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to : COREPER/Council

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Subject : Situation in the terrorist activity in the European Union : situation and trends

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1. At its meeting of 20 September 2001 the Council approved the production of an open document on the situation and trends of terrorism in Europe. After approval by the Council the document will be sent to the European Parliament and made public.
2. The first document covering the period September 2000 - September 2001 drawn up by Europol as amended and agreed by the Article 36 Committee at its meeting of 19 December 2001 is annexed.
3. COREPER is invited to forward the present document to the Council for approval and subsequent transmission to the European Parliament and publication.

# SITUATION IN THE TERRORIST ACTIVITY IN THE EUROPEAN UNION: SITUATION AND TRENDS

September 2000 – September 2001

During the year 2001 terrorism has been confirmed as one of the major concerns for the European Union due to the enormous impact on the European Union, the Member States, economy and society. Existing groups continued their terrorist activities. The number of incidents was showing a small decrease, whereas the importance of the attacks increased dramatically.

The decrease in the number of terrorist incidents is however gratifying. Police services were on number of occasions very successful, for instance in Spain and in Ireland, in arresting terrorist cells and seizing terrorist paraphernalia.

On the political side it is worthwhile noting the progress in the Northern Ireland peace process. Subsequently cease-fires in Corsica and in Northern Ireland, except from dissidents groups, have been maintained by the main players.

Important from a global point of view is the fact that the European Union is not only a target for terrorist attacks but also an important area for preparatory and logistic purposes in the widest sense. In the aftermath of 11<sup>th</sup> September attacks in the Unites States of America, it became clear that a number of the suicide hijackers allegedly prepared their activities in the European Union.

## 1. SEPARATIST TERRORISM

### 1.1. Spain/ France

#### *1.1.1 General situation*

The Bask separatist terrorist organisation, **Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA)** has been the most active terrorist organisation in the European Union. The politicians, military, journalists and the judiciary have been their most frequent targets. The summer campaign against Spain's tourist interests was also of importance.

The techniques used varied from shooting victims in the back of the neck to car bombs, also using letter bombs and booby-trapped explosive devices. **ETA**'s favourite explosive is dynamite. In two cases **ETA** stole quantities of these explosives from depots in France (Grenoble, Plevin).

During a 'cease fire' period that finished in December 1999, **ETA** discovered how effective the staging of violent public disorder was to terrorise the Basque population. Juvenile groups, linked to **ETA** have been more frequently used in arson attacks against automatic cash dispensers, public transport (buses), train stations, car dealers and shops and houses owned by members of the Popular Party and Socialist Party of the Basque Country. **ETA** selects future activists from among these youths.

### ***1.1.2. Law enforcement and judicial activity***

Spanish law enforcement agencies have been very successful in their fight against terrorism all over the year 2001. The **ETA** cells Barcelona, Madrid, and Donosti (San Sebastian), were dismantled. The dismantling of the Donosti cell was especially relevant, with the arrest of 38 people.

**EKIN**, an **ETA** support organisation was declared illegal, and the leaders of **Haika**, a juvenile organisation, and of the pro-amnesty association **Gestoras Pro-Amnistia** were arrested by order of the Spanish National Judicial Authorities. The three organisations are closely affiliated with **ETA**. Another association called **XAKI** that worked as bureau for international relationships for **ETA** was also closed.

### ***1.1.3. International cooperation:***

France co-operated with Spain in combating **ETA**. Sixteen activists of this organisation – among whom were the activists responsible for the military and logistic apparatus, for the reserve cells and for passing weapons and terrorist cells over the French-Spanish border - were arrested on French soil. Additionally, three activists were handed over to the Spanish authorities, three training camps were found in the region of Les Landes, and 1,600 kilos of dynamite that had been stolen by **ETA** activists in Grenoble were recovered near Pau.

It caused **ETA** to announce that the French authorities are now included in its target-list, thus spreading the threat over the southwestern part of the European Union. Although there is no collateral information, it might spur **ETA** to start a European Union wide campaign as it carried out in 1989 and 1990.

## **1.2. Northern Ireland**

### ***1.2.1 General situation:***

On 06 August 2001, the Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) reported that agreement had been reached with the **Provisional IRA (PIRA)** on a method to put its arms completely and verifiably beyond use. On 23 October 2001, the IICD confirmed that it had witnessed a quantity of arms, ammunition and explosives being put completely beyond use. It also confirmed that contact would be maintained with the PIRA representative. As a result David Trimble, the First Minister in the devolved Northern Ireland Executive returned to his post from which he had resigned in July because he was unhappy with the lack of PIRA progress on decommissioning.

