



Dear reader,

I am pleased to present to you the fifteenth issue of Eurojust News. The first issue of Eurojust News in October 2009 was devoted to explaining Eurojust's role in counter-terrorism. In light of the recent attacks in the European Union, this issue shall again focus on Eurojust's role in counter-terrorism and relevant developments. The recent terrorist attacks have led to unprecedented support for further European counter-terrorism cooperation to protect EU citizens from the threat of terrorism. While 38 people died in terrorist attacks in the European Union between 2009 and 2013, in 2016 alone, this number rose to 142 dead, 379 injured, and 142 failed, foiled or completed attacks (source: TE-SAT 2017), making the need for better European coordination at EU level to prevent such attacks even clearer. The EU's four pillars of counter-terrorism, **prevention, protection, pursuit and response**, have been enhanced to better combat this new wave of terrorism, and through this, Eurojust's role in counter-terrorism has developed.

Eurojust's counter-terrorism apparatus evolved in parallel with the tragedies that have struck the European Union and its partners. Every year, the number of terrorism cases in which Eurojust has been involved has risen, and so has the level of trust Member States have placed in Eurojust as a coordinator of counter-terrorism activities. Eurojust is seen as central to the EU's **pursuit** pillar, for its capacity to improve cooperation between judicial authorities in tackling terrorist financing and depriving terrorists of their means of attack and communication. Eurojust has consistently aided in the investigation and prosecution of cross-border terrorism cases by coordinating cooperation among Member States and building relationships with judicial authorities in third States.

A unique asset of Eurojust is its informal network of national correspondents for terrorism (NCT), comprised of prosecutors and judges specialised on counter-terrorism in Member States and certain third State partners. The network's development in the wake of the 2004 Madrid bombings is perhaps the single greatest leap forward in Eurojust's international counter-terrorism coordination, and, if optimally used, should enable States to better communicate on both long-term cases and emergency situations by providing trusted and informed contact points in each State.

In this issue, we emphasize the importance of developing Eurojust's counter-terrorism apparatus by highlighting the current counter-terrorism situation across the European Union and illustrating Eurojust's successes in the field. Then we focus on the work and role of the NCT by interviewing a correspondent from a Member State, Spain's **Vicente González Mota**, and a third State correspondent from Switzerland, **Juliette Noto**. We also get insight from the perspective of a think tank from **Dr Alistair Reed**, Acting Director of the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague, who explains some of the developing issues surrounding terrorism and counter-terrorism in Europe. Finally, we write about Eurojust's counter-terrorism strategy.

If you have any comments concerning this issue of Eurojust News, please contact our Corporate Communications Office at [info@eurojust.europa.eu](mailto:info@eurojust.europa.eu).

Michèle Coninx, President of Eurojust

## Counter-Terrorism

### EU developments in counter-terrorism

**D**ue to the growing danger of violent extremism, the European Union and the Member States have undertaken a number of initiatives to reinforce security and counteract the threat posed by terrorism. You will find below some of the more notable initiatives, legislative and other, that are also of relevance to Eurojust's work in counter-terrorism:

▶ **Riga Joint Statement, January 2015**, through which the Ministers of Home Affairs and the Ministers of Justice of the Member States of the European Union reiterate that terrorism, radicalisation, recruitment and financing related to terrorism are the main common threats to the internal security of the European Union;

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that, in the fight against terrorism, not only the consequences but also the underlying factors of radicalisation must be addressed; and that the Ministers strongly reconfirm their commitment to ensuring a speedy and enhanced exchange of information and best practice between Member States and all justice and home affairs agencies, particularly Eurojust.

- ▶ **The statement of the Members of the European Council of 12 February 2015 on counter-terrorism: Report on implementation of measures** sets out an ambitious agenda based on three pillars: ensuring the security of citizens; preventing radicalisation and safeguarding the values of the European Union; and cooperating with our international partners. It also underlines Eurojust's role with regard to foreign terrorist fighters (FTF).
- ▶ **The European Agenda on Security of 24 April 2015**, European Commission, establishes that terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime are the three core priorities for immediate action. It underlines the importance of better information exchange and increased operational cooperation. It calls on Eurojust to be fully involved in the activities of the European Counter-Terrorism Centre to improve coordination of investigations and prosecutions.
- ▶ **Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive (EU) 2015/849 on the prevention of the use of the financial system for the purposes of money laundering or terrorist financing and amending Directive 2009/101/EC (4th Anti-Money Laundering Directive, May 2015)** seeks to prevent the use of the EU's financial system for the purposes of money laundering and terrorist financing. This Directive also lists the entities to which it should be applied.
- ▶ **The Council Conclusions of 20 November 2015 on enhancing the criminal justice response to radicalisation leading to**

**terrorism and violent extremism** addresses the significant and evolving challenges to be addressed at judicial level.

- ▶ **Action Plan for strengthening the fight against terrorist financing, February 2016**, focuses on the following main actions: tracing terrorists through financial movements as well as preventing them from transferring funds or other assets and disrupting the sources of revenue used by terrorist organisations by targeting their capacity to raise funds.
- ▶ **Directive (EU) 2016/681 on the use of passenger name record (PNR) data for the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution of terrorist offences and serious crime, April 2016**, provides for the transfer by air carriers of PNR data and the processing of such data, including its collection, use and retention by Member States and its exchange between Member States.
- ▶ **Regulation (EU) 2017/458 amending the Schengen Borders Code** reinforces border control by introducing systematic checks against relevant databases at the EU external borders.
- ▶ **Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism** replaces Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and establishes minimum rules concerning the definition of criminal offences and sanctions in the area of terrorist offences, offences related to a terrorist group and offences related to terrorist activities, as well as specific measures for the protection of, and assistance to, victims of terrorism. ■

## Eurojust's role in counter-terrorism

*'Eurojust plays a pivotal supporting role in our wider fight against terrorism and organised crime – facilitating and promoting coordination between Member States' law enforcement authorities. This means that investigations and prosecutions can be more effective. The recent example of the French and Belgian terror attacks is a case in point, which underlines Eurojust's added value: they helped French and Belgian prosecutors and investigative judges by providing advice and coordinating complex investigations. I want to support Eurojust further in this role – which will help us, with other agencies, deliver an effective and sustainable Security Union.'*

Statement of Sir Julian King, EU Commissioner for Security Union, on the occasion of his 11 October 2016 visit to Eurojust.

**E**urojust operates as a permanent network of national judicial authorities comprised of senior practitioners (prosecutors, judges and police officers with equivalent competence) from all Member States. Eurojust is in a unique position to facilitate judicial cooperation and coordination in complex cross-border



terrorism cases, to foster mutual trust and enable the exchange of best practice in investigations and prosecutions. Eurojust assists Member States to coordinate between their competent authorities across borders, for example by:



- (1) assisting the Member States in the execution of complex mutual legal assistance (MLA) requests, including with countries outside the European Union, especially through the network of Eurojust's judicial contact points;
- (2) being involved in the activities of the European Counter Terrorism Centre (ECTC) to improve coordination of investigations and prosecutions;
- (3) offering expertise and assistance to the national authorities when conducting financial investigations in terrorism cases; and
- (4) facilitating the exchange of best practice and identifying the challenges faced in the collection and admissibility of evidence (including e-evidence) in terrorism investigations and prosecutions.

