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**NOTE**

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from: Counter-Terrorism Coordinator in close consultation with the services of the Commission and the EEAS

to: Council

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Subject: Sahel / Maghreb (crisis in Mali, IN AMENAS) - implications for EU internal security : executive summary

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**A. Introduction**

The crisis in Mali and the terrorist attack on the gas facility In Amenas (Algeria) have shown that we face a serious terrorist threat from the Sahel/Maghreb, both for EU citizens and interests in the region and potentially in Europe. An analysis of the threat, the EU's response and suggestions for additional measures are set out in document 6752/13 and 6752/13 COR 1. The current paper summarizes them. It takes account of the outcome of the debate at the meeting of COSI and PSC, which was held on 28 February.

## **B. Addressing the challenges**

The challenges are multiple and need to be addressed both within the EU and on the ground in the region.

### Addressing challenges for the EU

The Council is invited to discuss the following proposals and task COSI and other relevant Council working groups to consider in more detail the suggestions contained below and in the more detailed document 6752/13 + COR 1.

#### **1. Foreign fighters**

The monitoring and where possible prevention of foreign fighters' movements should be addressed by mapping out solutions in the following fields:

- to look at the current practices of the criminal justice responses to this phenomenon and make recommendations for concrete measures, starting with a tactical meeting at Eurojust to share experience and information among prosecutors and law enforcement agencies
- to set out recommendations to maximize the existing possibilities of information exchange, notably through the use of the Europol Information System and to develop a more integrated response regarding access to data
- to increase cooperation regarding foreign fighters not only in the Sahel but also in particular with Turkey in order to monitor the flow to Syria.

#### **2. Protection of critical infrastructure**

An enhancement and better implementation of the existing measures is required.

Also, the Commission and EEAS could be invited to organize a meeting where Member States could share best practices on how to increase confidential dialogue with private operators of installations both in the EU and in the region, so that more such dialogues could be initiated. In that context, it would be useful to have a complete picture of European run installations in the region and how they are protected.

### **3. Sahel related aviation security**

The Commission could be tasked to carry out immediately, in cooperation with IntCen and Member States' experts, an EU air cargo risk assessment round covering all countries in the region (in the context of the existing EU inbound cargo regime using the established procedures). Other security risks could be assessed later in 2013.

Expert missions could be sent to the ground to assess aviation security capacity and identify needs and opportunities for assistance. In that context, it should be examined how immediate support to increase aviation security through concrete means (equipment support, advice, training etc) can be mobilised. This could consist of setting up, in cooperation with relevant international partners, an aviation security project for West Africa, the Sahel states and their neighbours to respond to the increased threat.

### **4. Radicalization prevention and civil society outreach**

It is important to update the EU policy on radicalization as already proposed by the Presidency and the Commission.

Given the important role of the Internet, resources should be ensured for monitoring the reactions on the web to the current crisis and more generally in the region

- possibly via short-term secondments from Member States to the Check the Web project
- by examining the possibilities (e.g. in a Europol workshop) of strengthening cooperation, complementarity and information exchange between respective national activities in monitoring terrorist use of the internet to reduce duplication and use resources more effectively

Moreover, efforts should be made to strengthen the voluntary initiatives which bring together public and private actors to fight terrorist propaganda on the internet.

A workshop could be organised with Malian diasporas, for example in the context of the coordination of assistance to Mali, to explore to what extent the diaspora could play a role in rebuilding the country.

## 5. Kidnapping for ransoms

Past cases of kidnapping for ransoms should be studied in order to draw common lessons learned and look for solutions.

The funding for the EU's ATLAS network should be secured so that Member States' special intervention teams remain prepared and trained to assist each other in case of a major crisis, including outside of the EU, when requested by the host government.

Moreover, given the demand from third countries for training of special intervention units, the experience of ATLAS network could be offered to build capacity in third countries.

Finally, it should be examined how SATCEN capabilities can be useful in monitoring hostage/kidnapping situations and gathering information.

### Support to the countries in the region

Under the leadership of HR Ashton, based on the European Strategy for Security and Development in the Sahel, the Foreign Affairs Council has taken comprehensive action in response to the crisis in Mali (cf. document 6752/13 and 6752/13 COR 1). This includes support to the political reconciliation process, including with civil society, which is itself an important factor in reducing radicalisation (see above).

It is important for the EU to step up **promoting the civilian approach to the fight against terrorism** in the Sahel and Maghreb regions. An ambitious response requires that **Member States make available** law enforcement, security and justice **experts** for EU projects and CSDP missions. EU projects are carried out with Member States expertise and complement, not replace bilateral cooperation. The instrument of co-funding should be further explored. Additional projects could be explored with Interpol.

Placing internal security and justice experts in EU delegations would be crucial to further strengthen the EU's response. The High Representative and Member States should explore how to make this a reality.

**Synergies between the CFSP and JHA tools** should be maximised. While excellent initiatives have been taken on drugs on both sides, they are not always well coordinated.

The current work on combating organised crime groups active or based in West Africa should be sustained, notably by reinforcing the platforms of liaison officers and funding the project of vetted operational teams, by developing further coordination mechanisms such as the Matrix of the Fontanot Group as well as the other measures suggested in document 6752/13. However, a technical response alone is not enough, the fight against drug trafficking should be addressed in the EU's political dialogues with countries of the region as a political priority and as a means of counter-terrorism.

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