



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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Delegations will find attached the partially declassified version of the above-mentioned document.

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**ANNEX**

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THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 18 November 2004**

**14235/1/04  
REV 1 EXT 2 (11.03.2011)**

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**NOTE**

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from: Presidency  
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Subject : Joint TWG/COTER Report on Recruitment: Headlines for a strategy

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**INTRODUCTION**

The EU Action Plan on Combating Terrorism adopted at the June European Council called for the development of a strategy to address the factors, which contribute to recruitment into terrorism. To that aim the Dutch Presidency presented a joint COTER/TWG work plan in which next steps were announced to take further the work of the Irish Presidency in this field. The work plan was presented to TWG and COTER delegates in July 2004. As announced in this plan, in the third pillar context a seminar was held in September 2004, which was attended by national experts of security services and police. In the second pillar context the topic of recruitment has been mainstreamed in EU's external relations. These initiatives have generated a basis for the strategy on countering recruitment.

This report presents the outcome of the work initiated through the TWG and COTER. Former presidencies also paid attention to recruitment. Under the Irish presidency for instance, this resulted in the joint COTER/TWG Thematic assessment on Underlying Factors in the Recruitment to terrorism (Council document 11562/04 Confidentiel UE). Also under the Irish presidency, the Belgian Royal Institute for Foreign Affairs hosted a seminar on the recruitment of Jihadist terrorists. This report is part of this continuous work and aims to serve as a practical guideline/approach for future Presidencies and for Member States on how to address the factors, which contribute to radicalisation and recruitment, at Member States- and EU level and in EU's external relations.

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## **A. INTERNAL EU FOCUS**

The phenomenon recruitment

A univocal definition of radicalisation cannot be given. At the same time it is clear that individuals can move from mainstream Muslim beliefs and practices towards Islamist extremism. This may be motivated by a potential confrontation with western society, though other factors also can play a role here such as justification of criminal activities, peer pressure, the appeal for 'justified' violent behaviour. Radicalisation and recruitment for the Islamist fight can be closely connected. A process can be identified, that begins with for instance an aversion to the Western society and can lead via increasing radicalisation to recruitment for the Jihad and ultimately to committing terrorist attacks. Only a small subset of the radical minority of conservative or orthodox Muslims will eventually become involved in Islamist extremist activities, even perform terrorist attacks. Involvement in terrorism is of course **NOT DECLASSIFIED** Involvement can include active or passive support as well as actual participation in a terrorist attack.

Most – not all – EU Member States, though in different phases, are confronted with an increasing radicalisation among parts of their Islamic communities. Radicalisation processes often take place in particular ‘hot spots’. Important examples of such places are mosques, schools **NOT DECLASSIFIED** and, last but not least, the Internet. Also the role of prisons or juvenile correction institutions should not be underestimated. These ‘hot spots’ seem to be instrumental. In general, it is believed that radicalisation tends to take place via loosely connected networks and individuals rather than through specific organisations dedicated to the task.

It has appeared that potential terrorists can be found among new immigrants, between the second, third or even fourth generation of migrants, among experienced international jihadists and among endogenous converts. Terrorists or potential terrorists differ in so many aspects, that a clear profile is difficult to produce. Potential terrorists can be ultra-orthodox or seemingly indifferent religious, can be young or middle-aged (though more often young), can be socially deprived or rather well educated. In some cases, they appear to be well-integrated into Western society. Some individuals may even not have gone through a recruitment process, but volunteered to participate.

On the other hand underlying factors and other indicators can be discerned, such as social deprivation or lack of integration, religious perception of martyrdom, criminal background, poor education, unfulfilled career expectations and conspiracy theories (‘Islam under siege’).

The present radicalisation in Muslim communities in the West is based upon exogenous factors and endogenous factors. Both factors influence and reinforce each other. As the role of Al Qa’ida as a leading factor somewhat has diminished it could be argued endogenous factors have an increasing influence on radicalisation. This is accompanied by decentralised recruitment modus operandi adapted to local circumstances.