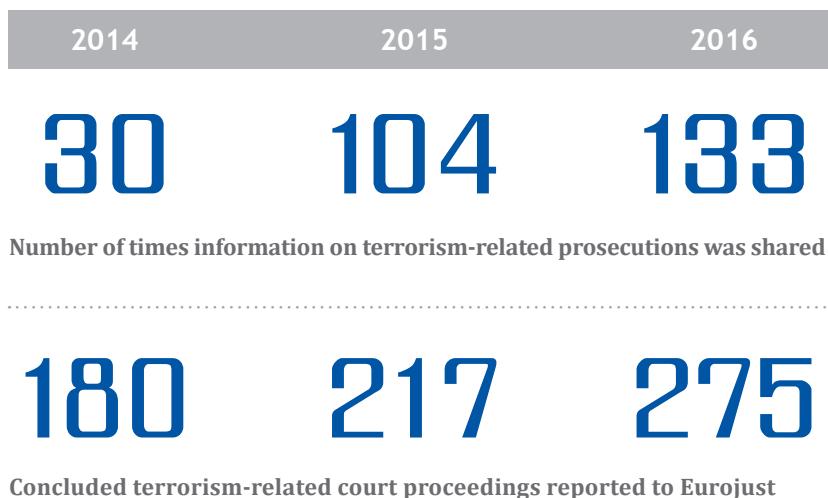
In addition, as provided by Council Decision 2005/671/JHA of 20 September 2005 on the exchange of information and cooperation concerning terrorist offences,

### Eurojust terrorism-related casework, 2014 – 2016



Source: Eurojust

## Information shared with Eurojust, 2014 – 2016



Source: Eurojust



Eurojust receives information concerning prosecutions and convictions for terrorist offences in the Member States. The collection and analysis of this information by Eurojust represents a valuable resource for judicial authorities.

The last two years have been marked by an increase in the number of terrorist attacks planned or carried out on European soil and an acknowledgement of the global threat posed by FTFs in Europe. The attacks in Paris, Brussels, Nice, Berlin, Manchester, London, Barcelona and Turku highlight the importance of closer judicial cooperation in terrorism cases.

At the same time, Eurojust observed links between terrorism and other serious and

organised crimes, particularly illicit trafficking of firearms and explosives, illegal immigrant smuggling and document counterfeiting. Notably, the investigations into recent attacks revealed that perpetrators used forged foreign passports to enter and travel across Europe.

Similarly, terrorists involved in attacks in the past couple of years had a background in organised or other serious crime, including drug trafficking and robbery. In addition, weapons and ammunition used in some terrorist attacks were discovered to have not been directly imported from war zones, but were bought in Europe through 'ordinary' illegal trade networks.

### Casework statistics

The figures collected from Eurojust's casework in 2015 and 2016 confirm that Member States increasingly rely on Eurojust's support to address and resolve issues of judicial cooperation in complex terrorism cases. In 2015, 41 terrorism-related cases were registered at Eurojust, almost triple the number of cases from 2014. In 2016, the number of terrorism-related cases further increased to 67. Eurojust held 15 coordination meetings involving terrorism-related offences in 2015 and 18 in 2016,

more than four times the number from 2014. Three joint investigation teams (JITs) on terrorism-related cases were active in 2015 and four in 2016, one of which was newly established.

Another important signal of Eurojust's evolving counter-terrorism role is that in 2015 it held its first coordination centre on a terrorism case, involving the real-time coordination of a joint action in several countries leading to simultaneous searches, seizures and the arrest of 13 suspects belonging to a radical Islamist terrorist group.

Of the 67 terrorism cases opened at Eurojust in 2016, Italy had 13 cases, Germany had 12 cases, and France had 9 cases.

### Information exchange

Eurojust's potential in counter-terrorism lies also within its role in information exchange. This information includes links to relevant cases, MLA requests and their execution. As provided by Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, Eurojust receives information concerning prosecutions and convictions for terrorist offences in the Member States. The collection and analysis of this information by Eurojust represents a valuable resource for judicial authorities.

The information on prosecutions and convictions for terrorist offences shared with Eurojust pursuant to Council Decision 2005/671/JHA significantly increased in 2016. Information on prosecutions for terrorist offences was shared with Eurojust 133 times, compared to 104 in 2015 and 30 in 2014. The number of concluded terrorism-related court proceedings reported to Eurojust increased to 275 in 2016, from 217 in 2015 and compared with 180 in 2014.

Increased information sharing on a regular basis and in a timely and systematic manner facilitates Eurojust's work in detecting links between cases, and in providing an overview of challenges and best practice related to prosecutions and convictions for terrorist offences. It enriches Eurojust's analysis of the judicial responses to terrorism, which is regularly shared with

the Member States via the *Terrorism Convictions Monitor* (TCM).

In addition, and as a follow-up to the Council Conclusions on the criminal justice response to radicalisation leading to terrorism, Eurojust would be in a position to monitor the use of alternatives to prosecution and detention and thus contribute to the development of criminal policy with regard to FTFs and radicalised citizens of the Member States.

Within the framework of the JHA Agencies Network, Eurojust and the other EU agencies inform each other about their tools and activities in relation to FTFs.

### Eurojust's Counter-Terrorism Team

First brought together in 2004 in the aftermath of the Madrid terrorist bombings, the Eurojust Counter-Terrorism Team (CTT) was created to address the specific challenges affecting EU judicial cooperation on countering terrorism: the need to strengthen operational cooperation and coordination in this area, to increase the sharing of information, and to build confidence and trust between Member States' judicial authorities.

The Eurojust CTT has been chaired since its founding by Michèle Coninx. The CTT has developed substantially over the course of the last 13 years, from a mediator between Member States to an important centre of expertise in terrorism matters. It is composed of Eurojust National Members, Deputies and Assistants, Seconded National Experts with expertise in terrorism, and Eurojust's administrative staff.

The team provides support in operational matters when necessary and facilitates cooperation and consultation with key partners at EU and international levels. The CTT has built up an informal network of counter-terrorism prosecutors from all Member States, facilitating their regular meetings to share experience and expertise and develop trust.

The team liaises regularly with the ECTC to ensure a strong operational and strategic cooperation between Eurojust and Europol. Other key partners

include the EU institutions, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Frontex, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the United Nations Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate, the UNODC and Interpol.

Due to the importance of the external dimension of the fight against terrorism, the CTT has also actively worked towards enhancing cooperation with countries in the Middle Eastern and North African (MENA) region. On 21 July 2015, Eurojust invited countries in

the MENA region to appoint Eurojust contact points, including a specific Eurojust contact point for counter-terrorism matters. Following these invitation letters, contact points for Eurojust have been nominated in Lebanon, Libya, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and the Palestine Authority (PA), in addition to those already appointed in Egypt, Israel and Tunisia. With this ever-expanding network of experts in countries most affected by terrorist activities, Eurojust will have the means to successfully respond to domestic and international terrorist threats. ■

Judicial cooperation, coordination and the exchange of information between Eurojust, national competent authorities, JHA agencies and third States are the fundamental elements in Eurojust's work.



