

Master in Crisis and Security Management

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Master Thesis

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## ***EU Security and Counter-Terrorism Strategy against a major threat***

*Does the EU have a strategy to fight a renewed Islamic State?*



## **Table of Contents**

<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	<b>p.4</b>
<b>1. Introduction</b>	<b>p.5</b>
<b>2. Theoretical Framework</b>	<b>p.6</b>
<b>a. Security from a historical perspective</b>	<b>p.6</b>
<b>b. Securitisation Approach</b>	<b>p.9</b>
<b>The Copenhagen School</b>	<b>p.9</b>
<b>The Welsh School</b>	<b>p.10</b>
<b>Post 9/11</b>	<b>p.10</b>
<b>c. Hybrid Threats: Terrorism</b>	<b>p.12</b>
<b>d. Response of the EU to ISIS</b>	<b>p.14</b>
<b>e. Strategy</b>	<b>p.16</b>
<b>Criteria to constitute a Strategy</b>	<b>p.17</b>
<b>Need for a coherent Strategy?</b>	<b>p.19</b>
<b>EU Comprehensive approach to security</b>	<b>p.20</b>
<b>3. Research Method</b>	<b>p.21</b>
<b>f. Research Question</b>	<b>p.22</b>
<b>g. Societal and Academic Relevance</b>	<b>p.23</b>
<b>h. Data Exploitation</b>	<b>p.24</b>
<b>i. Limitations to the study</b>	<b>p.26</b>
<b>4. Findings and Analysis</b>	<b>p.27</b>
<b>f) Islamic State</b>	<b>p.27</b>
<b>Background</b>	<b>p.27</b>
<b>ISIS Emergence and first phase</b>	<b>p.27</b>
<b>Decadence and (almost) defeat on the ground</b>	<b>p.29</b>
<b>The role of European Countries</b>	<b>p.31</b>
<b>Key findings: ISIS threat to the EU member-states when defeated</b>	<b>p.33</b>
<b>g) European Union</b>	<b>p.36</b>

<b>Background</b>	<b>p.36</b>
<b>Assessing the current sec. strategy of the EU from 2014-2017</b>	<b>p.38</b>
Year 2014: First reactions after the establishment of the Caliphate	p.39
Year 2015 The apogee of the Caliphate	p.40
Year 2016 The start of the decadence	p.45
Year 2017 The end of the Islamic State as previously known	p.48
<b>Key findings: a security strategy to counter terrorism?</b>	<b>p.51</b>
<b>5. Conclusion</b>	<b>p.55</b>
<b>6. Bibliography</b>	<b>p.57</b>
<b>7. Annexes</b>	<b>p.70</b>
<b>1. Key findings from the analysed texts</b>	<b>p.70</b>
<b>2. Interview 1: Enrique Barón</b>	<b>p.71</b>
<b>3. Interview 2: Beatriz Becerra</b>	<b>p.73</b>

**List of abbreviations:**

<b>Al Qaeda in Iraq</b>	<b>AQI</b>
<b>Common Foreign and Security Policy</b>	<b>CFSP</b>
<b>Common Security and Defence Policy</b>	<b>CSDP</b>
<b>Critical Discourse Analysis</b>	<b>CDA</b>
<b>European External Action Service</b>	<b>EEAS</b>
<b>European Union</b>	<b>EU</b>
<b>European Union Intelligence and Situation Centre</b>	<b>EUINTCEN</b>
<b>Federally Administered Tribal Areas</b>	<b>FATAS</b>
<b>Foreign Terrorist Fighters</b>	<b>FTF</b>
<b>Human Rights</b>	<b>HR</b>
<b>Islamic State</b>	<b>ISIS</b>
<b>Islamic State in Iraq</b>	<b>ISI</b>
<b>Mutual Assured Destruction</b>	<b>MAD</b>
<b>Member of the European Parliament</b>	<b>MEP</b>
<b>Passenger Name Record</b>	<b>PNR</b>
<b>Research Question</b>	<b>RQ</b>
<b>Syrian Democratic Forces</b>	<b>SDF</b>
<b>Treaty of the European Union</b>	<b>TEU</b>
<b>Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union</b>	<b>TFEU</b>
<b>United Nations Security Council</b>	<b>UNSC</b>

# 1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the legislative and political documents, agreements and speeches that constitute the measures created by the European Union (EU) from 2014, the year when ISIS was constituted as a Caliphate, until 2017 to prove whether they together constitute a proper “Security and counter-terrorism Strategy”. In order to do so equal attention will be put in both the external and internal security measures of the Union due to the new securitisation environment that has been created at the European level aiming to give a comprehensive response to Islamic terrorism and the interconnectedness of these two security areas. Doing so will be necessary to determine whether the EU has a clear and coherent counter-terrorism strategy that will be able to tackle the uncertainties that a defeated Islamic State (ISIS) will pose to the European Union as such and its Member States.

This will be done by carrying an examination of how the Caliphate has developed; alongside its current status in the territories of Syria and Iraq will be undertaken, especially focusing on the threats that it poses to the citizens and values of EU. Indeed, this will include investigating the change in ISIS modus operandi since 2016 due to the diminishment of their territory as a consequence of the US-led coalition intervention. In the end, and as a main consequence of ISIS’ upcoming defeat on the ground, the strategy of the terrorist organisation is changing, focusing more on strengthening their ideological branch, enhancing online radicalisation and encouraging recruits not to travel to the Middle East to fight, but rather commit attacks at home. Even if a military defeat of the terrorist group is considered to be the primary goal for a certain group of state actors, the aim of this study is to determine what threats the terrorist group will present once defeated on the ground.

Furthermore, a second part will be focused in analysing the documents previously described, using a discourse analysis’ method in order to better understand the meaning and the use of the language necessary to comprehend the willingness of the Institutions, Member States and third partners to conform a strategy as previously described. An overview of the previous European counter-terrorism framework until the treaty of Lisbon gets implemented will be provided to set the background of the actual measures against terrorism.

Research on the topic is needed as the academia has only focused so far on the measures pursued by the EU in tackling the ISIS threat, however these researches did not move forwards from 2015 when the International US led coalition was still fighting on the ground against the Islamic State and Raqqa and Mosul still belonged to the terrorists. Furthermore, no discussion has been found in the questioning of the strategy-ness of what is being called Counter terrorism - Security Strategy of the EU and particularly there is very little contribution on analysing the measures against ISIS once this one is defeated on the ground. Thus, this paper will try to add to the body of knowledge and make its little contribution to the academia within the possibilities allowed by the limitations of this research.

## **Theoretical Framework**

### **Security from a historical perspective**

Security is a term that tends to be overused in politics and consequently by the media. The use of the term security raises awareness of the issue in society, and therefore influences the behavior of individuals (Williams, 2013:2). However, at the same time, the academic community has not been able to determine a common definition for the term due to the variety of different angles from which security can be analysed and the diverse branches of knowledge that deal with it, such as the security studies and international relations. This has led to some scholars to describe security as a “contested concept” (Gallie, 1956 in Williams, 2013:1). Even if some ‘proto definitions’ of the term can be found, they do not cover all the aspects of its scope which has led authors like Baldwin (1997:120) to define security as a ‘neglected concept’. As Williams (1997:3) has highlighted, the term can be quite subjective as the concept of security, and that of threats, varies depending on the who, when and how. Williams has even tried to pull together the previous attempts at a definition, defining the concept of security as “the alleviation of threats to cherished values”. However, the values that he highlights are controversial within the academic community. Buzan (1991) has previously agreed with the subjectivity of the security concept, however he observes security from different angles and changes the object of their study from the individual level, state and the international

level. Additionally, these three levels are interconnected, thus it would be misleading to isolate them and study them separately (in Baldwin, 1997:3).

However, even if contrary to Buzan's idea, the concept of security has developed through paradigms that have changed over time within the realm of international relations and security studies. Thus, it is practical to make a distinction among the several approaches towards the idea of security from a historical perspective that will help to build up on the evolution of the way the threat perception has developed:

The realist paradigm is the first approach that deals with the idea of security. Traditionally, the state has been studied as the main provider of security to its citizens and the object towards which security needs to be focused upon. The national interests of the state and the main objectives of national security are going to be the preservation of political autonomy and territorial integrity from national and international threats (Orozco, 2005:165). As Williams (2013:6) explains, the main aims of the traditional approach is based on the four "S's": state, strategy, science and status quo. Additionally, in order to safeguard the latter, it is necessary to respect the legitimate monopoly of state military command within its borders and to strengthen its power abroad (Jordán, 2015). As the state is military threatened, there are going to be two main characteristics of this model. As a way to prevent this threat to the unity of the state power, military techniques will be used to tackle the threats faced by the state. Furthermore, the state can also be politically threatened from a national identity perspective as well as its institutional organisation that can lead to the state's structure being damaged (Orozco, 2005:169). This is a result of the anarchical character of the international arena where states need to focus on the survival of their own integrity and the reinforcement of its position at the international level (COT, 2007).

The Liberal approach on the other hand, envisions the state as the referent object of security but also places non-state actors on a level of higher importance. It dissents from the previous paradigm in the sense that the conception of power as it was understood is overridden by political or economic considerations, as the approach is influenced by the spread of democratic norms and the development of economic interdependence among states. (COT, 2007) In addition, this state-centric vision within the security perspective is going to change, leading to cooperation among states as a way to tackle problems that affect the ensemble of threats (Orozco, 2005: 171)

The end of the Cold War led to new paradigms in the field of security, and a shift took place on the perception of security, especially in the Western world, as pointed out by Ullman and Buzan (Williams, 2013:7). Ullman (1983) explains that the state in the aftermath of the Cold War cannot only focus on military threats, as they are not as prominent as they were in the past, but must also broaden its scope and add other security risks such as military, political, economic, societal and environmental risks (Buzan, 1991:130). Additionally, the object of study changed from national state security (from the previous traditionalist perspective) to the security of human collectives. This shift in security studies led to a change in the paradigm, encouraging the establishment of the constructivist approach, which developed the idea of security as a social construction.

The emergence of non-state actors after the Cold War; who had the power to threaten the nation-state in a different way than before, encouraged the social constructivist perspective to step into the scholarly arena and to counter the powerful realist approach. As the survival of the state was no longer at stake, alternative explanations of the international system arose from the academic community. Under the constructivist approach it is important to point out the fact that reality, in this case portrayed as the international arena, is socially constructed and does not exist independently by its own as Fearon and Wendt discuss (in Carlsnae, Risse and Simmons, 2002). Furthermore, state actors interact with their social environment and shape their identity, as this interaction influences their narrative, values and discourses (Risse, 2005 in Karacasulu & Uzgoren, 2007). Within this paradigm, the subjective interpretation of the social environment has an impact in the identity of the actors at the international level. It was also discovered that identity is relative and relationally linked to the idea of the interest of the actors (Jackson and Sorenson, 2003). In parallel to this new development within the field of international relations, at the end of the Cold War the military threat greatly decreased when the danger of mutual nuclear destruction subsided, and following the trend started by the liberal approach, it prompted a change in the security concerns due to the insecurity of the previous security paradigms as their only concerns were mainly military (McDonald, 2002:277). Furthermore, after the change in the referent subject for security to human beings and non-state actors, who gained more power once that realist military power ceased to be a major threat to the survival of the state, the academic community put forward the idea of human security in which threats are more economic, social, political, environmental, etc... and directly affect the perception of security of the individual, as a



human being and threatens its way of living (McDonald, 2002:279). Even if some military threats remain, this is not the main concern of this approach as there is an evolution in the perception of security due to the predominant role individuals hold within the international arena.

### Securitisation approach

A different theory that derives from the socio constructivist approach is the securitisation theory, which also emerged after the Cold War due to new security risks and threats that emerged from the new international environment. The main objective within the fields of security studies and international relations was to challenge the conventional concept of security, which had mainly been based on military threats posed by the two main international powers during the Cold War. These were the United States and the Soviet Union, whose MAD (Mutual Assured Destruction) doctrine based on deterrence had an impact on the international community's concept of security. Yet, the notion of security has been widened and redefined in order to match it with the environment coming out of the post-Cold War period, which included reduced military concerns, as the survival of the state is not a stake any longer, but the increase of other threats that pose a risk to specific aspects of the State is a legitimate issue (Šulović, 2010:2).

#### **The Copenhagen School**

The contribution to the field of security studies by the Copenhagen and Aberystwyth School must be recognised, particularly when it comes to the use of the securitisation theory as a tool for the construction of their security argument.

In one sense, the Copenhagen school's view when discussing securitisation theory is based on the idea that nothing constitutes a security threat until being labelled as such through the speeches of important political actors at the national and international level, and it is perceived as a threat to a subject's survival (Waeber, 1995:55). This idea is based on what has been constituted as the "speech act" theory, which puts away the reality element of the phenomenon and leaves it in hands of the politicians to decide the nature of the subjects and place them within the political agenda in order to discuss the application of extraordinary measures to tackle them (Buzan et al 1998: 21). The fact that a certain phenomenon is labelled as a security issue affects the acceptance of it by the

public and the generalisation of the association of the concept of threat to that phenomenon among the population, even if the reality diverges (Waever, 2000: 249).