At the same time the important role of mass media and modern information technology must not be underestimated. Nowadays global issues easily can become local issues. Conflicts elsewhere can become a conflict in Europe, at least in the perception of radical Muslims. Perceived unjustness against Muslims anywhere in the world can be portrayed by Islamist extremists as a personal attack on every Muslim. An inter-religious dialogue may help to adjust this perception Besides that Al Qa’ida remains the leading ideological factor and still plays a key role in influencing the masses and generating momentum for their causes. We can therefore conclude that both endogenous and exogenous factors are vital in the process **NOT DECLASSIFIED**

## 1. Countermeasures, national context

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Member States are strongly recommended to organise a multi-agency effort of information exchange and co-operation between all relevant actors, e.g. police and security services, military, immigration, detention etc. Also the use of open sources, especially academic sources of information should be optimised.

National government and local administrations are strongly recommended to establish good contacts, e.g. through a structural dialogue, with Muslim communities to defeat radicalisation and recruitment. Local administrators should make a strong effort to engage Muslim communities in such a dialogue. Police and security services have a supporting role in this. Identification of key stakeholders within the Muslim communities is essential. The authorities should address the involved communities in order to share commitment and responsibility, promote confidence and reassurance and alert them about radicalisation trends and developments or even specific information on radicalisation (and recruitment) and furthermore act to prevent polarisation and over-simplification.

Given the various stages of the recruitment process (a process which can take place at quite a high pace), the fluid character of the networks, the diversity of potential terrorists, as well as the wide range of possible attacks, a comprehensive approach to the problem is necessary (involving police, security services, visa/asylum agencies, other public services and local community).

## 2. Countermeasures, internal EU context

As far as cross-border EU co-operation is concerned, there is not so much a need for new institutions for co-operation on EU level. However there is a need, for an improved use of existing arrangements within the EU.

- Europol will contribute to the work in this field **NOT DECLASSIFIED**
- **NOT DECLASSIFIED**
- **NOT DECLASSIFIED**

### B. EU EXTERNAL RELATIONS

The topic of recruitment has been mainstreamed in EU's external relations under the Dutch Presidency. Please find below an overview of how this has been done, including suggestions for future Presidencies on how this approach might be continued.

#### 1. Threat assessments

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- Where appropriate, recruitment processes should continue to be taken into account in future threat assessments, thereby enabling the drafting of COTER policy recommendations on the issue. The acquired insights should be used as input for EU's dialogue with third countries (see point 2) and in the development of external assistance programs that address factors that contribute to recruitment to terrorism (see point 3).

## ***2. Political dialogue***

Under the Dutch Presidency the importance to counter recruitment has been raised in the EU's political dialogue with third countries in which recruitment is an issue of concern. This has been done from a general point of view.

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- Where appropriate, the EU and its future Presidencies should continue to raise this topic during the political dialogue with third countries.
- Where appropriate, insights acquired relating to policy recommendations towards a third country or region should be used as input for such a dialogue.
- Starting with the selected priority countries in the fight against terrorism an effort should be made in enhancing the exchange of information on recruitment processes.
- To that aim, the EU could inform, as appropriate, third countries about its approach in countering recruitment at Member States and EU level, as set out in this joint COTER/TWG Report on Recruitment.

## ***3. External Assistance programs***

Under the Dutch Presidency the Commission and Member States have been asked to assess how their external assistance programs might best be used to address factors that contribute to recruitment to terrorism.

- External assistance programmes should fully take into account the underlying factors that contribute to recruitment to terrorism.
- The EU could organise a seminar to exchange best practices on how to make use of external assistance programmes in countering recruitment.

### **C. FUTURE COTER AND TWG ACTION**

Both the second and third pillar working groups on terrorism are advised to continue to pay attention to countering recruitment. The two groups could continue to exchange information on the issue, especially through joint meetings.

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