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## Eurojust's role in countering radicalisation

**F**ighting terrorism and violent extremism requires more than repression. Countering the poisonous rhetoric of terrorist organisations by preventing and tackling radicalisation is a necessary step. De-radicalisation, disengagement and rehabilitation have been identified as EU priorities in the European Agenda on Security of April 2015. Eurojust plays a crucial role in helping Member States to develop effective judicial responses to radicalisation, as it is the sole EU agency tasked to monitor trends and developments in this area.

On 19 October 2015, the European Commission held a high-level ministerial conference on the *Criminal Justice Response to Radicalisation* to exchange views on effective interventions, management and sentencing practices to avoid the spread of radicalised ideas inside and outside prisons in the European Union that could lead to acts of terrorism. Sentencing policies, risk assessment tools

and the efficiency of de-radicalisation programmes were discussed. The conclusions of the conference were presented at the December 2015 Justice and Home Affairs Council of the EU. As a result, Eurojust was tasked to monitor trends and developments in the applicable legislative framework and relevant jurisprudence in the Member States of the European Union concerning terrorism and violent radicalisation, including the use of alternatives to prosecution and detention, and thus contribute to the further development of criminal policy with regard to FTFs.

Eurojust has recommended and underlined the need for an inclusive approach focused on prosecution, de-radicalisation and rehabilitation. Eurojust is looking into the type of approaches and initiatives that have the proper impact on de-radicalisation. Since 2013, Eurojust has focused on FTFs returning to Europe from Syria.

De-radicalisation, disengagement and rehabilitation have been identified as EU priorities in the European Agenda on Security of April 2015.



European Commission ministerial conference, 19-10-2015. Photo © European Union

Some of them have returned with traumas, disappointment or a lack of hope, and pose a considerable risk.

Classification systems have been introduced in some EU Member States, distinguishing among high-, medium- and low-risk returnees. The approach towards high-level risk returnees is clearly a repressive one. For the medium-level risk returnees, assessments are made to decide whether repressive approaches or de-radicalisation programmes in the community would be needed. For the low-level risk returnees, care and support measures are usually employed. Risk assessment tools are being developed in the Member States to assist prosecutors and judges when taking decisions in terrorism cases.

De-radicalisation programmes are also being designed in a number of countries. Nevertheless, as discussed at the June 2017 Eurojust meeting on terrorism, no uniform approach has been found and no evidence yet exists on what works in practice in tackling radicalisation. Eurojust will continue to monitor developments and share its findings with practitioners.

Eurojust is also involved in addressing the growing challenges posed by the sharp increase in online terrorist propaganda, which gives terrorists the ability to motivate, radicalise and recruit others by giving them a false sense of purpose, belonging, and obligation. The default response is to remove or block online terrorist content.

A number of effective initiatives can be found, including voluntary removal of the online content by Communication Service Providers (CSPs), private-public partnerships, and, since July 2015, a European Union Internet Referral Unit (EU IRU) at Europol that detects and flags online terrorist content to CSPs in view of its removal.

However, some challenges related to the removal of online content may require judicial intervention. These include:

(i) clarification of malicious content constituting terrorist propaganda; (ii) enforcement of the CSPs' obligation to immediately remove terrorist content

online after gaining knowledge of the illegal nature of the information; and (iii) investigation and prosecution of the authors of the content, considering

that the removal or blocking of the content (i.e. stopping the criminality) is not sufficient, but must be complemented by stopping those responsible. ■

## Eurojust products

Eurojust has developed a number of products in the area of countering terrorism, based on the analysis of information on prosecutions and convictions, on the lessons learned from Eurojust's casework and the outcomes of discussions during specialised meetings on terrorism organised by Eurojust.

### Foreign Terrorist Fighters reports

The first report, *Foreign Terrorist Fighters: Eurojust's Views on the Phenomenon and the Criminal Justice Response*, was issued in December 2013 and has been updated yearly. The purpose of the reports is to highlight best practice and challenges in the investigation and prosecution of FTFs, provide an overview of legislative developments in the Member States in the field of counter-terrorism, and make recommendations. Eurojust's FTF reports have limited distribution, and their primary intended recipients are practitioners specialised in countering terrorism, as well as EU stakeholders.

During a hearing at the European Parliament on 29 June 2017, Ms Coninx and the members of the LIBE Committee discussed the findings of the Eurojust report of December 2016 and exchanged views on several critical areas. These areas include:

- i) the legal and practical difficulties faced by national authorities that seek to use information collected by (national and foreign) intelligence services as evidence in criminal proceedings or for building criminal investigations in terrorism cases;
- ii) de-radicalisation programmes and alternatives to prosecution and detention as effective measures of prevention and reintegration;

iii) the implications of the ever-increasing links between terrorism and serious and organised crime, particularly concerning illicit trafficking of firearms and explosives, illegal immigrant smuggling and document counterfeiting; and

iv) the need for financial investigations in FTF cases to tackle money laundering, effectively disrupting the financing of terrorism.

### Terrorism Convictions Monitor

The TCM is a Eurojust document with limited access, distributed mainly to prosecutors and judges dealing with terrorism cases. It has been published three times per year since 2008. It provides a regular overview of terrorism-related convictions and acquittals throughout the European Union, legal updates, as well as judicial analysis of relevant judgements. The TCM is perceived as a valuable source of information and inspiration for building successful prosecution cases in the Member States.

The TCM is based on open source information and information on convictions for terrorist offences provided by the national authorities in the implementation of Council Decision 2005/671/JHA.

The latest issue of the TCM of May 2017 includes a detailed analysis of a judgement issued by the District Court of Rotterdam that concerns a returnee from Syria who had been active in the Free Syrian Army. It also presents highlights of the recently adopted Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism.

**Ad hoc analyses of landmark court decisions.** Closely connected with, and complementary to, the TCM, *ad hoc* analyses of landmark court decisions are being produced by Eurojust. These



analyses are published separately from the TCM due to several factors, including: the many and complex legal obstacles encountered in particular cases; the interest of practitioners in the arguments of a court in establishing, for example, the terrorist nature of a group or the qualification of a specific crime as a terrorist crime as opposed to a war crime; the nature and the length of the sanction imposed; the possibility to sentence *in absentia*; or the way of assessing the risk posed by a suspect when taking judicial decisions.

One of the notable court decisions analysed by Eurojust concerned Operation CESTO in Spain, which targeted a sophisticated terrorist recruitment network that facilitated the travel of FTFs to Syria. (More information on Operation CESTO can be found in the interview with Mr Vicente González Mota later in this issue.)

### Memorandum on Terrorist Financing

The *Memorandum on Terrorist Financing* is a Eurojust document with limited access that contains analyses of Eurojust

cases dealing with the complex issue of terrorist financing. The Memorandum highlights Eurojust's added value and tools in facilitating and speeding up judicial cooperation in countering terrorist financing. It enables practitioners across the European Union, in a quick and clear manner, to access vital information on combating terrorist financing.

The Memorandum was first issued in 2006 and is updated every three years, with the next update taking place in

the autumn of 2017. The latest issue of the Memorandum observed that terrorist financing takes place through general criminality as well as through charities and non-profit organisations. Although the organisation of an attack is inexpensive, the supporting of cells and organisations over the course of time requires considerable funding.