### **The Welsh School**

Furthermore, the Aberystwyth School, or the Welsh School of security studies, discusses the way in which security is achieved in an alternative way. One of their main scholars is Ken Booth, who argues that security is built upon the idea of “emancipation”, a positive view on security that contradicts the realist vision in which security is based mainly on power and fear (Floyd, 2007:331). For Booth, security is achieved when the subjects are able to be deprived of the elements that pose a threat to them, but at the same time do not interfere in the perception of security by other subjects, criticising the realist idea of military security (Booth, 1991:319). Thus, security is discussed as an added value for human beings in order to prevent harm from stepping into the development of their way of living (Booth, 2005:23).

### **Post 9/11**

However, the terrorist attacks of 9/11 created an impasse in the field of security as the paradigm by which societies were ruled changed again; and the securitisation approach radicalised. As observed by Beck (2002:40), collective fears arose as societies raised awareness of the pitfalls of globalization, such as international terrorism, which were made possible due to facilitation of global mobilities, leading to what he calls the “world risk society”. This stepping-stone in contemporary history marked the beginning of the war on terrorism, as named by George W. Bush after the September 2001 terrorist attacks, which created a tendency for the states to return to a semi-realist state in which they were jealous keepers of the security within their frontiers. However, due to the international interconnected nature of these threats, facing issues on their own would not have been an efficient strategy and therefore heightened cooperation among states was required in order to maximise security provisions (Amoore, 2006:345). Nevertheless, this securitisation trend that started after the terrorist attacks in 2001 has different characteristics when compared to the idea of securitisation that the Copenhagen school poses. The main idea of the “War on Terror”, which has led to this renewed approach to securitisation goes back to a more realist approach. This is due to the fact that it focus on the idea of “war” against a non-state actor, as under international law, the military

measures that can be used under an international armed (asymmetric) conflict exceed the ones that are allowed in a non-armed one and furthermore extrapolates what previously was treated as a sociological problem to a military one (Lucke & Dück, 2016:6)

Even if the terms appear similar, it is necessary to establish a distinction between the politicisation of security and securitisation. As pointed out by Buzan, Waever & Wilde (1998:29), politicisation entails bringing a topic into the political agenda in order for it to be discussed by the government with the aim of reaching a solution. It is also highlighted that securitisation tries to label issues as imminent and crucial threats in order to preserve the survival of a determined subject and take imminent action to eradicate the threat due to the urgency and priority of the latter (Buzan et al, 1998).

My justification for the use of the securitisation approach, particularly focusing on the renewed approach after the terrorist attacks of 9/11, is that, if analysed by another framework, terrorism would not have been given as much importance as it does not endanger the survival of the state and is not produced by a state actor like the previous approaches. However, as a theory that has been born under the social constructivism umbrella it argues, as posed by Balzacq (2011), the main aim of the securitisation approach is to conduct the attention of the audience towards an event and create a perception of danger surrounding it. If it had not been analysed under this approach, terrorism may not have been included within the realm of threat (or hybrid threat as labelled by the EU) and thus I would not be questioning in this report whether or not the EU is interested in defeating it as it would not constitute a relevant topic.

Having a closer look to the data, the actual number of people that had died in EU countries as a consequence of jihadist attacks raised to 273 in the period between 2014-2016, increasing significantly in the two last years: 151 casualties in 2015 and 135 in 2016. (Europol, 2016; 2017) This period of time coincides with the rising power of ISIS in 2015 and the starting point of its decadence in 2016. However, if analysing other social phenomena and the deaths produced at their own expense, such as driving and traffic accidents, it can be seen that the number of deaths in EU roads in one year (2015) was much higher, 25.075 casualties, than the deaths produced by terrorism in the last 3 years in the same territory (Eurostat, 2016). Nevertheless, due to the securitisation degree that terrorism holds nowadays this phenomenon is high on the agenda of European politicians, governments, and policy making at the international and supranational level (EU). This has led to the extension of the securitisation trend to all social phenomena that can be

related to terrorism, such as migration flow which includes asylum seekers and refugees and will place them in a proto narrative in line with terrorism, leading to othering practices as a consequence of the securitisation of the latter (Céu Pinto Arena, 2017:1) (Franko Aas, 2007:7)

Furthermore, at the European Union level security started playing a more important role as a consequence of the Madrid bombings (2004) and London terrorist attacks (2005) due to the development of the perception of terrorism as a structural problem with multiple and complex causes (Council of Europe, 2003: 4). From that moment two documents were published in order to give a coherent and reasonable response to jihadist terrorism, on one side the European Security Strategy from 2003 and on the other the Strategy of the European Union Against Terrorism of 2005 (Ruiz Granado, 2015:12). Also, for the first time, the securitisation approach led the EU to change the strategy of viewing its neighbouring countries and the US from a more military perspective (Bono, 2006:10) .

### Hybrid threats: Terrorism

Due to the rise of non-state actors, various new types of threats have come to the surface and risk destabilising the “cherished values” of the international arena (Williams, 2008:5). The new terminology used to name this phenomenon is “hybrid threats”, however the academic community has not reached an agreement on the characteristics nor the definition of this new term. There are some international organisations that have tackled this circumstance and have thus been forced to give it a unilateral definition, such as the one given by Aaronson, de Kermabon, Diesen, and Long (n.d) for a NATO report on hybrid threats, which described hybrid threats as “those posed by adversaries, with the ability to simultaneously employ conventional and non-conventional means adaptively in pursuit of their objectives” and “there is a need to focus on terrorism and the powerful threat it poses to the state due to its impact on society”. Therefore, to counter-act these threats it is necessary to implement hybrid warfare means, such as traditional military tactics as well as non-military ones (that can be psychological, economic, political, and more and more in the current times cyber-attacks) to destabilise the enemy not only in military terms but also reach to each *raison d'être* (Stowell, 2017). In order to fight against this new way of making war, nation states need the help of non-state organisations as well as individuals; due to the complexities that these new threats entail (Hunter and Pernik, 2015:7).

Thus, as described above, it can be stated that (Islamic) terrorism can be labelled as a hybrid threat. As a social construction, it depends on the interpretation given: “Terrorism is a threat to all States and all peoples. It possess a serious threat to our security, to the values of our democratic societies and to the rights and freedoms of our citizens, especially though the indiscriminate targeting of innocent people” (Council of the EU, 2005:6). However, the threats that current international Islamic terrorist groups (such as ISIS) pose to the international community possess certain elements that allow them to fit in the neglected definition of hybrid threats. As Minchev (2015) elaborates on, there are some specifics that the threat posed needs to comply with in order to meet the requirements to be a hybrid threat: first of all the use of weaponry and conventional armed forces in order to reach outcomes; the use of a radical ideology that makes their cause more attractive to these individuals creating a strong narrative towards the exterior world that will characterise the terrorist group; the use of the new technologies such as social media in order to reach a wider number of public and get (young) people into their cause and which can be considered to constitute a cyber-threat for the nation states suffering the threat. These tactics, also known as blended modalities, combined with the simultaneity of criminal activities, the fusion of different actors that take part in their cause and the criminality degree in final outcome of their objectives characterise the different elements that make hybrid threats a reality (Jasper & Moreland, 2014).

Regarding ISIS, since the former president of the United States, Barack Obama (2014), labelled it as a hybrid network that does not only have criminal outcomes but also territorial ones which make it much more complicated to defeat than a conventional criminal non-state actor, many academic articles elaborated on this label. If we focus on the criteria that Minchev (2015) and Jasper and Moreland (2014) use, it can be argued that ISIS fulfils all the established characteristics they present, fitting in the sub-genre of hybrid threats. Furthermore, this is reinforced by the fact that a military defeat of the terrorist organisation does not necessary mean the defeat of the phenomenon of ISIS danger as it has been proven that the organisation is mutating its strategy in order to adapt itself to the new conditions in place in order to ensure its survival (Jasper & Moreland, 2016). It must also be mentioned that ISIS has shown significant resilience despite the military defeats it has experienced on the ground due to their strong low profile tactics as part the warfare means they use in their defensive strategy against the international coalition fighting against them in Syria and Iraq (McFate, 2015:7)

## Response of the EU to ISIS

The measures taken by the EU in order to tackle terrorism are varied and date back to a period when Islamic extremism had yet to become a concern for European governments. The Spanish and British presidencies of the European Council during the 90s and early days of the XXI century both sought to include terrorism as part of the security concerns of the Union due to the internal situation both countries were going through in their fight against the IRA and ETA respectively. However, other Member States were more reluctant to approach terrorism at the European level because they perceived security, and more importantly, internal national security threats posed by terrorism, as matters to be dealt with by national governments (Annex 2 Interview: Enrique Baron, 2018). It was not until the terrorist attacks of Madrid (2004) and London (2005) and the manifestation of jihadism when securitisation became inevitable and essentially forced the EU to take measures to comply with the security trend that the United States initiated after the terrorist attacks of 9/11. As a result, two tools were created to fight this international threat. First, the so-called Security Strategy of the EU (or Solana Strategy) and the Strategy of the EU against terrorism of 2005. The mechanisms that the EU created in order to fight against (Islamic) terrorism have slowly developed, attempting to provide a gradual progression of the fight against terrorism and adapting to the threats posed by the different dominant Islamic criminal organisations. Despite the fact there is much to be discussed when it comes to whether these policies and the upcoming framework treaties and directives constitute a coherent security strategy, it is undeniable that the EU has taken some action when it comes to counter-terrorism.

The academic community has also discussed the role played by the EU when dealing with Islamic terrorism with a special focus on ISIS. A lot of criticism has been given to the small involvement of the EU as a non-state actor in the fight against ISIS, recurring to traditional means of soft politics and declarations of intention, leaving the responsibility to properly intervene to its Member States (Pierini, 2016). However, the majority of experts have focused on the fact that the EU has not had the chance to get too involved in the first military phase against ISIS in the ground due to its lack of hard politics means (Artega, 2014). There are some others that have also attributed this lack of involvement due to a traditional response to the phenomenon, and looks for a long-term solution of the problem though the stabilisation of the region most affected by the Caliphate's

intervention, in addition to putting emphasis on anti-radicalisation programmes, as stated in the Council Conclusions on the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as what the ISIL/Da'esh Threat that Ruiz Granado (2015:12) discusses. Furthermore, some others blame the weakness of the EU, as it lacks certain elements which are indispensable to providing a proper response to such a chameleonic threat, namely a proper European army (which is currently being debated in the PESCO Agreements) or appropriate secret services and exchange of information (Annex 3. Second Interview: ALDE MEP Beatriz Becerra, 2018). Finally, there is an absence of effective social measures to keep at risk youth and migrants attached to society and protecting them from being easy prey from radical ideologies within Europe (Lloveras, 2015). However, these arguments focus only on the physical threat that ISIS poses mainly on the ground and not the potential that this regional organisation has in order to give support to non-military measures in its Member States. This situation therefore needs to change now as military engagement seems to have done its job. Thus, the EU should take the lead in a soft politics fight against the Islamic State and assume a position of equality vis-a-vis other big actors (Artega, 2014) (Pierini, 2016)

The knowledge gap found in the little academic literature on the topic:

What can be pointed out is that the majority of the studies coming from the academic community comprised in the body of knowledge surrounding the specific topic of the EU dealing with security and counter-terrorism and more specifically the threat of Islamic State, is outdated. They mainly focus on the military scope of the war in Syria and Iraq against the Islamic State as well as to undermine the position of the EU within the military domain. Furthermore, the majority of the discovered documents pay attention to the period where ISIS was still at its zenith and the risk it posed was more military focused. As has been noted, the situation has changed and little has been written about the actual situation as it presently is. This includes current directives and regulations that the Union has published in order to tackle the phenomenon of an almost defeated Caliphate, specially focusing in the new type of threats that have been developed since 2016.

This analysis shows an important knowledge gap in the literature that may be a result of the changing nature of ISIS and its capacity to quickly adapt to new and changing circumstances in order to prevent its disappearance. However, it is important for the academic community to keep track of measures taken against this international terrorist organisation as a way to analyse the development of the EU in this field of action.

A lot of research has been done on the different nation-states that are involved in the fight against the Caliphate, their motivations, the situation in Syria and Iraq etc... However, this study concentrates on the interest of the EU as a supranational actor, with certain power at the international sphere due to the repercussion of its performance.