Irish republican dissident terrorist groups continued to carry out attacks in Northern Ireland and, in the case of the Real IRA (RIRA), in Great Britain as well. High-profile attacks by RIRA in Great Britain this year have included three car bombs. Two were in London at the BBC Television Centre in March; and in Ealing Broadway, a commercial and leisure area, in August (seven injured). In November RIRA mounted another car bomb attack in a commercial and leisure area in Birmingham. On this occasion the device failed to detonate fully.

Loyalist terrorists groups in Northern Ireland continued with their feuds with each other and to carry out attacks on Catholics. One Loyalist group, the Ulster Defence Association, was responsible for violence in connection with protests at the Holy Cross Catholic primary school in a loyalist district of Belfast.

### ***1.2.2. Law enforcement and judicial activity:***

Police services in Ireland and the United Kingdom continue to investigate and disrupt the activities of dissident republicans.

These investigations have resulted in the seizure of significant amounts of explosives and firearms which had brought us to the position where a number of activists are serving prison sentences, and others are in custody awaiting trial.

The investigation into the Omagh bomb continues on both sides of the border. The current position is that the trial of one person charged with conspiracy to cause explosions is ongoing before the courts.

## **1.3. France/ Corsica**

### ***1.3.1. General situation***

**The National Front for the Liberation of Corsica (FLNC)** has carried out a campaign of terror attacks against Police and Gendarmerie barracks and properties owned by continental Frenchmen.

**Armata Corsa**, another separatist group, planted a car bomb in Paris in March 2001. The car bomb did not detonate. It is alleged that the groups merely wanted to show its capabilities in perpetrating attacks. The leader and a member of this group were killed in Corsica in August allegedly by rival criminal gangs. The characteristics of the two bomb attacks carried out in Corsica in July, in which police barracks were targeted, made the authorities fear for a possible division inside the ranks of the existing Corsican separatist movements, as a result of their frustration regarding the peace process, known as the "Matignon" agreements. The emerging of new but more radical Corsican separatist group is thus still considered to be a possibility.

### ***1.3.2. Law enforcement and judicial activity:***

No further details.

## 2. ISLAMIC EXTREMIST TERRORISM

### 2.1. General situation

Extremist Islamic terrorist groups have continued to threaten the security of the European Union. Arrests in the European Union clearly demonstrate the existence in the European Union and the potential danger of terrorist attacks by these groups.

The European Law Enforcement agencies displayed an important activity against Islamic Extremist terrorist groups, both before and after the attacks on 11 September in the USA.

### 2.2. Law enforcement and judicial activity before 11<sup>th</sup> September 2001

#### *United Kingdom*

On 16th February 2001, six people were arrested in London after police conducted searches under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and subsequently charged with the possession of terrorist paraphernalia and associated deception offences.

#### *Spain*

The Spanish Police arrested in June 2001 an Islamic activist, a key person of the Al Qaeda network. Last September the Spanish Police also arrested a cell of the **Algerian Salafist Group for Preach and Combat**. In total 11 persons were arrests.

#### *France*

French authorities carried out a number of actions against Islamic fundamentalist groups:

- In February 2001, four activists that formed part of the so-called '**Group of Roubaix**' were killed during a raid on their hideout by the special intervention team of the French police. An activist who escaped to Belgium died in a shoot out with the Belgian Gendarmerie, while another was arrested in Belgium.

Two other activists escaped to Bosnia via Italy, but were arrested in Bosnia after having killed a policeman. One was extradited to France, while the other managed to escape from prison. This investigation uncovered a triangular network for trafficking in forged documents between Belgium, Canada and Turkey.

- On 7<sup>th</sup> February 2001, the trial of 28 Islamic activists suspected of being involved in an international network based in Bosnia started in Paris. A few weeks later, another trial was started in Roubaix, for some robberies using military weaponry that had been carried out in 1996.
- In June 2001, the trial of five Algerian-born Islamic activists, allegedly members of the **Groupe Islamiste Armé (GIA)** began.
- French authorities expelled on 9<sup>th</sup> November 2001 an Islamic activist. The man, one of the main responsible persons for the logistic support of the Algerian **GIA**, was expelled to Algeria.