#### **CBRN-E Handbook**

The *CBRN-E Handbook* is a Eurojust document that provides practitioners with

support for investigations and prosecutions related to transnational crimes involving chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear substances and explosives (CBRN-E). It contains an overview of the most relevant EU and international legislation dealing with CBRN-E, as well as supranational entities, systems and databases in the area of CBRN-E.

The *CBRN-E Handbook* is regularly updated. The latest version was produced in June 2017.

## Informal network of national correspondents for Eurojust for terrorism matters

The informal network of national correspondents for Eurojust for terrorism matters (NCT) is a part of the Eurojust National Coordination System (ENCS) that seeks to coordinate the work of national authorities and Eurojust across a number of competencies. The ENCS facilitates, within each Member State, the carrying out of the tasks of Eurojust and *inter alia* helps to ensure that the Case Management System of Eurojust receives information related to the Member States concerned in an efficient and reliable manner. The NCT is therefore the one area in which judicial expertise and information on terrorism is collected and shared amongst all Member States.

The NCT, active since 2005, consists of at least one representative appointed by each Member State, as well as representatives from Norway and Switzerland. The NCT ensures that information related to terrorism prosecutions and convictions is shared with Eurojust and serves as a primary point of contact to facilitate judicial cooperation.

The NCT meet regularly at Eurojust. Since 2013, their meetings have focused on the phenomenon of FTFs. The latest meeting took place on 31 May and 1 June 2017, focusing on *Enhancing judicial responses and cooperation in the aftermath of terrorist attacks*. Building on the discussions in the previous years, the participants shared their practical experience and lessons learned from the

The network of national correspondents for Eurojust for terrorism matters served as a primary point of contact for the response to the 2016 Brussels terrorist attacks. Within an hour of the attacks of 22 March, which involved coordinated suicide bombings on the metro and in Brussels Zaventem Airport, leaving 32 people dead and hundreds injured, Eurojust activated its network of national correspondents for terrorism matters to ensure that the competent judicial authorities from all Member States were available around the clock to immediately receive and process any urgent request for, or decision on, judicial cooperation.

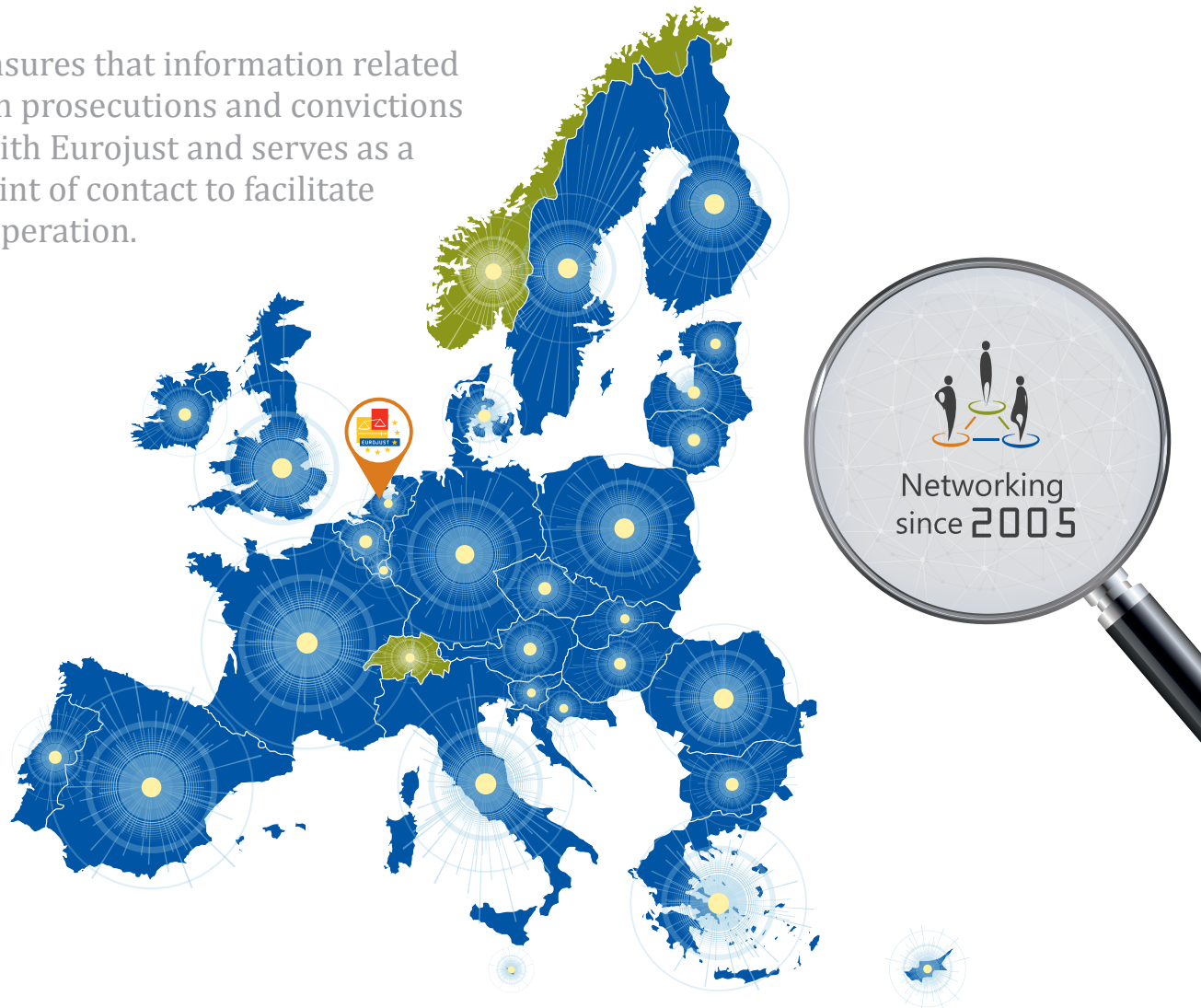
The activation of the network facilitated the provision of quick and comprehensive assistance to the Belgian investigation into this major terrorist incident by supporting and complementing the work at national level with a focus on the international dimension of the attacks and the identification of criminal networks and connected criminal activities. Eurojust was also put on stand-by to be able to promptly respond to any requests for assistance and coordination from the competent national authorities.

The investigation in Belgium revealed a sophisticated terrorist network with links both to other Member States and to the Paris attacks, with suicide bombers being supported by several individuals, and with connections to other serious crimes and networks involving arms trafficking and forgery of documents. The person seen next to one of the suicide bombers on surveillance footage from the attack on the Brussels metro escaped minutes prior to the detonation and was identified as a known FTF in Syria. His DNA, found in several 'safe houses' and cars used by the terrorist network, led to the discovery of links with other Member States and his involvement with the Paris attackers.

The Federal Prosecutor's Office of Belgium requested urgent assistance from Eurojust to facilitate an MLA sent to another Member State. Eurojust's prompt reaction proved instrumental in identifying, within a minimum amount of time, the correct authority with which to cooperate across borders so as to immediately execute the request and speed up the exchange of information at judicial level. Eurojust's support ensured that one of the accomplices in the Brussels attacks could be located and captured. His arrest took place on 8 April, in coordination with the arrest on the same day of the 'man with the hat' seen on CCTV camera as the airport suicide bomber who fled the scene.