## Strategy

For the purpose of this paper we must properly define the term “strategy”, as it is necessary to point out its contested definitions in order to find the best that fits this analysis. “Strategy” started to be a term used in the military field and then extended to other sectors such as business management or politics, thus it has been used and developed in many academic fields. Going back in time, it can be argued that the first time that military strategy was addressed in a written work was in the 5th century BC by the Chinese philosopher Sun Tzu in his book *The Art of War*, where he explains in 13 points the different steps to follow in order to perform an offensive strategy in the battlefield. In addition, another notorious thinker that deals with military strategies and tactics is Machiavelli in his book, *The Prince*, where he points out the main principles in order to set a strategy: knowledge, will and power, that will be implemented in later strategic plans. Furthermore, another notable character that made his own contribution to the military strategy literature was Carl Von Clausewitz, the so-called father of modern military strategy. In his book *On War*, the idea of war is portrayed as a strategic process at the intellectual level that is influenced by certain events (Clausewitz, 1832:101). He names “friction” the phenomenon of having unforeseen elements or small changes in the course of the war that are going to influence its outcome, which in some scenarios will make the set strategy void (Kornberger, 2013:1061). Furthermore, another element that influences the end of a war is “the fog,” or rather the missing information that each party has on the enemy that never can be completely accurate and will lead to uncertainty in the battlefield (Kornberger, 2013:1063). However, his thought is mainly focus on the military arena. On the other hand, Liddell Hart (1967), one of the main scholars dealing with the term from a military perspective, disagrees with Clausewitz’s view (Bond, 1977). He points out in his work that a strategy has to be an integrated set of activities that focuses not only on the ground activities but on also political outcomes from governments behind those hard political measures. In fact, Hart (1967: 335) defines strategy as “policy in execution,” establishing a link between the concept of strategy and the government and



using warfare means to achieve political outcomes. After the creation of this circumstantial environment, he discusses the concept of “indirect approach”, as the best strategy to defeat enemies on the battlefield is through the surprise factor, which delivers an advantage to that party applying it and the exploitation of this superiority position (Hart 1967: 339).

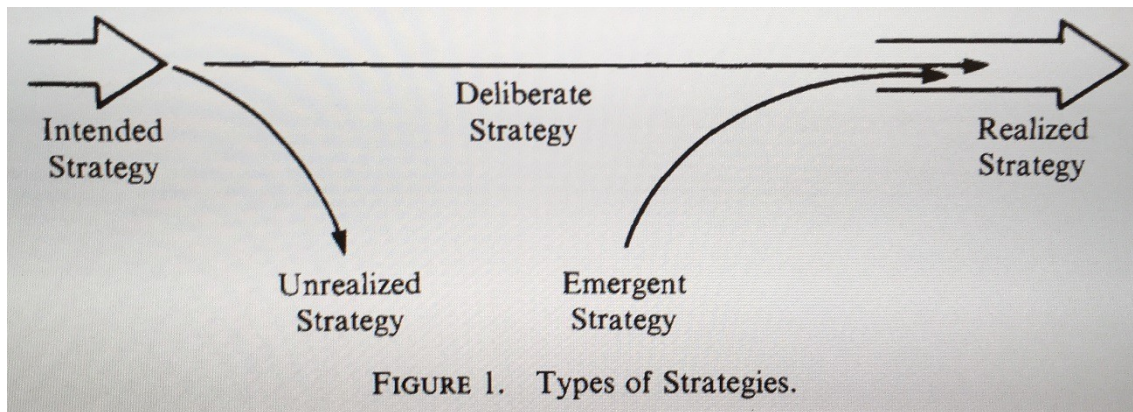
Finally, one of the modern authors that has denied the temporal idea of a strategy as an ensemble of means to reach a particular outcome is Lawrence Freedman. He emphasises the idea that strategies do not terminate, but have to be reappraised due to the changing nature of the means that the subject owns and the ends he wants to reach (Freedman, 2013:611). These means have developed throughout history with technology as one of the most innovative ones (Harris, 2015:768). Freedman argues that this process is a continuum due to the tendency of human beings to “strategise” conflict situations in order to create an advantageous situation versus the enemy and thus create power (Freedman, 2013:610). At this stage it is obvious to point out the close relation between strategies and political outcomes (Harris, 2015:768).

Recently, the idea of strategy has taken a new course and has also been integrated by ten other different schools of knowledge such as management, publicity or marketing (Mintzber, 1994). This is because in these social science areas, situations of conflict emerge that need good management of power through the use of strategies. Within this new trend Michael E. Porter is one of the main scholars that deals with later conceptions of strategy, focusing on business organisation, which moves away from the central topic of this paper.

### **Criteria to constitute a strategy**

Despite the previous definition and prerogatives given to “strategy”, the main terminology that is going to be used in order to extrapolate it to the documents that the EU has formulated in the security domain is the one purposed by Henry Mintzberg. He proposes many definitions of strategy, the first one is more generic and refers to “the pattern in a stream of decisions” or in a simpler way as the number of decisions taken over an issue that are aimed to resolve it (Mintzber, 1978). However, even if in his work “Of Strategies, Deliberate and Emergent” he elaborates on the definition of eight types of definitions, he puts special emphasis on only two definitions of strategy: one of them as

a conscious process, also called deliberate strategy that may come to the conclusion as a realised strategy or unrealised one. This one can be more linked to the term “plan” that he states as a guide of action in order to tackle future objectives and its function is to make operational a strategy (Mintzber, 1994). On the other hand, another type of strategy may start as unintentional but gradually develops, called emergent strategy that normally ends up being finalised (Mintzber and Waters 1985).



Retrieved from Mintzberg (1985) Patterns in Strategy Formation

Furthermore, in order to determine when these two types of strategies are present, Mintzeberg and Water (1985) develop a short list of features in order to determine the purity of the be-called strategy.

First of all, in order to constitute a deliberate strategy some steps need to be followed:

1. Intention. A specifically detailed plan from the organisation that wants to achieve certain goals in order to state the willingness of the latter before any action is being taken.
2. Choice. In addition, the actors that compose the organisation need to share their support to the willingness of achieving these goals.
3. Pattern of formation. The environment in which the organisation interacts does not interfere in the development of this plan as: the environment could be foreseen to be favourable to the goals of the organisation or it was already controlled by the organisation, thus taken as a window of opportunity in order to execute the strategy.

On the other hand, in order to constitute an emergent strategy there has to be a proof of the organisation having a *consistency in action over* in order to achieve a certain set of goals. It is not possible to meet the criteria of the intention in this type of strategy but it

develops due to a change in the environment surrounding the organisation that makes it prone to take action. (Mintzeberg & Waters, 1985:258)

Furthermore, he also stress the evidence that also some other strategies may arise even if these characteristics show in a more diluted way, however they are also integrated in this continuum of steps that allow them to be portrayed as strategies and should be categorised as such.

### **Need for a coherent strategy?**

Coherence is value that needs to mediate between the strategy and the outcomes that the organisation needs to achieve in order to establish a competitive advantage (Ching-Yick Tse & Jogaratma, 2008: 176). In order to reach these goals, strategies have to be provided with a specific orientation or levels in which they need to operate that will increase the effectiveness of the actions taken to reach the desired objectives (Hofer & Schendel, 1978 in Ching-Yick Tse & Jogaratma, 2008: 176). The coherence of a strategy is correlated to the consistency of decisions and choices made across the different levels of strategy.

One of the main authors that deals with the concept of coherence portrayed within strategic planning is Rumelt (2011). He starts with the concept of guiding policy, as guidelines to lead the direction of the actions that need to be taken however do not specify how to reach the ends of those policies. This guiding policy looks for exploiting an advantageous situation, creating a parallelism with the concept of strategy. One of its main prerogatives in order to achieve the established goals is to create coherent policies or action plans. This means that the actions taken need to be coordinated and developed with a certain level of consistency from one another, building a network of related actions that are complementary and have strategically been promoted by frequent evaluations of the goals and the objectives, thus ad hoc measures are not even conceived. These consecutive or joint actions are going to constitute an ensemble of actions that are going to make favorable the achievement of the final goals. However, coherence is difficult to reach because coordination is an imposed action by a centralised decision-making power and goes against the natural rules of the system.

## **EU comprehensive approach to security**

As the concept of strategy has been analysed from different periods in time, through the vision of different authors and schools of thought, it is time to focus on the approach given to the security strategy currently pursued by the EU, especially when it comes to counter-terrorism.

According to the European Council (2017), terrorist attacks and security threats in Europe are not going to be eradicated in the short-term, and the radicalisation of certain members of European society is a reality that national governments will have to deal with in upcoming years. Thus, in order to overcome this challenge which threatens all Member States, the EU must take responsibility and carry out supportive activities directed by a comprehensive approach in order to tackle the long-term threats from a holistic perspective (European Council, 2017).

A comprehensive approach to security can be defined as taking into consideration each and every complexity of a security situation, from the root causes to the long-term threats they may pose. This is done to make sure the political, diplomatic, structural and operational measures are taken as effectively as possible in order to fully eradicate the issue. However, the division of competences in the EU and the coordination and implementation issues present at the supranational level make this comprehensive approach difficult to accomplish at the European level. (Gebhard, 2013: 1)

A comprehensive strategy would be needed in order to defeat ISIS, as even if based in a certain territory, they are now spreading to other locations as a means to prevent their disappearance (Artega, 2014). As Aaronson et al's (n.d) report states, in order to fight against hybrid threats, and especially terrorism, it is necessary to apply complex measures that are capable of tackling the totality of the phenomenon, and thus a comprehensive approach to deal with Islamic terrorism is necessary.

At the European supranational level, since the new Commission of Jean Claude Juncker took office in 2014, an EU integrated approach when building up their plans in order to tackle security and also focusing on international terrorism has been given more importance. This can be noticed with the introduction of the Joint Communication 2013 by the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS), along with the Council Conclusions to this document and the establishment of the Action Plan by the Commission. This Action Plan sets a working method among the Commission interests

on security and the Member States in order to enhance cooperation, and also focuses on different regional areas that may pose threats to the Union in the form of internal instabilities, terrorism or any other type of issues. (European Commission, 2015: 3). In this regard, the Action Plan, with the aim of giving different treatment to different problems, is going to focus on three different initiatives: the security and development of the region's relation, transition strategies in order to review the missions that are carried out in those regions and readjust them in the best way to increase efficiency of EU efforts and finally, a rapid respond by the EU institutions in cooperation with its member states in order to react time appropriately to the most critical circumstances in those regions (European Commission, 2015: 4-5). The final aim of the Comprehensive approach is to link security to development and thus tackle, with operational as well as structural instruments, the complexities of the internal and external security challenges (Gebhard & Norheim-Martinsen, 2011: 3).

### **3. Research method**

This study uses the securitisation theory, having already been addressed in the previous section, in order to analyse EU legislation, political documents, agreements and speeches used for the purposes of counter-terrorism subject within the time frame; which spans from 2014, the year in which the apparition of the ISIS was made public, until 2017. As formerly discussed, the comprehensive/integrated approach promoted under the Juncker Commission is taken as a framework of reference when analysing these policies, directives and speeches. This comprehensive approach in the security field is going to be considered by some authors as a branch of the securitisation theory to European Union's policies (Furness and Gänzle, 2012: 3). This is the case as the aim of the comprehensive approach is to tackle the threat from its root causes all the way to the last consequences it may produce, and thus could lead it to expand into other domains.

Therefore, the purpose of this research is divided into two parts: the first consists of analysing primary sources that emanate from the EU (legislation, political documents, agreements and speeches) in order to discuss and argue the characteristics of these documents and assess whether they constitute a counter-terrorism strategy. The second part of the RQ deals with the content of these policies, political documents, agreements

and speeches and the way they tackle the threats that ISIS still poses to the EU even when defeated on the ground.

This study aims to help fill the knowledge gap that exists in the outdated academia, which has not focused on the latest attempts of the EU to deal with ISIS, as the majority of current texts focus on analysing the measures taken when the terrorist organisation was constituted as a caliphate, but not at the time of being almost defeated militarily. Furthermore, another goal of this study is to add to the body of knowledge that analyses the security strategy of the EU, as this paper takes the particular framework of analysis by Henry Mintzberg (1978) and Ching-Yick Tse & Jogaratma (2008) in order to discuss the patterns of EU strategy and its coherence.

## Research question

In order to lead and focus my research, the following central research question has been formulated:

***To what extent does the EU have a clear and coherent counter-terrorism strategy that tackles the uncertainties that a military defeated Islamic State poses to the European Union?***

This question is an explanatory one with some predictive elements, as it aims to explain a phenomenon that has not happened yet but has a high potential of occurring based on current trends and results on the ground. This phenomenon has a strong changing nature that can make this research void in the future, however, at the same time is also important to carry out a research that focuses in the period of time that dates from 2014-2017.

To go more in depth into the main RQ, some other sub questions are formulated:

1. The beginning of the question relates to the first part of the RQ, in order to analyse the construction of the security counter-terrorism strategy of the EU :

Do the legislative and political documents, agreements and speeches that help to give shape the counter terrorism measures form an actual strategy?

Is it coherent?

Under this Strategy what are considered to be the main threats?

What are the measures in place in order to minimise the threat that IS poses?

What is and has been the main response of the EU towards ISIS?

2. The second part of the thesis analyses the main threats ISIS has posed to the EU since 2014 onwards.

What are the main manifestations of the threat ISIS poses to the EU?

What are the results of a military defeat of the Caliphate?

Change of ISIS strategy after the weakening of the Caliphate in Syria and Iraq?

