremism organised by the Presidency in the margins of COTER, in the afternoon of 21 October 2015. The focus of this seminar was on the diverse roles played by women in violent extremism. The Chair also announced that a seminar on more effective capacity building in counter-terrorism will take place in Brussels on 24 November 2015 (9 am–4.30 pm at the Thon EU Hotel). This seminar will be co-organized by the Presidency and the Commission. Counter-terrorism and development experts will be invited to examine different ways of monitoring and evaluating counter-terrorism capacity building effectiveness, with a focus on human rights due diligence, monitoring, evaluation and impact measuring. The geographic priority area will be the North Africa and the Sahel regions.

- Update by the Presidency (FoP Cyber)

The chairman of the FoP concentrated in his presentation on the main topics related to terrorism.

3. Terrorist Travel Hubs and Routes

- Presentation by EU IntCen (EU CONFIDENTIAL)

Delegations took note of the abovementioned classified presentation given by a representative of IntCen.

- Withdrawal of Travel Documents: Presentation by the Presidency (TWP)

The Presidency summarized the replies to the questionnaire on withdrawal of travel documents, focusing on recent legislation that had been introduced by a number of Member States, establishing power to seize travel documents to hinder persons intending to travel to engage in terrorism activity. A written summary will be circulated at the next TWP meeting on 17 November 2015.

4. Risks to Civil Aviation arising from Conflict Zones

- Presentation by the Commission

The Commission gave an update on recent actions undertaken, understanding that better information sharing was needed. A meeting would be held during the first week of December, date to be confirmed; invitations would be addressed to Member States' Permanent Representations (Counter Terrorism Focal Points and Aviation counsellors) and members of the Risk Assessment working group.

The Netherlands mentioned the release of the report on 13 October 2015 on the crash of the MH 17.

5. Strategic Communication and countering Violent Extremism

- State of play regarding the Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team (SSCAT) Project:

Presentation by SSCAT

The Chair introduced the discussion regarding the activities of the Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team (SSCAT) by recalling the origin of SSCAT and its financial support constraints.

The representatives of SSCAT provided a state of play of the activities pointing at the success of a wide range of activities and reporting considerable interest and support gained in a large number of Member States. In the discussion the support for SSCAT was confirmed by five delegations.

The representative of the Commission highlighted the considerable cost/benefit ratio of SSCAT and pointed to its valuable contribution in the understanding of terrorism beyond counter-narrative actions, and recommended SSCAT to be made a permanent cooperation instrument.

The EU CTC noted that at least 20 Member States currently participate in SSCAT-related activities. He recommended further efforts in communication notably on islamophobia and possibly on migration, referred to the Task Force aiming at a better image for the EU in the Arabic world, and to the need to substantially scale up communication efforts.

The Chair of COTER recalled the considerable work achieved so far regarding the Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence.

The representative of the Commission updated on progress achieved so far. He referred to the competence of Member States in 90% of policy areas and stressed that the local level is the most appropriate starting point for most activities, with organisation networking, cross-fertilisation, validation and feed-back processes as crucial actions. Networking is expected to be maintained in future, and the think-tank tasking to be expanded. Spill-over of the outcomes of the network to the benefit of third countries is also envisaged, on a case by case in the Balkans, Tunisia and Turkey, depending on preconditions to be met. Network working groups would be set up on the following issues: police, prison/probation, victims, prevention, de-radicalisation in prisons, internet, social media, and link between internal and external aspects of terrorism. Local authorities would be invited to join these network working groups. The official launching of the network is expected to be announced in January 2016, at the JHA Informal Ministerial Meeting.

- Update regarding the RAN (Radicalisation Awareness Network Centre of Excellence)

Presentation by the Commission

The Commission gave an update on recent developments on RAN. The Centre of Excellence would be fully functioning from January 2016. New issues should be taken on board, education should be better addressed, local authorities should be more involved, and also ways to engage with practitioners from the judiciary should be explored. A better geographical balance would be beneficial. Apart from the existing logistical and financial support, RAN, according to the Commission, was to "beefed up" and be given more of a think tank function: gather knowledge, statistics, develop concept papers, and increase the ability to give tailor-made advice to Member States. A cautious engagement on a case-by-case with third countries could be an option as well.

6. Counter-Terrorism Cooperation with the Western Balkans

- Western Balkans Counterterrorism Initiative and Integrated Plan of Action 2015– 2017:
Presentation by Slovenian Delegation

The Slovenian chair of the Western Balkans Counter Terrorism initiative (WBCTi) gave an overview of activities since the start in November 2014 and of the most recent meeting of 20 October 2015 gathering 17 Member States and representatives from Europol, the EEAS, the Commission and the CTC's office as well as relevant external stakeholders.

Presentation by the Presidency (TWP)

The draft Council Conclusions on the Integrative and Complementary Approach to Counterterrorism and Violent Extremism in the Western Balkans (11625/1/15 JAI 623 ENFOPOL 228 COTER 118 COWEB 81) had been very well received by the TWP. The Presidency intended to have these adopted at the December JHA-Council, passing through COSI on 24 November 2015 after endorsement by the TWP. The conclusions were referred to by the Presidency and by the Commission as an example of excellent cooperation between the preparatory bodies of the Council in the counter-terrorism area and beyond.

- Debriefing regarding Interventions by Serbian and Montenegrin Security Services :
Information on the state of play by the Presidency (TWP).

The TWP chair summarised the comprehensive presentations from Montenegro and Serbia, given the day before at the TWP meeting, on Counter Terrorism, explaining their legal framework, organisational structure, and including statistical data.

7. AOB

Debrief from the Presidency on the High Level Ministerial Conference on "Criminal justice response to radicalisation", organised by the Commission (Justice and the Presidency, with the support of the CTC), which had taken place in Brussels on 19 October 2015. A high number of Ministers of Justice had participated. As a follow-up, the Presidency intended to have conclusions adopted at the December JHA Council laying down guidelines for the future work, acknowledging that it was a delicate area since the EU had mainly a support/facilitator function. The CTC highlighted the importance of developing strategies on how to deal with (the growing number of) returnees, including by the judiciary (referring also to RAN), the importance of training of (prison) personnel, police and CEPOL's role in this regard, and the crucial role of Eurojust in the handling of returnees.

The Commission indicated that the next meeting within the internet platform with industry would take place on 27 November 2015. Apart from all the big internet providers, the platform counted 21 Member States and the CTC among its participants. The meeting would focus on the production of counter-narratives, culminating in the launch of an IT-platform back to back with the December JHA Council. A call for further national experts to the EU Internet Referral Unit (IRU) was made, referring to the desirability of keeping a geographical balance. 550 referrals had been made by the unit so far, and overall Internet providers had been responding positively to request from the IRU.

Denmark briefly mentioned a seminar on radicalisation to take place on 19-20 November 2015, in Aarhus and distributed invitations at the meeting.