The NCT ensures that information related to terrorism prosecutions and convictions is shared with Eurojust and serves as a primary point of contact to facilitate judicial cooperation.



investigations and prosecutions of the recent terrorist attacks in Europe, the judicial context of de-radicalisation, best practice in dealing with victims of terrorist attacks and the links and thin line between war crimes and terrorist offences. The participants agreed to further exchange best practice, legislation, guidelines, case law and other relevant materials. ■

### Next steps

**E**urojust will continue to work closely with the NCT to find the best possible solutions and enhance the overall level of expertise. Eurojust will provide all necessary support in the exchange of information and in the further development of measures to effectively tackle the many judicial challenges related to the FTF phenomenon.

Eurojust will continue to analyse challenges to the criminal justice response to returnees from conflict zones, the approaches to women and children, to radicalisation, to the gathering and admissibility of battlefield evidence and electronic evidence, to dealing with victims of terrorist attacks and to the legal qualification of the crimes committed in conflict areas. Eurojust will share the outcome of its analysis to facilitate a comprehensive and common approach towards the phenomenon of FTFs.

In accordance with the European Agenda on Security, Eurojust is closely working with Europol to increase the exchange of information and ensure the immediate judicial follow-up of the activities of the ECTC. To this end, a prosecutor specialised in countering terrorism shall be recruited and seconded by Eurojust at ECTC.

Furthermore, Eurojust has been invited by the European Commission to participate as a member of the recently established High Level Expert Group on Radicalisation (HLEG-R) to assist the EU's efforts in: (i) improving cooperation and collaboration among the different stakeholders and bringing EU-level work to counter radicalisation closer to the policy-making level in the Member States; (ii) supporting the further development of EU counter-radicalisation policies, including by elaborating a set of guiding principles and recommendations and proposing the implementation of concrete actions to address shortcomings and gaps; and (iii) helping to assess options for a more permanent structure for collaboration and coordination of counter-radicalisation work at EU level. ■

## Interviews

### Vicente Javier González Mota, Prosecutor at the *Audiencia Nacional* and national correspondent for Eurojust for terrorism matters



**V**icente Javier González Mota began his legal career after attaining his law degree at the University of Alicante. He started as a prosecutor at the Prosecutor's Office in Barcelona in 1988. From 1996 to 2005, he worked as a prosecutor at the Special Prosecutor's Office against Corruption.

In 2005, he was appointed Prosecutor at the Audiencia Nacional (National Court), the only court responsible for dealing with terrorism cases in Spain, a position he still holds. In 2011, Mr González Mota became a national correspondent for Eurojust for terrorism matters. He is a frequent speaker at international seminars on topics ranging from fraud and organised crime to terrorism.

***Eurojust News:** Eurojust has maintained an informal NCT network since 2005, in part because of the terrorist attacks in Madrid in 2004. In your opinion, what has been the added value of Eurojust in combating terrorism since then?*

**Mr González Mota:** 'I think that terrorism, specifically jihadist terrorism, is a threat to Europe, and a network in which we can share our experience and knowledge is an important tool. The terrorist attacks in Europe concern our identity as Europeans, regarding Europe as an Area of Freedom, Security and Justice. In 2004, we suffered the bomb attacks in Madrid. Attacks on London, Paris and Brussels are a continuation of this nightmare. We need cooperation tools and the NCT is one of the means to improve our capacity to respond to this criminal phenomenon. We need to feed the NCT network with more information on national cases to provide all of us with useful data concerning national law, which must be taken into account in prosecuting terrorism cases.'

*In light of recent events, has your role as an NCT changed to adapt to the evolving threat of terrorism and the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters?*

'We report all Spanish court decisions in cases dealing with terrorism, and also report information about suspects who are put in custody during the investigation. Some of these cases are investigations about terrorist fighters in Syria and Iraq.'

*Operation CESTO resulted in Spain dismantling a group that recruited and indoctrinated young men in Spain and Morocco to fight for an Islamic extremist organisation in Syria. A Eurojust analysis of the ruling in a similar case in Belgium was used in the CESTO trial. What does this example tell us about the importance of Eurojust?*

'In Operation CESTO, we dealt with aspects very similar to the case of Sharia4Belgium. We debated differences between terrorists and members of the armed forces, and declared Jabat al Nusra a terrorist organisation. I participated in this trial, prosecuting the members of a network that sent people to Syria to join Jabat al Nusra and Daesh. Eurojust's analysis of the decision of the Court of Antwerp in the Sharia4Belgium case was very useful. The Spanish Court decision specifically mentions this precedent and the Spanish Court decision was in line with the decision of the Court of Antwerp. The defendants were members of a terrorist organisation.' ■

We need cooperation tools and the NCT is one of the means to improve our capacity to respond to this criminal phenomenon.

### Alastair Reed, Acting Director of the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism

**A**lastair Reed is the acting Director of the International Centre for Counter-Terrorism – The Hague (ICCT). He joined the ICCT and Leiden University's Institute of Security and Global Affairs in the autumn of 2014 as Research Coordinator and Research Fellow. Previously, he was an Assistant Professor at Utrecht University, where he completed his doctorate on research focused on understanding the processes of escalation and de-escalation in ethnic separatist conflicts in India and the Philippines. His main areas of interest are terrorism and insurgency, conflict analysis, conflict resolution, military and political strategy and international relations, with a regional focus on South Asia and South-East Asia. His current research projects address the foreign fighter phenomenon, focusing on motivation and the use of strategic communications.

## Terrorism is an evolving threat, which requires constant evaluation of state responses and the sharing of best practice and lessons learned.

**Eurojust News:** *What is the added value of think tanks for EU agencies with a counter-terrorism mandate?*

**Dr Reed:** ‘Cooperation with think tanks can be an asset for agencies such as Eurojust and Europol, because they can provide a perspective that is unique from, for example, universities or government departments, that is important to the counter-terrorism work of these agencies. In essence, think tanks can present EU agencies with access to broad expertise – from scholars to former practitioners – which is important to keep up with an ever-changing threat. ICCT focuses on analytical rigour and empirical research that is policy relevant but also valuable for frontline practitioners across the private and public sectors. We can do this because of the varied expertise we have access to for our projects.’

*How, in your opinion, should the European Union respond to the evolving security threat posed by the FTF phenomenon?*

‘The first step to a successful response to the FTF phenomenon is recognising that this “security threat” is multi-faceted. I tend to think of it as being characterised by four interlinked dimensions, which must be tackled collectively. The first dimension is the travel of EU citizens to Syria/Iraq to become FTFs; second, the return of FTFs to EU Member States; third, the impact of the FTF phenomenon on social cohesion across the European Union, and, finally, the role that the FTF phenomenon can play in inspiring lone actors and home grown terrorism.’

Tackling these four interlinked threat dimensions requires careful consideration of the inadvertent negative impact that policies targeting only one aspect may have on all the others. For example, countering the travel of FTFs comes with serious challenges. If policy aims to prevent the travel of people to Syria and Iraq, for instance by revoking their passports, the risk that those people will

prepare terrorist attacks as lone actors remains. On the other hand, if people are allowed to travel to Syria and Iraq, there is the serious risk that they will contribute not only to violence there but also assist in the planning or preparation of terrorist attacks back home or in a third country. And even if policymakers prioritise security at home over security abroad by allowing FTFs to leave, but not to return, the threat may simply evolve as FTFs move to third countries and organise themselves in places in which thorough surveillance is impossible. The only way to tackle the FTF phenomenon is a comprehensive approach that addresses all dimensions of the threat.’