### Societal and academic relevance

The societal relevance of this topic is clear. According to the Spring 2016 Global Attitudes Survey from the Pew Research Centre (March 29 – July 9, 2016), ISIS-inspired terrorism was one of the main threats perceived by European citizens, which can be linked with the increase in terrorist attacks throughout the continent in the past four years. According to the Eurostat database from 2016, despite Islamic terrorism being one of the main concerns of European citizens, deaths caused by traffic accidents in Europe are actually 91 times the number of deaths caused by terrorist attacks in EU countries. Thus, the fears of EU citizens regarding terrorism are high despite the fact the actual threat of dying from a terror-related incident remaining rather low.

However, the importance of this topic lays in the threat ISIS poses not only to Member States and its citizens, but also to the values and structures of the Union once the terrorist organisation has been militarily defeated. As a result, there is the objective by the public to understand what type of measures and how the EU, due to their role as a supranational regional organisation, has dealt with the ISIS threat in the past when it constituted a Caliphate, but also more specially the threat it poses now, considering the uncertainty its military disintegration produces.

Additionally, the academic relevance falls within a better understanding of the security and counter terrorism strategy that the EU is carrying out throughout the period in which ISIS has been an objective risk to EU Member States as well as the values of the EU both

when it had reached its zenith point and currently being almost defeated on a military basis. The aim of this thesis from an academic perspective is therefore to research the evolution of the counter-terrorism discourse in order to scrutinise the evolution of the securitisation approach in EU policies and directives, as well as to find out if they correspond to and can be claimed to be part of a proper and coherent “strategy”. After the previous analysis, it can also be considered relevant to point out what are the threats integrated in these documents, and evaluate the extent to which the threats posed by ISIS, once it is defeated militarily, are included and to argue whether the measures purposed by the European institutions to counter act these threats can be deemed adequate to fight the terrorist threat. Furthermore, the research will also add to the body of knowledge that studies the security approach of the EU as it updates the recent policies and discusses its “strategy-ness”.

## Data exploitation

This study uses a combination of methods called triangulation which increases its reliability and validity, as well as to apply a greater variety of sources in order to increase the data exploitation and enrich the research. The methods used are divided into:

### **Primary sources**

The main primary sources used in this research are the EU main legislation, political documents, agreements and speeches from EU personalities that focus on the construction of a European Security and Counter-terrorism Strategy. As ISIS’ establishment as a Caliphate was done in June 2014, the time frame used for this research starts in 2014 and lasts until July 2017. The data will be gathered through the use of discourse analysis. The interest of this study is then to analyse the measures taken by the EU against ISIS’ new threats that had or will have in the future some repercussions to Europe. The main aim of this method, is to study the change of the language and tone of the analysed texts after a quick overview of the background inherited by the analysed documents. The use of this method helps to outline the motivation and willingness of the Institutions to promote further cooperation and implementation and the Member States to follow the guidelines set from the EU. This paper is going to focus on both external and internal security measures



implemented to counteract terrorism. The point in time that the subject of analysis of this paper studies has reached a degree of political integration in which the internal and external dimension of security and counter terrorism measures cannot be separately analysed. In addition, the hybridity of Islamic terrorism makes it not possible for the EU to isolate its efforts to tackle ISIS threat but upraise the collective measures necessary to defeat it. The policies enhanced to prevent and tackle criminal and terrorism related activities inside and outside the EU territory complement one another and work on a feedback process that increase their degree of complexity and correlated (aimed) efficiency.

The type of discourse analysis used for this research is the critical discourse analysis (CDA), with some elements that belong to the CDA developed by Norman Fairclough.

This method does not focus on replying to “why” questions but on the “how”, as one of its main objectives is to demystify power relations, transmitting knowledge and understanding language as a social practice (Wodak & Meyer, 2008:7). Furthermore, it does not analyse the texts only based on the language, but also establish a strong link to the context surrounding the development of the texts and the triggering events that encourage the creation of the certain policies.

Fairclough (1992) sets up three levels that are helpful to carry out the analysis of the texts such as: focus on the way the text is produced; focus on the vocabulary that the texts uses in order to give an interpretation to the words; and finally, analysing the relationship between the discursive practices and the social ones in order to make the analysis critical (in Jørgensen and Phillips, 2002:7)

Studies in CDA have never attempted to set specific methodology characteristics of the research thus permitting it more freedom to choose the one that best matches the texts (Wodak & Meyer, 2008:5). In the current study, this research program is applied from an inductive perspective, in which no frames are going to be pre-selected even if due to previous knowledge it is difficult to eliminate the researcher’s bias and look for certain concepts. Thus, the frame will be decided upon once the text is analysed and the coding is subsequently complete once the text has already been studied.

Furthermore, another method used in this thesis using primary sources is Interviews, due to the internship I am undertaking at the European Parliament I could receive the input of Enrique Barón, former president of the European Parliament and Beatriz Becerra Basterrechea, politician and independent member in ALDE who is also the vice-president of the Human Rights Subcommission at the European Parliament and sponsor of AWARE (Alliance of women against radicalisation and extremism). The topic that I am analysing contains very changeable elements as the military offensive against ISIS changes on a daily basis, thus being a phenomenon that develops quicker than the policies that follow it. This element raises the importance of the interviews I am going to perform, however it does not make it the main method to obtain data.

In addition, the final method used is Document Analysis, in which Historical Analysis is pursued to briefly study the first attempts to shape security under a European perspective, which is going to focus on the documents that precede 2012, as the year when security and defense were included as one of the pillars of the EU.

### **Secondary Sources**

The information dedicated to the history of ISIS as well as the current threats posed by it are gathered using desktop analysis though articles produced by EU institutions such as EUROPOL or the think tank, Institute of War. Even if primary sources are used to gather specific information in certain publications such several ISIS magazines are used, as well as speeches by its spokesperson.

### **Limitations of the study**

It is necessary to point out that this research does not portray a full picture of the security strategy of the EU, as it takes a sample of European legislation, political documents, agreements and speeches framed in time between 2014 to 2017 and only gives a brief background of the measures previously enhanced.

It is also important to note that the specific tools set in the action plans to particularly fight certain threats cannot be mentioned in this paper due to the large amount of tools in place, which would require further space that was not made available for this paper. For

that reason, there will only be a discussion of the main measures that the analysed documents purpose in order to simplify the analysis.

In addition, the particular position of the Member States and the way in which they have specifically dealt with counter-terrorism at the national level is not going to be subject of analysis of this paper. The fact that this paper does main focus in the position of the European institution and not the position of its key actors may also diminish the reliability of this study.

Furthermore, the fact that this research is based on discourse analysis may also bring disadvantages. First of all, qualitative studies are more likely to be influenced by the writer bias. In order to avoid this, and as a way of encouraging further research, instruments like corpus linguistic techniques, quantitative computer techniques that measure the repetition of concepts and make easier to code patterns, were used (Tang, n.d). However, as this is a mechanistic tool, its use may leave aside the importance of the context where the documents were produced and focus only on the linguistic aspects (Hidalgo Tenorio, 2011:198). Nevertheless, the author has tried to counter this disadvantage by trying to let herself be advised by experts in the field in order to remain as objective as possible under the limits of this thesis.

## **4. Findings and Analysis**

### **Islamic State**

#### **Background**

##### *ISIS emergence and first phase*

The emergence of the Islamic State dates back to the beginning of the 21st century with the name Jama'at al-Tawhid wa'l Jihad, led by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi. It was defined then but has kept its true essence today as a Salafi-Jihadist insurgent organisation, a Sunni-based political extremist movement of Islam that has been growing and propelled by Wahhabism scholars in which jihad is understood in military terms and they purpose a violent radicalisation in order to fight against the 'infidels' (Antunez Moreno, 2017:11). The group was very active during Iraq's occupation by the international, US-led coalition in 2007, after pledging alliance to Al-Qaeda in 2004 and thus turning into its branch in Iraq, changing its name to Al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) (Standford University, 2017).

However, as soon as Al Zarqawi died in an airstrike carried out by the United States in 2006, Al Qaeda renamed the organisation as the Islamic State in Iraq (ISI). The years that followed were difficult for the ISI as the pressure that US and Iraqi forces implemented against them and the creation and financing in Iraq of the Sahwa Councils (or Awakening Councils), groups of Sunnies rose up in order to fight extremist Sunni groups made them get weakened (Rubin and Farrell, 2007). The organisation spent some years in isolation due to the damage suffered during the Iraqi war and the death of its previous leader Al Masri. It was not until the appointment of the new leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi in 2011, who reformed and reorganised the group, when it decided to come back to scene in Syria and taking advantage of the critical political situation that turned into a civil war and made them take an important role as a fighting force within the conflict (Standford University, 2017). Furthermore, another extremist Salafist-jihadi organisation was created in Syria under the name of Jabhat Al-Nusra by followers of the AQI in Syria in order to fight the troops of Bashar Al-Assad in the Syrian civil war (Sanjuán Martínez, 2016:3). It was not until 2013 when the group moved to Syria, fused with Al-Nusra and changed its name to Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) against the will of Al Qaeda, as they wanted ISI to change its name to Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (Standford University, 2017). From this moment onward, due to the authoritative lead of ISIS at the time, the disobedience towards their main partner at the time and the brutality of the execution of their actions, the bond established with Al-Qaeda deteriorated and at the beginning of 2014 the ties between the two organisations were cut (Weggemans, Peters, Bakker and de Bont, 2016). By the time this event happened, ISIS had already started to gain territory in Syria and Iraq, however it was on January the 14th and June the 9th when the cities of Raqqa in Syria and Mosul in Iraq respectively surrendered to ISIS and the amount of territory the group had conquered had reached its zenith (France-Presse, 2017). However, it was not until the 29th of June 2014 that Al Baghdadi publicly declared the establishment of the caliphate of the Islamic State and proclaimed himself as caliph in order to increase the prestige of the organisation and eulogise its achievements (Sanjuán Martínez, 2016:1).

Nevertheless, it was in September of that same year when the United States launched the first airstrikes against ISIS targets, joined by the Iraqi army and local militias in the following months, starting the offensive against ISIS as a means to slow down the territorial progress of ISIS (Standford University, 2017)

### *Decadence and (almost) defeat on the ground*

The situation in the Caliphate has changed considerably since its establishment in 2014. This is the case because it is partially located in an area dominated by one of the most complex conflicts of the 21st century, i.e. the Syrian civil war, but also due to the pressure that the different factions fighting against ISIS have put on them. In many occasions, groups from the different factions have allied among themselves with the purpose of defeating ISIS, giving them a major threat to fight.

Yet, it can be confirmed that the fighting over ISIS-held territory that was included in the Caliphate started to dwindle in 2015. From the second half of the year, and due to the pressure imposed by the Syrian Regime forces supported by Russia, the Kurds allied with Sunni insurgent organisations - backed by the US-led coalition and other rebel groups (principally Shia) - thus rendering the Caliphate loss of territory imminent (Weggemans et al, 2016). However, these victories cannot be deemed strategic and we can only talk about tactical losses of territory (Lister, 2015:4). The data confirms that ISIS lost a total amount of 14% of its territory in Syria and Iraq by the end of 2015 (Weggemans et al, 2016). The tendency of the phenomenon continued in the same line in 2016, with a higher percentage of territory lost (23%), which is a quarter of the territory that the terrorist organisation held in 2015, according to IHS Markit (2017).

Nowadays, even if the comparative analysis of the territory currently claimed by IS compared with previous years is still not available, figure 2 shows an updated picture of the territorial ISIS presence in Syria and Iraq at the end of the 2017 and compares it to the territory that the terrorist organisation held in 2015.

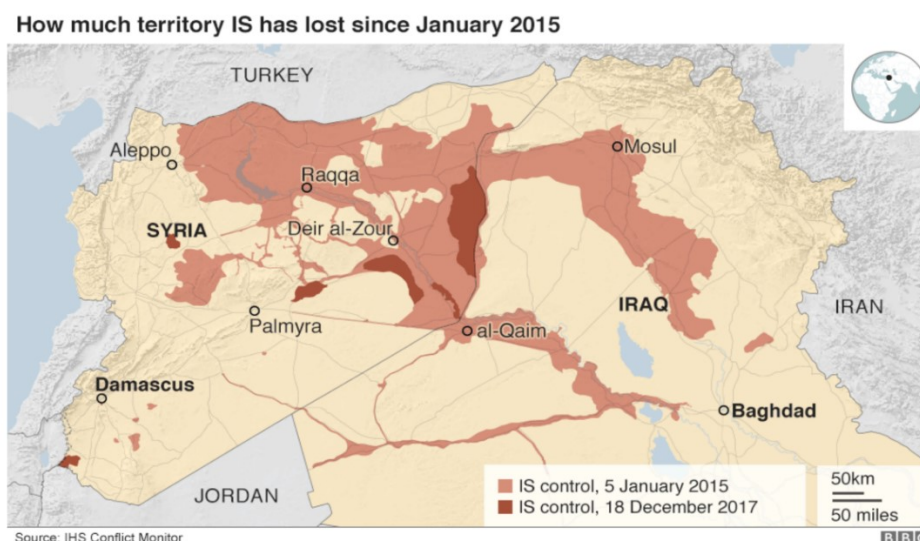


Figure 2: Current territory controlled by ISIS. IHS Conflict Monitor (18 December, 2017)

Mosul was one of the main achievements that ISIS could obtain, not only because it is the second biggest city in Iraq with all the trading advantages and supply routes this entails, but also as it is the place with most oil fields in Iraq, thus turning into a great source of income for the group (BBC Mundo, 2016). On the other hand, Raqqa was the first city that fell to ISIS, thus becoming the capital of the Caliphate when it was captured, as well as a great recruitment centre and storage point for weapons and ammunition (El Comercio, 2015).