### *Germany*

In December 2000, the German Bundeskriminalamt arrested a terrorist cell based in Frankfurt (Germany). One of the alleged terrorists managed to escape, but was subsequently arrested in June 2001 in Alicante (Spain). Subsequent joint investigations of the German and United States authorities linked this group to another suspect, who was already arrested at the end of 1999, while trying to smuggle 60 kilos of explosives from Canada into the US, with the alleged purpose to attack the Los Angeles airport. On July 2001 an Algerian national, living in the United Kingdom, was accused by the US federal prosecutor with being linked to the Frankfurt cell and being one of the masterminds behind this plot.

### *Italy*

In April 2001 Italian authorities arrested a cell integrated in the Al-Qaeda network. This cell had connections in France, Germany and United Kingdom.

### 2.3. Law enforcement and judicial activity after 11<sup>th</sup> September attacks

#### *Belgium/ The Netherlands*

During a joint operation against a suspected radical Islamic Extremist terrorist group, eight people were arrested in Belgium and the Netherlands on 19<sup>th</sup> September 2001.

The U.S. Embassy and other United States interests in France, as well as the Strasbourg cathedral, were the alleged targets of this group.

#### *Germany*

Three of the hijackers (Mohammed ATTA, Marwan ALSHEHHI and Ziad JARRAH) have lived at least temporarily in Hamburg. The investigations so far have lead to hints for the involvement of other perpetrators during the planning and preparation, international relations to Islamic-ideological leaders and world-wide financial transactions. International arrest warrants for the suspicion of the involvement in a terrorist organization, thousands of homicides as well as other serious crimes have been issued against three suspects (Said BAHAJI, Ramsi BINALSHIB und Zakariya ESSABAR).

#### *United Kingdom*

In the United Kingdom arrests were made in September 2001. These arrests were related to the 11<sup>th</sup> September attacks and the arrests made in Belgium and The Netherlands during the joint operation of 19<sup>th</sup> September 2001.

#### *France/Italy/ Spain*

Arrests were made related to the 11<sup>th</sup> September attacks and the arrests made in Belgium and The Netherlands, as well as a result from prior investigations.

### **3. OTHER TERRORIST RELATED INCIDENTS**

#### **3.1. General situation**

##### **3.1.1. Anarchist terrorism**

First signs of the possible resurrection of left wing terrorism viz. anarchist terrorism were visible in the second half of 2001. Under an umbrella name “ International Solidarity” attacks were carried out in the southern part of the European Union. The attributed attacks were in solidarity with imprisoned anarchists and against prison regimes. As left wing and anarchist web-sites in the Northern European countries cover this situation in depth, the possibility of resurrection of the left wing and anarchist terrorist groups is existent, in which the southern terrorist activity might function as an example.

Italy has suffered other terrorist attacks by anarchist groups this year, viz. against the Palais of Justice in Venice, the headquarter of the Lega Nord in Vigonza (Padova), a church in Agrigento and a building of the municipality of Catanzaro.

On 10<sup>th</sup> April 2001, a powerful bomb caused material damage to the outside of the buildings housing two non-governmental organisations in Rome (Italy). The responsibility was claimed by the group Nucleus for Proletarian and Revolutionary Initiatives. The same night another explosive device was found in Turin outside a former office of FIAT. Police dismantled this bomb by a controlled explosion before detonating.

On 26<sup>th</sup> August 2001, a letter bomb exploded in the Office for Tourist Advice of the municipality of Catanzaro.

##### **3.1.2. Eco-Terrorism**

Radical environmentalist and animal rights movements have maintained a limited campaign. Nevertheless, the material damage they caused was extensive.

### 3.2. Law enforcement and judicial activity

#### *Italy*

In Italy, sixty members of the Italian anarchist group Solidarieta Internazionale were arrested on 18<sup>th</sup> September 2001. They were allegedly preparing terrorist attacks against Milan's cathedral and other objectives in the same city.

### 4. RESUME

The September 11 attacks in the USA have marked a new era in the fight against terrorism, as well as in the terrorist theatre. The developments in the so-called war on terrorism against the ruling Taleban regime in Afghanistan and the al-Qaeda network will be of extreme importance for the future of combating terrorism in the European Union and globally. At the moment Islamic Extremist Terrorism could be regarded as the main threat against the European Union. However it would be dangerous to focus only on this phenomenon, as other European terrorist groups still remain active with all possible consequences.