*You have written before on understanding ‘lone wolves’. Several recent attacks in the European Union were committed by ‘lone wolves’ inspired by IS. How has this phenomenon developed in Europe and how might the European Union adapt its counter-terrorism policy to this threat?*

‘In recent years, the European Union has seen an increased threat of lone actor terrorism from jihadist groups, such as the devastating Nice attack and the recent Westminster and Manchester attacks. As IS’s fortunes declined in Syria and Iraq, it increasingly shifted its strategy to target Western countries by calling on its supporters in the West to carry out attacks on soft targets in their home countries. This has included both lone wolf attacks acting independently but inspired by IS, and also those more directly supported by IS operatives or networks.’

The nature of the lone wolf phenomenon – often isolated individuals with limited criminal histories – makes it difficult for policymakers and intelligence agencies to proactively gather information about the potential malicious intentions of lone actors, particularly because the techniques used successfully against terrorist networks have limitations against lone wolf threats. As a lone operator, there is rarely a coherent network to “infiltrate” and limited

communications to intercept. As such, lone wolves represent one of the most pressing terrorist threats facing the European Union. More research is desperately needed in this area, but some promising projects are underway.’

*How would a common definition of terrorism and of FTFs aid in EU counter-terrorism?*

‘The international efforts to tackle terrorism have always been hampered by the lack of an agreed definition of what constitutes terrorism. Without this clarity, it continues to be difficult for countries and international organisations to cooperate both politically and practically. It is greatly concerning that the same issue is affecting FTF threats, too.’

With respect to EU counter-terrorism strategy, defining who is a terrorist or FTF is essential when attempting to harmonise national efforts in tackling this transnational phenomenon. Clarity on who is considered an FTF can help target resources to prevent radicalisation to those communities and individuals considered most at risk. Likewise, a common definition would make it easier for national law enforcement agencies to protect external borders by identifying and jointly monitoring those individuals suspected of participating in terrorist activity. With regard to the criminal justice response, a joint definition would also form the basis for uniform measures to counter the FTF phenomenon, be it to



harmonise detention regimes and implement targeted disruption, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.'

*You have written on the importance of effective strategic communication in counter-terrorism. How could Eurojust serve as a platform to improve strategic communication on counter-terrorism between Member States?*

'Understanding the appeal of extremist propaganda and devising more effective counter-measures has been the focus of ICCT's Counter-Terrorism Strategic Communications (CTSC) Project over the past year. This project has sought to address important gaps in the strategic policy field, including why previous counter-terrorism efforts in this area have not been as effective as hoped. The ultimate aim of the project is to create practical frameworks to aid policymakers in campaign and message design. This means not just focusing on any single medium of communication, for example social media, but broadening efforts to deploy a range of media with tailored messages designed for specific target audiences. Of course, coordination between Member States is needed to achieve effective counter-terrorism strategic communication across the European Union; organisations like Eurojust can play a vital role in facilitating such coordination.'

*In your professional opinion, what is Eurojust's added value in EU counter-terrorism?*

'Eurojust's added value is simply that it helps bring nations together and aid their cooperation against terrorism. It is a cliché, but also a truism that we are stronger together. As terrorism is an international issue, close cooperation among Member States is essential to effectively investigate and prosecute terrorism cases. Especially with regards to the issue of FTFs, most cases show cross-border links that require transnational investigation and close judicial cooperation. Eurojust therefore fulfils a pivotal role by coordinating, facilitating and supporting judicial cooperation as well as joint transnational investigations in complex terrorism cases. Also, the network of judicial authorities

allows Eurojust to rapidly respond to terrorism or violent extremism on both operational and tactical levels. Finally, Eurojust can provide support and advice to Member States about judicial questions in complex terrorism cases, such as the admissibility of evidence gathered by (foreign) intelligence services, or about special emergency powers.'

*How do you think Eurojust could develop to better aid Member States in combating terrorism?*

'Terrorism is an evolving threat, which requires constant evaluation of state responses and the sharing of best practice and lessons learned. As long as national counter-terrorism policies and responses remain inconsistent between the Member States, Eurojust can further develop itself as a central point within the European Union where Member States can find support and ask for advice in complex (cross-border) terrorism cases. The information that Eurojust gathers on these cases and the judicial response to these cases can aid in the development of best practice to speed up judicial processes in the future.'

*Eurojust has operated an informal network of national correspondents for terrorism. What is the value of such a group in fighting terrorism?*

'Informal networks can help provide a forum for exchange of best practice; however, these networks can assist only if they are used properly. Too often in the field of counter-terrorism, unfortunately, we see that while such initiatives

are set up with the best intentions, States are still reluctant to share sensitive information with others and these networks are not used to their maximum effectiveness. This may also be due to the varying levels of urgency that different States are facing with regard to the FTF phenomenon. With respect to criminal justice measures, this exchange of information and experience is particularly useful, and Eurojust's efforts in bringing together national prosecutors for that purpose should be lauded.'

*What, in your view, is the most important counter-terrorism challenge facing the European Union and how might it be met?*

'The most important challenge is not a new one, but the residual problem of preventing governments from falling into the terrorist's "provocation trap", in which State reaction to terrorist events plays straight into the terrorist's hands with divisive rhetoric and draconian countermeasures that amplify the population's sense of threat (whether posed by the government or terrorism itself). Governments face the continual challenge of getting the balance right between the perceived need for tough action to reassure the public and overreacting to the terrorist threat. The growing political polarisation among Europeans, which has been driven in no small part by the perceived threat of terrorism, is a clear example of what happens if the right balance is not reached. The threat of terrorism needs to be placed in perspective, and the phenomenon soberly understood and calculatedly confronted.' ■

## Juliette Noto, Federal Prosecutor at the Office of the Swiss Attorney General

**J**uliette Noto is a Swiss Federal Prosecutor at the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland, responsible for cases involving terrorism since 2015. She is also the Swiss national correspondent for Eurojust for terrorism matters. Ms Noto joined the Attorney General's Office in 2002 as Assistant Federal Prosecutor. She then was promoted to Alternate Federal Prosecutor before being appointed Federal Prosecutor in 2009. She has an academic background in law and political science, including a Master of Advanced Studies Degree in Economic Crime Investigation from HEG Neuchâtel. Ms Noto is course supervisor at HEG Neuchâtel and l'Université de St-Gall.

**Eurojust News:** *You were appointed the first Eurojust national correspondent for terrorism matters (NCT) for Switzerland in 2015. What was your experience in coordinating terrorism cases with Member States prior to this?*

**Ms Noto:** ‘Prior to 2015, the coordination between Switzerland and the Member States had to be handled selectively, assessed on a case-by-case basis. This process was time-consuming, and often the proper counterparts were not immediately identified. Moreover, Switzerland had no information on ongoing multilateral operations or investigations with possible ties to Switzerland.’