Thus, some scholars talk nowadays about “The Last days of the Caliphate”, when great developments are made against ISIS on the ground (Wood, 2017). These main developments are summed up as the recovery of territory and the military weakening of the terrorist organisation. The Iraqi army, supported by US airpower, started the siege of Mosul and actually liberated the closest western villages since the May 15th 2017 (South Front, 2017). This led the Iraqi military forces to a strategic position at the main gates of Mosul (Cockburn, 2017). In addition, Raqqa was targeted by several bombings since the beginning of 2017, having an effect over ISIS brigades around the Euphrates river, as the US-led coalition was able to encircle them and cut off the city (Wood, 2017). We also need to take into account advances made by the Kurdish-dominated Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the north-eastern part of the country and the territories taken in the South as well as some factions close to the city of Aleppo by some factions of the Syrian Opposition (Gutowski and Dury-Agri, 2017).

One of the main victories against ISIS was proclaimed on June the 10th 2017 when the Iraqi government published a press release in which it announced the liberation of Mosul after months of siege. The document also gives credit to the Kurdish Peshmerga fighters and the International Coalition that helped the Iraqi security forces in this arduous task. Furthermore, the document also highlights the evidence that even if expelling the terrorist organisation from the territories the ideology and the threat posed by ISIS need further efforts to be completely eradicated (Al-Abadi, 2017). Only three months later the US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, announced the liberation of Raqqa by the International Coalition and the great effort of the Syrian Democratic Forces. Furthermore, following the line started by the Iraqi government it is admitted in the communication that the threat posed by ISIS is deemed to continue not only in a military way (Tillerson, 2017).

Fortunately, the Iraqi government has declared that the country has currently been completely liberated from ISIS influence. However, due to the political situation that Syria is still going through since the beginning of the civil war, it is very difficult to permanently eradicate the terrorist organisation and its clandestine activities from the borders of the country (Levenson & Karadsheh, 2017). Furthermore, the panorama left in the country due to the alliances made to defeat ISIS, the territory gained by Kurdish and by the Syrian rebels is going to make it very difficult for Syria to come out of its civil war and the war against terrorism as the country it was before 2011 (Asrar, 2017). It can be determined that despite the fall of Raqqa and Mosul have had a significant effect weakening the military strength of ISIS, the battle against ISIS terrorism continues as they still keep control of certain dispersed territories in Syria, (Cockburn, 2017). Not forgetting also about the non-military and ideological battle that is currently been fought not only in the Western countries but also against the extremist and radical jihadism in the Middle East countries.

### *The Role of European Countries*

Moreover, when analysing the role of Western European countries that take a position towards the military eradication of the terrorist organisation, it is necessary to show two strands. One of the sides is characterised by the countries that take an actual role against ISIS on the ground, led by the US International coalition. Among the European countries that are more prone to fight the terrorist organisation we can find the ones that have been more openly targeted by the Islamic State in their home countries and have suffered their attacks. They are also pointed out to be the hometowns of more foreign fighter that have left their birthplaces to fight on the side of ISIS. This is the case not only of France, the United Kingdom and Belgium, but also Denmark or the Netherlands (BBC News, 2015). In addition, there are some countries that despite playing an important role at the international arena do not want to get involved in 'hard' politics, such as Germany. (Peifer, 2016). On the other hand, there are exceptional cases like Spain, which has remained passive in the war against ISIS due to past experiences with Islamic Terrorism, but have nonetheless felt the impact of terrorism on its society. In August 2017, a terrorist attack in the Ramblas (Barcelona) was claimed by the Islamic State (Di Stefano Pironti, 2014).

A chart which overviews the main terrorist attacks that the organisation has perpetrated, the perpetrator pledge allegiance to the Islamic State or they claimed authorship of those attacks within the Member States of the European Union starting in 2014 is provided:

Attack	Place	Date	ISIS reaction
Jewish Museum Shooting	Brussels, Belgium	24th May 2014	Perpetrator pledged alliance to ISIS
Police Station Stabbing	Tours, France	20 <sup>th</sup> December 2014	Perpetrator Pledged Alliance to ISIS
Great Synagogue Shootings	Copenhagen, Denmark	15 <sup>th</sup> February 2015	Perpetrator Pledged Alliance to ISIS
Thalys Train attack	France	21 <sup>st</sup> August 2015	Perpetrator had links with ISIS
Bataclan and Paris Attacks	Paris, France	13 <sup>th</sup> November 2015	ISIS cell in Brussels
Brussels Zaventem Airport Bombing	Brussels, Belgium	22 <sup>nd</sup> March, 2016	ISIS cell in Brussels
Magnanville Police stabbing	Magnanville, France	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2016	Perpetrator had links with ISIS
Promenade des Anglais run over	Nice, France	14 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	Claimed by ISIS
Normandy Church Attack	Normandy, France	26 <sup>th</sup> July 2016	Perpetrator Pledged Alliance to ISIS
Christmas Market Attack	Berlin, Germany	19 <sup>th</sup> December 2016	Claimed by ISIS/fake
Shooting of a Police Officer	Paris, France	20 <sup>th</sup> April 2016	Pledged Alliance to ISIS



Ariana Grande's Concert	Manchester, UK	22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2017	Claimed by ISIS
London Bridge Attack	London, UK	3 <sup>rd</sup> June 2017	Claimed by ISIS
Las Ramblas run over	Barcelona, Spain	17 <sup>th</sup> August 2017	Claimed by ISIS
Parson Green Bombing	London, UK	15 <sup>th</sup> September 2017	Claimed by ISIS
Saint Charles Station	Marseille, France	1 <sup>st</sup> October 2017	Claimed by ISIS

The chart clearly shows that the places that have been attacked more frequently by ISIS militants in Europe has been France and the UK, which are also the countries where more victims of ISIS terrorism have been left. Furthermore, it can also be observed a tendency by ISIS to claim responsibility for the attacks perpetrated after the truck attack at the Christmas Market in Berlin 2016. However, there is a divided opinion on this matter about the range of influence that the Islamic State can reach. For example, some have argued that individuals which do not have any contact with the terrorist organisation, nor let ISIS know of their intention and self-radicalise themselves cannot have any link with the organisation (Bearak, 2016). Others experts meanwhile, argue that the terrorist organisation is very disciplined in claiming the attacks that they have inspired, enabled or directed somehow (Osborne, 2017). The main difficulty then is to establish a relation with ISIS when only the organisation has “inspired” the attack, as it is a difficult fact to prove. However this issue is a consequence of a change of modus operandi that the organisation promoted in 2016 when the loss of territory in Syria and Iraq had already become a reality.

**Key Findings: Isis threat to the EU member-states when defeated on the ground**

“We must remain vigilant and ready to face any terrorist attempt targeting our people and our country (...) Terrorism is a permanent enemy and the battle with it continues, and we

must preserve this unity, which with it we have defeated ISIS” Al-Abadi President of Iraq’s speech after Iraq was liberated from ISIS military troops, 9th December 2017 (Levenson and Karadsheh, 2017).

The military defeat of ISIS in Syria and Iraq does not mean that the organisation has been completely defeated or has lost its ability to act. ISIS has been defeated in his version of conventional force, but not its threat as an organization that will mutate into a version linked to the insurgency or as dormant cells and terrorism (Villarejo, 2017). In fact its strategy has mutated in order to adapt itself to this new scenario in which they have less resources, but they are not necessarily less dangerous (Annex 3. Second Interview: ALDE MEP Beatriz Becerra, 2018).

Until 2016 one of the main priorities for the Islamic State was to keep the territory where its Caliphate was based. Nevertheless, this objective became increasingly unrealistic when the US-led international coalition started to recuperate territories that had previously been controlled by ISIS (Europol, 2016). For this reason an official change in the ISIS modus operandi was announced in the speech by ISIS’ spokesperson in May 2016, Abu Mohammed al-Adnani Al-Shami, as the starting point of a de facto change in the organisation’s strategy and priorities due to the reduction of their military actives. In his speech published by Al Furqan Media, he publicly admits the losses the Caliphate suffered in Syria and Iraq and called upon further action. (Kamolnick, 2016). In fact a quarter of the territory they held was lost by the end of the year (BBC News, 2017).

As a consequence, Al-Adani encouraged attacks by their supporters in their home countries against the unbelievers and warned them from travelling Syria and Iraq due to the accepted defeats on the ground. Indeed, there was a recognition that these people could be more valuable to ISIS in Western countries, especially in those that are part of the International Coalition against the Caliphate, among which, many EU Member States (Kamolnick, 2016). The goal of this message is to increase the appearance of lone wolf attacks to soft targets rather than symbolic targets, which was the tradition held by terrorist organisations in the past, increasing the fear among the civil population (Europol, 2016).

Moreover, there has been an exportation of the modus operandi applied in Syria and Iraq to Europe, such as carb bombs, kidnappings, suicide attacks or extortion. (Europol, 2016). Furthermore, the weaponry used in those attacks, far from being sophisticated, has usually

been reduced to domestic objects that are easier to find. Nonetheless, some more powerful weapons such as high-grade explosives, have been acquired through illegal collection and used for this purpose. However, it is also important to highlight some of the concerns expressed by Europol (2016:11) in pointing out the intention of the terrorist organisation to use chemical weapons at some point against the European continent.

What is more, even if the communication campaigns by the terrorist organisation have strongly diminished since 2016, their propaganda is still active and is rather successful in reaching their target audience (Europol, 2017:31) Thus, their objective is to strength the ideology backed by their marketing propaganda, to reach a broader audience, and so spend less time on one-on-one radicalisation, promoting a less detectable self-radicalisation that could be more effective for ISIS purposes (Europol, 2016:8). The strategy has looked for people that are not necessarily interested in religion, but have lived under certain circumstances that make them more prone to be opened to enjoy what fighting for ISIS in their home countries is and thus, commit attacks “inspired” by the Islamic State, even if technically these two groups of individuals were never in touch. (Europol, 2016: 8) These “inspired attacks” by ISIS, for Western Security Forces are going to be defined as “complex attacks” due to their difficulty they sometimes require to establish a proper link to the terrorist organisation (Cafarella & Zhou, 2017).

In addition, there exists the possibility they focus on Syrian (Sunni) refugees or asylum seekers and the new paths of migrations to Europe, which are considered a more vulnerable group of people. As Europol (2016:9) suggests, there might be a high number of ISIS terrorist getting into Europe to carry this task. This would also polarise European societies, as the refugee crisis linked to the topic of the free flow of people within the internal border of the EU may bring reluctance to public opinion to allow refugees into the counties.

A shift in “training” to “coaching” has been developed in the new modus operandi pursued by ISIS, which focuses less on the role of foreign fighters due to the precarious situation in the Caliphate, and more in coaching other people in the task of radicalising others (Europol, 2016:10). Even if there are less people travelling to the conflict zone, another question that is posed is the question of what to do with those ones that want to return back to their home countries after having fought for ISIS. However, these foreign fighters have already been linked to some of the terrorist attacks committed in Europe, causing a threat in terms of their return to the European continent (Cafarella & Zhou,

2017:3). It is estimated by the Counter Terrorism Chief that around 1500 foreign fighters have returned to Europe, some of whom will provide logistic and network support for the conduction of attacks in Europe (in Cafarella & Zhou, 2017:3)

It is important to point out, as Europol (2016) does in its report, that despite the fact ISIS has not shown any interest in cyber-attacks yet, the potential does exist for them to ally with groups which have the ability carry out cyber warfare in order to target strategic objectives (Corder, 2016).

Furthermore, in order to ensure the survival of the organization, ISIS is focusing on other regions. The main targeted ones are countries situated in Northern Africa, particularly Libya due to the current political instability which reigns in the country after the disposal of Gaddafi. As a result, there is a certain fear in Europe that the territories taken in Libya could be used to attack the European continent as it is placed nearer than the Middle East (Africa Research Bulletin, 2016). In addition, South East Asia is also on high alert, especially since the Islamic State in the Khorasan province tried to take the mountains that separate Afghanistan from Pakistan - denominated “The Tribal Belt” -, known also as the “Federally Administered Tribal Areas”(FATAS), in 2016 (Europol, 2017:38). Finally, ISIS’ influence has also reached the most remote places in Asia such as the Philippine archipelago, having entered via the isle of Mindanao and allying with other groups in order to cause destabilisation in the country and taking governmental structures (McKirby and Watson, 2017).

## The European Union

### **Background**

Terrorism has always been a very sensitive issue for European States and cooperation in this matter has been challenging due to its treatment as internal issues of the States. For this particular reason and due to the indoor problems with terrorist groups such as ETA and the IRA, the British and Spanish presidencies of the Council of the EU during the 90s and early years of the new century fought to give a common impulse to this threat (Annex 2 Interview: Enrique Baron, 2018)

However, European cooperation in terrorism matters started in very informal terms when in 1975 some ministers of Interior, informally called the TREVI club use to meet to

discuss threats to internal security linked to terrorist attacks (Rivas Sanchez, 2005:12). This cooperation started evolving with the Schengen Agreement and including counter terrorism measures within Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) included in the second pillar of the Union in the Maastricht treaty of 1992 and police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters in the third (Sgueo, 2016:2)

It was not until the creation of the figure of the High Representative for the CFSP that counter terrorism measures were given an impulse. The main results were the creation of a common “terrorism” definition in 2001 and the European Security Strategy 2003, also known as the Solana’s Strategy. This document establishes a conceptual framework for the CFSP and identifies key security challenges for the EU such as among which terrorism (Aguilera, 2006:3). Furthermore, the EU Strategy against Terrorism in 2005 was presented after the Madrid and London attacks of 2004-2005 and is divided in four pillars in order to “prevent”, “protect”, “prosecute” and “respond” to terrorist threats (Ruiz Granado, 2015:5). This Strategy is complemented by an EU Action Plan on Combating terrorism that gives concrete measures to implement the previous political purposes.

Once the Treaty of Lisbon entered into force in 2009 the pillars structures of the EU came eliminated and the EU received legal personality at the international level. It gave more competences to the Union in counter terrorism matters as well as in the external affairs sphere, making possible for the European Commission to create the External Action Service in 2011. Furthermore, the article 42 establishes the Common security and defence policy (CSDP) should be included in the CFSP, giving more powers to the Union in security related matters and enhancing cooperation between the Member States. In the fight against terrorism there are two articles in the treaties that are important to highlight: art. 42.7 of the Treaty of the EU (TEU) that is the “mutual assistance clause” and art. 222 of the Treaty of the Functioning of the EU (TFEU), the “solidarity clause” when it comes to terrorist attacks to Member States (Ruiz Granado, 2015:7)

However, the attempts to counteract jihadist terrorism pre-2014, before the establishment of the Juncker Commission, were mainly focused on giving a long term politico-diplomatic response to the problem, strengthening international cooperation on the issue in order to increase the prevention as well as revising the ideological causes of the phenomenon. In addition; the perception of security had been framed for a long time within the competences of the national authorities and thus, the reluctance to leave it in European supranational hands until Islamic jihadism increased its activity in the

continent. Hence, from this moment on some further action was needed in order to give a complete response to the phenomenon, to catch up to the new threat environment surrounding the Union.

**Assessing the current security and counter terrorism strategy of the EU from 2014 to 2017 towards ISIS**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Regulations/ Directives (legislation)</b>	<b>Political (Framework) Documents</b>	<b>Speeches</b>	<b>Agreements</b>
<b>2014</b>		-Counter Terrorism Strategy for Syria and Iraq		
<b>2015</b>	-Anti-Money laundering directive: new rules to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing -EU PNR data directive agreement	- <b>The European Agenda on Security 2015</b> -Council conclusions on the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat - Council conclusions on strengthening the use of means of fighting trafficking of firearms	-State of the Union 2015	-Riga joint statement on counter-terrorism
<b>2016</b>		- <b>Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy 2016</b> -Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats 2016	-State of the Union Address 2016	-Joint statement following the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 March 2016 -EU Nato joint declaration 2016
<b>2017</b>	-Regulation for the reinforcement of	-Guidelines to combat	-State of the Union 2017	-EU leaders reaffirm their

checks against relevant databases at external borders March 2017 - Directive on combating terrorism	radicalisation and terrorism recruitment	commitment to cooperate at EU level -PESCO Agreement
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*Year 2014: First reactions after the establishment of the Caliphate*

**-Counter Terrorism Strategy for Syria and Iraq 2014-**

In the context of a quick response by the US led international coalition against the installed Caliphate by the Islamic State on June the 30th 2014 and the support of the United Nations Security Council's (UNSC) resolutions UNSCR 2170 and UNSCR 2178, the EU showed its support to this international initiative releasing the present Counter Terrorism Strategy.

This strategy is positioned in the text as an element of the "EU's wider foreign and security policy (...) situated within the wider political and regional context", showing a degree of superficiality since its first instances as it watches terrorism from the distance. In addition, it keeps a degree of consistency with the previous responses to Islamic terrorism, mainly focused in the politic-diplomatic dimension of the problem and enhancing cooperation with other entities or States in the matter. In this case, the so called "strategy" proposes counterterrorism measures to prevent and contain the new threat, but always focusing in long term aims, combining and encouraging the development of an international comprehensive approach in order to fight ISIS. These measures are focused in the main threats posed by ISIS at the time, such as: combating the financing of the organisation, counteracting the narrative, combating their actions online etc... However, there is a big silencing in the texts regarding concrete measures to pursue these actions, thus, showing a slight lack of unwillingness for further action at the European supranational level at the time. The repetition of the word "should" is notable when talking about the priorities of action to eradicate the terrorist threat, reinforcing the idea of the good intention of the text but emptiness of its measures. Furthermore, it also focuses in some more political solutions such as promoting good governance to improve regional security conditions in Syria and Iraq with the further aim of holding the threat within their national borders and making these counter terrorism measures tackled in first

instance at the nearest national level. Finally, a further noticeable silence is that no issue related to the military dimension of the threat is discussed in the text.

### *Year 2015 The apogee of the Caliphate*

#### **-Riga joint statement on counter-terrorism-**

After the terrorist attacks against the French magazine Charlie Hebdo, the European ministers of home affairs met in an informal session in order to highlight the importance to “provide a determined response at the EU level” against “terrorism, radicalisation, recruitment and financing related to terrorism as common threats to internal security of the Union”. However, the preventive attributes of this document make it fall in the scope of a “comprehensive cross sectorial approach” that requires a continuous effort to make the purposed measures to have an effect.

The main emphasis of the text lays in building more concrete measures using the tools at the disposition of the EU and implementing them in a fastest way than in the past. In this scenario the EU PNR framework, the fight of illegal trafficking of firearms, financing of terrorism and cooperation with third countries will be enhanced.

A big silence within this text is the lack of consideration of the military component, needed in 2015 in order to defeat the terrorist organisation. Thus, the approach this Joint Agreement takes lays in the classic but insufficient EU counter terrorism approach, too focused in providing assistance, cooperation and the potential damage of the EU values.

Despite its informal character, this document is going to set the lines of action of the directives and regulations that were issued in the year 2015 as well highlighted in the new renovated European Agenda on Security 2015, that are going to be analysed in this paper.

#### **-Council conclusions on the EU regional strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat-**

In March 2015, a year after the Counter Terrorism Strategy for Syria and Iraq entered into place, in order to tackle the external dimension of the security of the Union. “The EU noted that the circumstances have changed (...)” in terms of development of the threat not



only in Syria and Iraq but also towards the European Union and “it will adapt its actions to the changing nature of Daesh threat”.

Thus, this new document has a double purpose. First of all, encouraging a peaceful political transition in Syria and the stabilisation of the political situation in Iraq. In addition, it discusses measures to counteract ISIS threat.

However the response of the EU against ISIS still focuses once more on a long term approach, the prevention of the threat to counteract its root causes and the emphasis on the stability of the countries that suffer in first instance the direct threat of terrorism. This so called strategy could also be deemed to be non-ambitious as its implementation is linked to the performance of the actors in the region. Nevertheless, a discreet improvement can be pointed out, which are the concrete tools purposed to tackle radicalisation (such as the use of the Radicalisation Awareness Network, Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team etc...) and the fight against foreign fighters (make use of Schengen Information System II, Europol etc...)

### **-The European Agenda on Security 2015-**

In April 2015 the renovation of the outdated 2003 Agenda on Security is done, after several public manifestations by the High Representative on Foreign Affairs on the willingness of the Commission to reformulate it due to the high danger posed by the new multidisciplinary threats (Ruiz Granados, 2015). Even if security was a topic that relied on the member states themselves even after the reformulation of the treaties in 2009, this present document puts an end to this philosophy: “Member States have the front line responsibility for security, but cannot longer succeed fully on their own (...) all relevant EU and national actors need to work better together in to tackle cross-border threats” or hybrid threats. Thus, what is intended with this document is to purpose concrete measures, either new ones or others that have already been approved but not implemented to tackle the threats towards the internal security of the Union and its member states. It also sets the lines of actions of the security legislation of the EU until 2020 in the areas of counteracting terrorism and preventing radicalisation, disrupting organised crime and tackling cybercrime. To do so, it favours a cooperation between the EU and its agencies with the law enforcement authorities from the Member States in order to enrich the added value of the already existing tools to tackle this problem.

Moreover, a tone of impatience can be read across the lines when talking about the implementation of the instruments that are already created to fight terrorism, organised crime and cybercrime, noted by the repetition of words like “necessary to develop”, or keep reminding about the “responsibility” of the Member States to protect.

Furthermore, a very clear aim of this Agenda is to put an end to the threats posed by Islamic Terrorism preserving the values that characterise the European compromise such as “the compliance with fundamental rights”, “transparency”, “accountability” and “democratic control”.

The European Agenda on Security 2015 can be seen as the first document at the European level that proposes a change of role of the EU, from a passive actor on the international sphere, reliant on other actors to counter terrorism, to assume a more realist role at the current international order as well as more protagonism. It follows a traditional European approach against counter terrorism as it focuses in the protection of the European values but it also focuses on the task that the EU itself can perform to tackle the Islamic terrorism within its borders and does not only focus on the prevention of the threat as previously done but also uses law enforcement measures and particular action plans to be further developed.

#### **- Anti-Money laundering directive new rules to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing 2015/849-**

After the European Agenda on Security was issued in March the legislative bodies of the EU started putting in place the recommendations by this Action Plan.

“Money laundering and terrorist financing are frequently carried out in an international context. Measures adopted solely at national or even at Union level, without taking into account international coordination and cooperation, would have very limited effect”. Takes into account the trans-boundary threat that terrorism poses and the different policy areas that are compelled to deal with it and collaborate in order to stop its development. The repetition of the word “cooperation” is notable in order to highlight its importance when tackling the hybridity and high risk of the threat. It is acknowledged that diminishing the financial funding of the Islamic organisation will not stop their activity, however it will impede the growing of the Caliphate and make more challenging the

activities they want to pursue out of the borders of the countries they are based in i.e. Syria and Iraq.

As this document is an amendment of a previous directive, it includes a number of reforms to the previous one. It covers a wider area of crimes and activities that can be punished, it puts a lot of emphasis in the transferring of funds and the traceability, as well as an annual European risk assessment to measure the impact of these illegal activities on the internal market.

#### **-Council conclusions on strengthening the use of means of fighting trafficking of firearms-**

Another offspring of the European Agenda on Security 2015, also driven by the aftermath of the terrorists attacks perpetrated in Europe during the present year encouraged the Council of the European Union to issue this document.

However, it does have a softer character than the directives previously analysed, that “obliged” and “urged” the member states to apply the measures proposed in those documents and that had the legal power to do it. Instead, this conclusion invites the member states and the other institutions involved, to take the proposed initiatives. Once more, the “increasing of cooperation and communication exchange” is a practice that get extended to the fight against trafficking of firearms.

Finally, it is also necessary to point out the close relations and implications of the internal and external security of the Union to one another’s. Thus, further cooperation with neighboring countries is necessary to prevent internal risk to security.

#### **-EU Passenger Name Record (PNR) directive –**

The text of this directive was approved by the Council and European Parliament in December of 2015, however it entered into force in 2016.

The present directive deals with the gathering of passengers’ details when travelling to the EU countries or PNR. Nevertheless, the new focus given to this useful tool is to “detect” and “investigate”, via the sharing of information between EU agencies (Europol), member states and third countries, to further prosecute terrorists. Once more, the “cooperation” feature of this directive is highlighted as one of its main aims, in order

to put in contact the national authorities, EU agencies and member states to prevent the entrance of terrorists inside EU territory and reinforce border security.

Important to note is the repetition of the “obligation” that countries have to use these tools and enforce them, otherwise sanctions will apply.

Finally, carrying on with the protection of European values, the texts also protects the confidentiality of the data obtained in compliance with the right of protection of personal data.

### **-State of the Union September 2015 –**

The State of the Union is a traditional speech made by the president of the European Commission in which he makes balance of the previous year’s work and state of the European Union. It was in 2015 the first time Jean Claude addressed the challenges that could not be achieved in the previous year and needed to be brought into the agenda of the European Commission for the upcoming one.

One of the main characteristics of the speech is its reformist tone, in which, the president of the Commission openly announces the upcoming “politicisation” of certain policy areas due to the threats and the crisis that the EU was facing at that time. He explains that the best way to “address them from a very political perspective, in a very political manner and having the political consequence of our decisions”. Jean Claude Juncker was already advancing in this speech the new strategy of the Commission, under a causation of “need” and backed by the Lisbon Treaty, an empowerment of the E. Commission distant from its previous mandates.