*Why was a decision taken to set up an NCT for Switzerland?*

‘In the experience of practitioners, the added value offered by Eurojust consists in particular in its linking together of experts in specific crime areas, to allow a rapid response in crisis situations, as well as to offer reliable direct contact between specialised prosecutors whenever needed, to discuss legal questions arising in ongoing investigations, to initiate bilateral cooperation, to discuss MLA requests, etc. The annual strategic meetings on terrorism organised by Eurojust allow specialised prosecutors to meet and connect, so setting up the

NCT network is an integral part of this approach. For Switzerland, situated in the centre of Europe and facing a rising number of cases of foreign fighters, we constantly need to reassess the situation and to assume our role as a partner in the internationally coordinated fight against terrorism. It is therefore a highly appreciated opportunity to participate in the NCT network.’

*Based on your experience so far, what do you think the added value of this new relationship with Eurojust will bring?*

‘What is needed in current investigations is a more effective and rapid exchange of information and a valuable personal network that can be activated when swift information is required.’

*Have you had any experience working with Eurojust’s NCT network so far?*

‘Yes, with Sweden, when an immediate response was needed for investigation purposes.’

*At the tactical meeting held at Eurojust in June 2016, you made a presentation on the Nautilus case and the use of intelligence in the prosecution of terrorist offences. Why do you think this type of expertise-sharing is important in fighting terrorism in Europe?*

‘First, it is important to know how our colleagues work and what kind of operational solutions they have used in the past. Second, it is valuable in arranging mutual legal assistance – to understand what you can expect from the other countries.’

*How do you plan to utilise Eurojust in the future? Do you have any cases that you think might be served by cooperating with EU Member States through Eurojust?*

‘Eurojust is always a good instrument to speed up mutual legal assistance requests. There is currently a foreign fighter recruitment case ongoing in Switzerland with ties to Austria and other countries and it may lead to a tactical meeting to coordinate the investigation among the Member States affected.’

*Looking forward, what do you think will be some of the new criminal developments, especially concerning the FTF phenomenon, in relation to terrorism cases in Switzerland? How can Eurojust help to deal with these new challenges?*

‘A major development will be the FTFs. It would be interesting to know how other countries deal with this phenomenon, especially in terms of risk assessment, the use of evidence, extrajudicial solutions and surveillance after sentencing.’ ■

The added value offered by Eurojust consists in particular in its linking together of experts in specific crime areas, to allow a rapid response in crisis situations ....

## Michèle Coninx, President of Eurojust and Chair of the Counter-Terrorism Team

**M**ichèle Coninx has been the President of Eurojust since May 2012, after having served as Vice-President for five years. In addition, Ms Coninx is National Member for Belgium at Eurojust and Chair of Eurojust’s Counter-Terrorism Team. Ms Coninx is a Federal Prosecutor (Magistrat Fédéral). She holds the title of Hon. Fellow of Law and Criminology at the University of Brussels (Vrije Universiteit Brussel (2014-2017)), Visiting Professor in the School of Law at Queen Mary University of London (2015-2018) and in the College of Europe (2016-2018). Ms Coninx has a Master’s Degree in Law, a Master’s Degree in Criminology, and is a specialist in Air Law and Aviation Security (UK – USA). She served for nine years as an expert in aviation security for the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Before joining



*Eurojust, she was a National Prosecutor in Belgium dealing with terrorism and organised crime at country-wide level.*

***Eurojust News: What is Eurojust's most important role, vis-à-vis counter-terrorism?***

**Ms Coninx:** 'Eurojust is first and foremost an operational body. It helps and assists the judicial authorities of the Member States, upon their request, in specific terrorism cases. Whenever the national authorities seek the support of Eurojust within a given case, we help them, through the tools at our disposal, to ensure effective and efficient judicial investigations.'

Although Eurojust remains primarily an operational body, it also plays an important strategic role. Terrorism is a constantly evolving threat, and we have to look backwards to see what was lacking, what was hampering counter-terrorism efforts, whether we have the right judicial instruments, legal basis and means of exchanging information. We look towards the future at what needs to be done to strengthen the Member States and the European Union as a whole in the fight against terrorism. This strategic work is a constant process. Terrorists are not standing still, and neither can we.'

***How does Eurojust respond to the new terror threats affecting Europe?***

'Eurojust was among the first to identify the nature of the new terror threat menacing Europe. Back in 2012, a strategic meeting was hosted by Eurojust at its headquarters in The Hague. Counter-terrorism experts from the Member States, Norway and Europol discussed the phenomenon of "lone wolf" terrorism. Practitioners shared their experience to provide everyone with a better insight into the threat, especially in the context of radicalisation online and through social networks. We looked at the legal challenges to successful investigations and prosecutions, what could be done in practice, and debated the use of social network information in counter-terrorism judicial proceedings. During that meeting, a first reference was made by one of the NCT to the emerging threats linked to FTFs going back and forth to Syria and Iraq.'

Later, in 2013, Eurojust identified the growing threat of returning FTFs and raised the issue to the EU policy-making level by producing a restricted access report on the basis of sensitive information received from the judicial authorities of the Member States. This *FTF Report* has become a regularly updated document that provides national authorities with information on the evolving threat and the measures undertaken by various Member States to address it, and disseminates best practice. It must be kept in mind that although all Member States are active in the fight against terrorism, only some of them are directly concerned and even fewer are especially concerned. Eurojust serves the vital role of disseminating the knowledge of the experienced Member States by producing special reports annually and sharing them with the Member States and relevant EU institutions and agencies.'

Of course, Eurojust also plays an active role in supporting national authorities in specific terrorism cases, but it never stops looking at the larger picture and all aspects of the problem, the practical, legal and judicial challenges of tackling terrorism.'

***Eurojust's informal network of national correspondents for terrorism (NCT) was established in 2005 in the wake of the Madrid bombings. How has the network developed over the last decade and how could it further evolve?***

'The need for such a network predates the Madrid bombings. In the aftermath of the London and Madrid bombings and through the 2005/671/JHA Council Decision obliging Member States to exchange information on prosecutions and convictions for terrorism, the network meetings with the designated NCT were held each year at Eurojust and the informal network was gradually established.'

Cooperation means much more than simple information exchange. Getting national experts together in a specific format adds value, allowing them to speak to each other directly. It builds trust, and trust is the cornerstone upon which counter-terrorism international cooperation must be built. Without trust, very little can be

accomplished, even with the legal obligation to exchange information.'

Since 2005, regular meetings of the network have taken place. Each one has a specific theme chosen by the Member States or suggested by Eurojust and approved by them. The meetings of the network cover various topics that are considered to be of importance by the Member States. In the past, Eurojust has had meetings on left-wing extremism; the PKK; Tamil Tigers; financing of terrorism; use of internet by terrorists; "lone wolf" terrorists and returning FTFs. The identification of new topics to be addressed is a constant process and Eurojust is also exploring ways the network can be used to improve the judicial response to terrorist attacks.'

***What value can terrorism contact points from third States add to Eurojust's role in combating terrorism?***

'The terrorist threat faced by Europe has a strong international dimension. In 2005, we saw the first wave of FTFs going back and forth to Iraq. In the aftermath of the Arab spring, other countries, such as Libya and Syria, became conflict zones.'

In operational terms, getting evidence from third States, especially the ones that are conflict zones, is a challenge, so contact points in third States are vital to successful investigations and prosecutions. Simply knowing that someone has been in a conflict zone is not sufficient to secure a conviction. We need reliable evidence and we obtain that evidence through the help of our contact points in third States. Eurojust has a constantly growing network of contact points that currently covers 42 third States, and we are always looking to expand it. The countries of the Middle East, North Africa and the Western Balkans are a priority.'

In 2016 and 2017, Eurojust gathered the NCT and representatives of the Office of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC) to discuss links between terrorism and war crimes. Possibilities for cooperation were explored, particularly the use of ICC's formal and informal networks and contact points for judicial cooperation in conflict zones.'

*Has your experience with the Counter-Terrorism Team influenced the direction of your Presidency at Eurojust?*

'As President of Eurojust, Chair of Eurojust's Counter-Terrorism Team, National Member for Belgium and national prosecutor specialised in counter-terrorism, I wear many hats, but in the end I have only one head. Having practical experience of investigations and being involved in the operational response to the Paris and Brussels attacks means that I can bring the concerns of the people on the ground, the prosecutors, to the decision-makers. Regular contact with the decision-makers allows me to bring to their attention the most pressing practical problems, but this contact also works in the other direction, bringing the strategic vision to the operational level.

Cross-fertilisation between the tasks helps me to keep a firm grip on reality and practical concerns. The work takes a lot of energy, but being able to inspire Eurojust to action and make the concerns of the counter-terrorism prosecutors heard by policy-makers has great value. Since 2013, Eurojust has been focusing on identifying common problems, common solutions and common legal framework in terrorism cases. We do not have time to lose. The threat is pressing and the time to act is now.'

*You have often spoken of the need to build trust between Member States through Eurojust. How does trust aid EU counter-terrorism efforts?*

'Terrorism is not an ordinary crime; it is a question of national and EU security. In 2001, before 9/11 and before the establishment of Eurojust, Al-Qaeda was already identified as a threat. However, only a few of the EU's then 15 Member States were active in counter-terrorism, no one wanted to share any information, and there was no common vision. The cooperation in terrorism cases was bilateral, not multilateral. After 9/11, the Member States requested that joint counter-terrorism efforts be stepped up. Eurojust was established, the European Arrest Warrant was created and even cooperation with third States like Switzerland started progressing

on problematic issues such as terrorism financing. Trust has developed gradually, with the phenomenon of terrorism itself as the catalyst for progress. Trust changed from an elusive goal to an acknowledged fact. Today, we trust each other. Reactivity has been stepped up. The response to terrorism in Europe is no longer national or even bilateral; it is multilateral, with all Member States working together.'

*Does Eurojust contribute to the Member States' efforts to tackle radicalisation leading to terrorism?*

'In October 2015, the EU Commissioner for Justice, Consumers and Gender Equality, Ms Věra Jourová, and the Luxembourgish EU Presidency organised a high-level ministerial conference, the *Criminal justice response to radicalisation*. Based on the outcomes of this event, the Council of the EU tasked Eurojust to continue monitoring convictions, focusing on whether alternatives to imprisonment, prosecution and de-radicalisation measures are imposed by the courts. Since then, Eurojust has documented the measures of the Member States to counter radicalisation and discusses these measures during meetings with judicial practitioners.

We look at the various programmes undertaken by the national authorities to counter radicalisation and systematically verify the results of such programmes, see what works and what needs changing. On the basis of the information we receive on terrorism convictions, Eurojust produces the *Terrorism Convictions Monitor* for use by the practitioners in the Member States. Eurojust's work is needed, recognised and valued by judicial authorities. We have seen gradual developments and will continue to monitor these, but knowing what works in practice at such an early stage is a challenge.'

*What, in your opinion, are the next steps in the development of a European counter-terrorism policy?*

'Much remains to be done. Objectives that were identified in Eurojust's 2013 *FTF Report* need to be achieved. For example, travelling abroad for terrorism, facilitating such travel and receiving

training for terrorism are not yet uniformly criminalised in all the Member States. The EU Counter-Terrorism Directive of March 2017 provides the answer, but it needs to be transposed by the Member States into their national legislation. Digital evidence is also of growing importance. More needs to be done so that its gathering can be facilitated and admissible in court. Links between terrorism and forms of organised crime have become apparent: trafficking in weapons, trafficking in forged documents, in fact all types of trafficking. Organised crime can also be a source of financing for terrorism, and this issue must be addressed.

Judicial cooperation with third States must be stepped up as much as possible. Such cooperation has already proven useful in the past, for example in the investigations of the terrorist attacks in Tunisia for which Eurojust's support was praised by the Member States. A high level of judicial cooperation with the countries of North Africa, the Middle East and the Western Balkans is especially important.

The development of the European Criminal Record Information System (ECRIS) in relation to third country nationals (TCN) is being discussed at EU level to ensure that complete information on the criminal history of convicted TCN is easily exchanged and made available to courts and other entitled authorities. This development is important, particularly in the fight against terrorism. Eurojust will have an important role to play.

Furthermore, Eurojust is in the process of recruiting a judicial expert specialised in counter-terrorism, who will be seconded to Europol's European Counter-Terrorism Centre (ECTC), to serve as a bridge-maker between Eurojust and Europol in this field. The objectives of this secondment are to ensure early judicial follow-up to the work of Europol and coordination of investigations and prosecutions of terrorist offences.

Much remains to be done to succeed in our common fight against the complex and evolving terrorism threat. Eurojust stands ready to assist judicial authorities in their efforts to bring terrorists to justice.' ■

## Eurojust Presidency



Left to right: Ladislav Hamran, Michèle Coninx, Klaus Meyer-Cabri

**Michèle Coninx**, National Member for Belgium, joined Eurojust in 2001. She has been the President of Eurojust since May 2012, after having served as Vice-President for five years.

**Ladislav Hamran**, National Member for the Slovak Republic, joined Eurojust in September 2007. He was elected Vice-President in December 2013 and re-elected in December 2016.

**Klaus Meyer-Cabri**, National Member for Germany, joined Eurojust in September 2014, and was elected Vice-President in November 2016. His appointment completes the Eurojust Presidency.

## Publication of Eurojust Annual Report 2016



The Eurojust AR2016 is available on our [web-site](#) in English. Translated versions in all 23 other official EU languages will follow.

## New Eurojust premises



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Over 15 years ago, the work of pro-Eurojust started in a corridor of borrowed offices in Brussels; then came The Hague, and the two buildings off Binkhorstlaan. Now, finally, we have occupied our new premises, designed to meet Eurojust's specific needs, with all the space, facilities and technology required to perform our tasks and ensure that Eurojust functions as a centre of expertise for judicial cooperation, and the EU leading partner of our national authorities in bringing criminals to justice.

The new Eurojust premises, very close to the Europol headquarters in the International Zone of The Hague, is a reality thanks to many of us, to colleagues from different units and services working together, who went the extra mile and more to ensure that the new premises project materialised. This project is indeed an excellent example of what we, at Eurojust, are capable of achieving when we work together collectively, collegially and constructively. We are also grateful to the Host State – the government of the Netherlands – which financed this project, and to the European Commission, which also provided a significant contribution to ensure its completion. ■