Furthermore, when talking about the threats that puts at risk the stability of the Union it is important to point out that Islamic Terrorism is not mentioned. We can argue that only “the migrant crisis” could be related to the Islamic Terrorism phenomenon as a consequence of their practices in Syria and Libya at that time.

A reason for not taking into account ISIS threat can be the timing of this speech. Being the Bataclan and Paris attacks on November that same year one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in Europe caused by Islamic terrorism, even if there were some previous evidences of their brutality, such as the Charlie Hebdo attacks that were perpetrated in January that year.

### Year 2016 The start of the Decadence

#### **-Joint Statement of the EU Ministers for Justice and Home Affairs and representatives of the EU institutions on the terrorist attacks in Brussels on 22 -**

This particular piece of communication that gathered the national ministers and representatives of the EU, even if ad hoc, puts in evidence the continuing lack of measures to fight against terrorism. The constant repetition of the phrase “as a matter of urgency” calls the states themselves to implement the existent EU legislation to counter terrorism but also to increase developing measures to fight against it at the European level.

Even if this is a condolence message, it has also a slightly more positive character when mentioning “the substantial progress made at Member State and EU level to enhance our collective ability to combat terrorism” especially since the Juncker Commission took office. The text also sends a message of encouragement to keep the fight up against a common threat that puts in risks the European democratic values shared by all the member states

Furthermore, the measures proposed are summed up in promoting cooperation among member states through information sharing, use of preventive measures to fight radicalisation and to use tools that are already in place in order to combine efforts between institutions and states.

#### **-Joint Framework on countering hybrid threats -**

As previously witnessed at the EU policy level, security measures tend to be addressed once a major event has happened at the national level, in this case the Brussels Zaventem Airport Bombing., keeping the ad hoc philosophy that characterises the Union external and internal security and the supremacy of the Member States in tackling the terrorist threat. This context of “change in the security environment of the EU” is the one in which this Joint Communication is settled.

Even if it states that “terrorist attacks and violent extremism are not per se of a hybrid nature”, the definition given of hybrid threats encompass “a mixture of coercitive and subversive activity, conventional and unconventional methods used in a coordinated manner (...) to achieve specific objectives while remaining below the threshold of

formally declared warfare”, clearly matching with the actions perpetrated by the Islamic State until that date and thus including them within the sphere of consideration of hybrid threats.

The document recalls the raising of awareness for hybrid threats and also suggests an EU response based on previous measures and other more concrete actions to reinforce these previous ones. The main response is advised to be based on protecting critical infrastructure, strengthen defense tools, paying special attention to the cyber services, targeting terrorist financing, building resilience against radicalisation and finally, to increase cooperation and improve information sharing. The majority of these measures were previously addressed in other official communications or policy papers, paying special attention to the European Agenda on Security and the following directives and regulations that emanated from it.

However, one of the main changes in the course of EU security policy that can be spotted in the document is the willingness for the EU to cooperate with non-state actors and military powers, in particular NATO. This potential partnership with NATO should be based in “prepare and respond to hybrid threats effectively in a complementary and mutually supporting manner”. What can be read between lines is the realisation by the EU of the need for a partial short term military pressure on the terrorist organisation from an armed supranational organisation.

#### **-Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign and Security Policy -**

A document that the EEAS, led by Federica Mogherini developed in order to point out the challenges and opportunities that the EU faces due to the insecurity and instability of the neighboring countries surrounding the Union’s external border. It aims to create a comprehensive or integrated strategy that focuses on the threats to the internal security of the EU and a multi-dimensional way to tackle them, with security and foreign policies and instruments at the preventive level but also at the managerial level and resolution of the problem.

In addition, it also aims at portraying the EU as a credible international actor that not only focuses on soft power solutions, as it characterise the EU previous strategies, but also provides security resources as a result of the joint work of its member states, institutions

and partners altogether. However, “we are not making full use of this potential yet” as the collective alliance between these 3 actors that create the EU structure does not always comply. However the slogan “Unity is strength” prevails during the entirety of the document referring to the shared practical, economic and preventive assistance that make this alliance of country reach further joint results.

One the major priority areas that the document focus on is security and defense of the Union and within this wide area, challenging countering terrorism is of great importance. The EU resources and instruments to tackle this phenomenon are based on the Joint Framework to counter Hybrid threats, that show a more collective and effective approach when implemented. The actions proposed by the Union in order to tackle terrorism are summed up in: sharing information, counter extremism and radicalisation, cooperation with third countries and protection of the shared values. Also further cooperation with NATO is foreseen.

#### **-EU-Nato joint declaration -**

Only a month later than the Global Strategy was released, the EU-Nato partnership took a new direction in terms strengthening cooperation between the two organisations. In this document it is perceived that a higher level of equality between the two organisations in terms of providing security to the citizens of the member states that integrate them. “Together they can better provide security in Europe and beyond” due to the new risk environment caused by the South and East neighbors.

This integrated cooperation focuses in both maintaining stability in the countries where the threats emanate from but also “prevention” of hybrid threats, “operational cooperation”, mutual “cyber security and defense” and even “building security and defense capacities”. Thus, portrays the EU not only as a partner to counter terrorism, but as a proper provider of security that strengthen its assets in cooperation with NATO, in equal terms.

#### **-State of the Union Address -**

The second State of the Union pronounced by the President of the Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, partially follows the line drawn by the previous one. Whereas in the former much hope put on the reforms that needed to be taken in order to achieve a better

Union, this one emits a tone of exasperation. This is reflected in some of the statements made by the President Juncker in the opening part of the speech. “Our European Union is (...) in an existential crisis” or “Never before have I seen so much fragmentation and so little commonality in our Union”. On the one hand this is due to the political problem that Brexit poses to the integration project, but on the other the differences of priorities among the Institutions and national leaders in order to tackle the arduous environment that the Union faces.

One of the main difficulties that constitute a challenge to the EU, which was not even mentioned in the past year’s speech are defense and security due to the increase in number of terrorist attacks in the member states territory. In this section the aim of being more than a soft power is arisen, stating that “Europe can no longer afford to piggy-back on the military might of others”. With this reference a deeper integration in defense matters is enhanced, pushing to have a proper permanent structure able to deal with military issues threatening the Union beyond and at its borders, in cooperation with NATO. Also it sets a security agenda in order to counteract terrorism consequences in Europe.

### *Year 2017 The end of the Islamic State as previously known*

#### **- Directive on combating terrorism -**

Being 2016 the year with more Islamic terrorist attacks in Europe, the renewal of previous law enforcement methods to prosecute terrorist activities in order to match the international circumstances and the change in the security panorama is needed. Also, the fact that terrorist acts constitute an “attack on democracy and the rule of law, principles which are common to the Member States and on which the Union is based” need to be given a legal answer from the European supranational level. It is also necessary to highlight the change on narrative towards the FTF , whose activity is going to be considered of a terrorist character as they have been “inspired or instructed by terrorist groups” and also “have been linked to recent attacks and plots in several Member States”. This serves to criminalise the activities carried out by the returnees when trained by terrorist organisations and does not only limit the terrorist activity to the commitment of crimes but takes into account the willingness to do so.



This document reinforces and redefines at the European and national legal framework level what constitute the criminal offences of terrorism, the sanctions that these should receive and the protection of victims. The importance of this text does not only lay in the updating of the old fashion rules regarding terrorism, but also unifies the procedures among countries and promotes cooperation between the institutions, agencies and member states involved in the process. But, above all it does not consider anymore Member States as the only responsible ones dealing with this phenomenon.

#### **-Regulation for the reinforcement of checks against relevant databases at external borders -**

The State of the Union 2016 set certain guidelines regarding taking further steps in the protection of the Union border, as it has a direct impact in the internal security of the EU. Following its commands, the aim of this text is to amend the Schengen agreement in order to increase the checks of people when entering the Union, to prevent “the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters, many of whom are Union citizens” from spreading, taking into account the extra difficulty of the free movement of Europeans. Again and in concordance with the previous text, the criminalisation of the FTF is going to lead to the strengthening of checks and storage of individual and personal information in connected databases able to be consulted by all the Member states.

The promotion of cooperation between Member States and Agencies in charge is very much encouraged, as well as the compliance with the HR of the European citizens when consulting private personal data.

#### **-Guidelines to combat radicalisation and terrorism recruitment -**

This text is another tool to remake security not only as a prerogative of the States but since the wave of terrorism spread in Europe between 2015-2016 a collective action at the supranational level. It comprises all the necessary measures and initiatives promoted by the Institutions to be implemented at the national level in order to tackle radicalisation that could lead to violent extremism and terrorism in the new international environment.

#### **-EU leaders reaffirm their commitment to cooperate at EU level -**

Maintaining the ad hoc character that distinguishes EU, it was foreseeable after the London Bridge attacks to “call on Member States” for further cooperation between with the Institutions and unify efforts towards a common threat. This is the external security context in which a Permanent Structured Cooperation (PESCO) is announced in order to give further credibility to the defense aspirations of the EU, which would also be in cooperation with NATO.

The EU is intending to give an international response after the terrorist attacks, showing its potential strength as an international power and an important regional actor that is willing to achieve more than civil capabilities.

As a proof of unity against terrorism it proclaims that “these acts have strengthened our resolve to cooperate at EU level so as to enhance our internal security” and thus despite the harm they cause to the European societies, they are also helping to build a more secure internal security of the Union.

#### **-State of the Union 2017 -**

The annual speech pronounced by the president of the European Commission in this occasion has a much more relaxed character than in the past years. The European institutions, led by the EC “take credit” for the “wind change in the sails of Europe” as due to the reforms and deeper cooperation between states and institutions, hand in hand with the new change of the international environment, has opened “a window of opportunity” that the EU has taken advantage of.

The security field this time does not make it to the first page of the speech and remains relegated to the end. Again, with the same positive tone, the Commission recognises the progress made in the sector. However it remains opened to a deeper communication sharing to impede the impact of cross-border terrorist action.

Furthermore, as in the previous documents of this year, it highlights the disposition from the EU institutions to increase the power of the Union at the international level. It has been made obvious that soft power is not only enough to defeat its enemies but a proper hard power is needed with a permanent military structure.

## **-PESCO Agreement -**

In order to foster security and enhance defense “in a challenging geopolitical environment and to better protect its citizens”, an “increasing degree of convergence of Member State’s actions” is purposed once more. Further integration and cooperation of the member states is wanted in order to protect against terrorism and hybrid threats.

### **Key findings: a security strategy to counter terrorism?**

Once the analysis of the EU action against ISIS’ threat has been completed and annex n°1 has been consulted, it is necessary to discuss the main findings that stand out from the texts.

In first instance, the securitisation process in Europe is characterised for being balanced and proportional to the circumstances. It was not impulsed by the global securitisation trend after the war on terror was declared by the United States. The terrorist attacks in Madrid and London in 2004 and 2005 respectively, showed the lacunae in the legislative bodies of the Member States in terms of prosecuting Islamic terrorists (Annex 3 Interview: Beatriz Becerra, 2018). For this reason, counter-terrorism measures started further developing as the EU started perceiving terrorism as a structural problem and common to the Member States that requires a soft power long term response and can mainly be tackled cooperating with the third countries where it originates to cut its root causes. Later on as the Treaty of Lisbon conceded more powers to the Union in security matters, the arrival to the Juncker Commission in power gave a breath of fresh air to foster the fight against terrorism in a moment when ISIS established its Caliphate. Further securitisation measures arouse, setting a European comprehensive approach in order to prevent the threat but also tackle the long term ones, and thus, being better prepared to counteract the phenomenon.

The main response of the EU against ISIS has been very progressive along the period of 2014-2017 and it is characterised for not directly trying to tackle ISIS phenomenon but the new trend of ”Islamic terrorism” offences that can be applied to our subject of study. The development of the response has been notable over the years. Whereas in 2014 and the beginning of 2015 the main response of the EU was to promote political-diplomatic

responses to the threat, in which the right of the Member States to be providers of their own security is respected. On the other hand, Islamic terrorism was perceived as a far reality that was settled mainly in Syria and Iraq and thus the EU had to promote cooperation with those 3<sup>rd</sup> countries in order for them to deal with the problem, as well as supporting the activity of the international coalition in their efforts to defeat the terrorist group on the ground.

It was not until the first ISIS attacks were perpetrated on European soil that this mentality switched and they started talking about a “change in the environment” in which terrorism operated also in European lands, involving also EU citizens and thus, a collective action from the Member States, Institutions and third countries were required in order to create a comprehensive approach to tackle Islamic terrorism. Until this year the lack of ambition of the political documents enhanced by the Union was notable as the sole emphasis was put in the interdependence with the efforts of the countries where the threat originates. However, from this moment on the adoption of legislation to be implemented at the national level in order to use supranational tools and share efforts to counter terrorism is on the rise.

Furthermore, the European shared values such as compliance with HR, transparency, accountability and democracy, which all Member States agree on are being put at a stake by terrorism. Thus, the EU needs not only to safeguard these cherished values from the claws of terrorism but also respect them when fighting the threat.

In addition, during the last two analysed years, the urgency to implement and transpose the measures created at the supranational level is something that European Institutions promote and encourage Member States to do in order to progress. This is partially due to the fact that the EU starts developing a new identity as a provider of security, and not only a diplomatic and soft power reference. That is the main reason to strengthen the cooperation with NATO as well as fostering integration in the defence domain.

Despite of the evolution of the response towards ISIS threat it is also necessary to point out the weight of the ad hoc responses or the acceleration of those responses due to the terrorist attacks carried out in European territory and the instant need to provide a reply.

The main threats that Islamic terrorism poses and that could be identified in the texts are several as well as the measures to tackle them. This phenomenon has revealed the great interconnectedness between the internal and external security of the Union as well as the

joint response they deserve in order to pursue a comprehensive approach to eradicate the threat.

Starting with the phenomenon **Foreign Terrorist Fighters** that is one of the priorities of the EU as they are integrated by people trained in warzone that joined ISIS and pose a great uncertainty to the European governments at the time to return to their home places. This problem is not fought only with equal **law enforcement methods** at the national level in order to convict these individuals but also **increasing the external border control** of the Union, **enhancing (operational) cooperation** with the Agencies in charge, other member States and 3<sup>rd</sup> countries as well as promote **information exchange** of personal data.

Another of the threats perceived is **(online) radicalisation** and **recruitment** of European citizens that may potentially develop extreme views and violence against those who, the terrorist organisation which indoctrinates them consider infidels. The risk these individuals pose is to move to a more operational threat and end up committing terrorist attacks framed in the category of **lone wolf**, as they do not have a direct link with ISIS but they still pledge alliance to the organisation when entering in action. The main responses from the texts are the **counter narrative preventive policies** in order to reach the root causes of the problem, as well as cooperating with partners in order to remove sensitive content from the internet that may suppose a risk for these soft targets. In addition, promoting cooperation and information sharing of good practices to detect and stop the process of radicalisation. Furthermore, in order to give a response once the ultimate aim of radicalisation is produced and a terrorist attack is committed, the EU has a solidarity clause on the article 222 of the TFEU for Member States to provide assistance to each other when needed in the fight against terrorism.

Finally what is also considered to be a threat by the EU is **cross border crime linked to terrorism** as it allows the organisation to keep carrying on their activities in Europe. The measures at the European level in order to fight this threat are the same as to combat previous ones, cooperation and information sharing. However, there are some more specific ones in order to give a better response to the threat at the external security dimension. In order to do so a reinforcement of the external border of the EU is needed, in addition to **fighting terrorism financing** and **fighting illegal traffic of arms**.

Not all tools that have been created at the supranational as well as the national level can be mentioned due to space restraints, however specific measures have been put in these fields of action.

Despite all the bureaucratic apparatus of measures proposed there are complaints from the E. Commission regarding the slowness of the Member States in terms of applying and transposing them into the national legislation (Bassot, 2018). Moreover, further work is required in the creating a proper synergy that that leads to the interoperability of information systems to exchange information more quickly and efficiently within the EU, its Member States and the institutions, as well as third countries. And thus, create a global information exchange system to deal with terrorism (Annex 3 Interview: Beatriz Becerra, 2018). Furthermore, another pitfall is the nonexistence of a coordinated structure that comprehends the local organisations dealing with countering radicalisation in order to implement a joint European policy against it (Annex 3 Interview: Beatriz Becerra, 2018).

Finally when analysing all these legislation, political (framework) documents, agreements and speeches from 2014-2017 that have to deal with countering terrorism at the supranational European level it is necessary to argue whether they constitute a proper Strategy.

These counter-terrorism measures previously analysed can be argued to pursue a political outcome and develop over time at the same time as the perception of the threat evolves as presented in the political EU agenda. Thus, fitting with the definition purposed by Lawrence Freedman (2013). They also fit with the principles set by Mintzber (1994) in order to constitute a deliberate strategy, from the year 2015 onwards. From this period of time on the willingness of the European institutions in order to put an end to Islamic terrorism is publicly expressed and put in practice in its subsequent directives and political documents. In addition, it can be seen how the Member States engage in this behaviour via public communications and transposing the European legislation at the national level. Furthermore, the environment where this “plan” developed, the year in which ISIS expansion was at its zenith, supposed a window of opportunity for the EU in order to set a proper plan, increase and strengthen the measures to fight the terrorist organisation, as well as to convince the Member States to support them. Thus, we can talk about the establishment of a proper deliberate strategy since 2015. However, in previous years, since the creation of the Solana Strategy it would be more accurate to talk about an emergent strategy, as the phenomenon of Islamic Terrorism was unknown in Europe and only from that moment on the EU started taking some action to give an answer to the change in the security environment. However the willingness of the Member states

was not completely defined in terms of taking further action to tackle this new threat until the Juncker Commission took place.

On the other hand, stating the coherence of the strategy is a more difficult task. Some of the actions taken from the Institutions promoting legislation as well as communication from member states asking for more collective European action were enhanced ad hoc after some of the terrorist attacks produced in the European continent. On the contrary, the coordination of the counter terrorism policies has been greatly improved in the recent years. Following Rumelt's (2011) theory, there are also guiding policies to coordinate the efforts at both national and supranational European level. Nevertheless, consistency in its long term capacity to coordinate and create a network of actions involving all the actors of the network that match with a constant revision of the goals of the strategy is something that is still in process, as stated by the MEP Beatriz Becerra (2018). Thus, this paper is only being able to overall assess the coherence of the EU counter terrorism strategy with a doubtful level.

## **5. Conclusion**

ISIS terrorism is a phenomenon that has developed over the past four years adapting itself to the new environment that has flourished at the international level in order to militarily defeat the organisation. However, as previously analysed, the fact that the Caliphate has been (almost) defeated on the ground does not mean that the risk that the terrorist organisation poses to the European Union and its Member States has diminished, but only mutated into a different form.

In order to keep up to the efforts by the Islamic States to violate the European values and integrity of the Union, the EU has tried to give a comprehensive response to the threat. Guided by the previous efforts to counteract Islamic terrorism during the first years of the new century, the EU, supported by the Lisbon Treaty and the impulse given by the Juncker Commission has made a great advance in identifying the new threats posed by ISIS as well as adapting its legislative measures to fight the uprising risks.

These new threats have moved from the military sphere to a more narrative one in which radicalisation and recruitment as well as returning of Foreign Terrorist Fighters take the lead as first concerns at the EU level. Furthermore, linked activities to terrorism such as cross border crime and lone wolf terrorist attacks are taken into account. The measures to

tackle these threats now posed by the Islamic State have also been strengthened. Especially since several political framework documents were issued by the European Institutions during 2015 and 2016 setting the legislative guidelines to follow in the upcoming years.

Thus, it can be clearly said that according to the definitions set by Mitntzber (1994) the current ensemble of legislative and political documents, agreements and speeches analysed in this paper constitute a deliberate strategy. The intention of the EU is supported by the Member States that integrate the organisation, generating the necessary willingness to trace an action plan to tackle the Islamic Terrorism problem in an environment that has mutated since the organisation has been almost defeated on the ground.

Finally, the analysis of the coherence of this counter terrorism strategy is more difficult to assess. As Enrique Barón Prieto, former President of the European Parliament, stated (2017) “it is very difficult to have such an exigent strategy” due to the partial lack of capacity to coordinate and revise the changing aims of the political agenda, as this efforts require also time and willingness.

Even if there are several areas which need to be improved in order to reach the required levels of coherence and consistency to constitute a proper deliberate and coherent strategy, it can be said that the progress and the efforts that the EU has made in the past three years regarding the creation of a proper counter-terrorism strategy are notable.



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## 7. Annexes

### Annex n° 1 Key findings from the analysed texts

	2014	2015	2016	2017
<b>Variables found</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ad hoc responses</li> <li>-Security is a premise of the Nation States</li> <li>-Foster Cooperation</li> <li>-Promotion of a long term approach to terrorism</li> <li>-Defeat ISIS in Syria and Iraq</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Change of the environment</li> <li>-Compliance with EU values</li> <li>-Security as a collective duty</li> <li>- Impede the terrorist organisations to grow: tackling roots</li> <li>- Foster cooperation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Ad hoc responses</li> <li>-Change of the Environment</li> <li>-Need to implement EU legislation</li> <li>-Protection of European Values</li> <li>-Foster Cooperation</li> <li>-The Union as a security provider</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Emphasis on the change of the environment</li> <li>-Foster cooperation</li> <li>-Protection of EU values</li> <li>-EU not only a soft power</li> <li>-International position of the Union</li> </ul>
<b>Tone of the texts</b>	Neutral	Neutral with negative tendency at the end of the year	Negative (not enough implementation)	Positive (progress has been made) but not enough
<b>Main response of the EU against ISIS</b>	Politico-diplomatic response, supporting the international coalition against ISIS	First main guidelines approved , as well as directives to be implemented at the National level	Final setting of guidelines for a comprehensive strategy to tackle terrorism. Renewal of military cooperation.	Looking for a Europe that defends and protects against terrorism. Further step: military defense
<b>What are the main threats?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Foreign Terrorist Fighters</li> <li>-(online) Radicalisation</li> <li>-Recruitment</li> <li>-Terrorist attacks in Member States (lone wolf)</li> <li>-Cross border crime linked to terrorism</li> </ul>			
<b>Measures purposed against them</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Prevent radicalisation</li> <li>-Fight terrorism financing</li> <li>-Fight illegal trafficking of firearms</li> <li>-Cooperation with 3<sup>rd</sup> countries</li> <li>-Reinforce of the external border</li> <li>-Information exchange</li> <li>-Cooperation between Member States, Institutions and other partners</li> <li>-Counteract (online) narrative</li> <li>-Protection of soft targets</li> </ul>			

## **Annex n°2 First Interview: Enrique Barón Crespo, former President of the European Parliament 1989-1992**

Brussels, 08/12/2017

### **Parte primera:**

Durante los años en los que fue Presidente del Parlamento Europeo (1989-1992)...

#### **1. ¿Cuáles fueron las principales amenazas en materias de seguridad que acechaban a la UE?**

La principal fue la denominada caída del muro, que supuso el fin de la división del Continente. La primera preocupación era que la URSS pusiera como condición para la unidad alemana su neutralidad y la estabilización de todo el centro del continente (prioridad en toda la década de los 90). Proceso que se vio amenazado por la sangrienta implosión de Yugoslavia y la imprevista implosión de la URSS en diciembre de 1991.

La respuesta fue el paso de la Comunidad a la Unión Europea, introduciendo por primera vez la PESC.

#### **2. ¿Cómo se percibió el Acuerdo Schengen 1985 y sus medidas compensatorias en el marco de seguridad entre los países miembros?**

Como una cooperación reforzada con visión de futuro que se ha visto reforzada por la realidad.

#### **3. ¿Cuál fue la actuación de España durante las presidencias del Consejo europeo del 89 y 95 en materia de lucha contra el terrorismo?**

En aquella época, los terrorismos eran domésticos. En España ETA, en Gran Bretaña e Irlanda, el IRA, en Italia, Brigatte Rosse, en Grecia, 17 de noviembre, en Francia, algún fenómeno islamista. Era difícil incluir lo en la agenda como una prioridad europea. Poco a poco se fue avanzando con Europol, el Grupo Trevi y Eurojust pro el verdadero salto se produjo con los atentados del 11 S en Nueva York

Segunda parte:

En la actualidad y centrándonos en un terrorismo de carácterihadista...

**4. ¿Cree que la estrategia de seguridad de la UE para contrarrestar el terrorismoihadista es coherente y lineal? ¿Por qué?**

Es muy difícil crear una estrategia tan exigente, aunque la coordinación entre Estados ha aumentado y se ha reforzado. Incluso hay un Comisario responsable de la Seguridad.

El problema es que el terrorismoihadista es una nebulosa con franquicias.

La cuestión de fondo es que no existe una estrategia definida de una vez por todas, se trata de una lucha que hay que proseguir con empeño y actualizar continuamente. A la vez con las exigencias propias de sistemas democráticos.

**5. ¿Cree que ha habido un proceso de securización en la UE con motivo del aumento de los ataques islamista-jihadistas en Europa (sobre todo después de los ataques de Charlie Hebdo de 2015)? ¿Por qué?**

Pienso que aumentado la conciencia de urgencia y prioridad por el agravamiento de la situación.



Brussels, 15/02/2018

**Parte Primera - Amenaza Terrorista**

**1. ¿Cuáles son las principales amenazas en materias de seguridad que, en su opinión, acechan a la UE en la actualidad?**

Como bien señala la Estrategia Global para la Política Exterior y de Seguridad de la UE de 2016, el terrorismo es una de las principales amenazas para la seguridad de la Unión Europea. El **terrorismo, en cualquiera de sus formas**, manifiesta un desprecio absoluto por la vida humana y los valores democráticos. Debido a su alcance global, sus consecuencias devastadoras, su capacidad de reclutamiento a través de la radicalización, y a la difusión de propaganda en Internet y en los diferentes medios mediante los que se financia, hacen del terrorismo una amenaza significativa y en constante evolución para nuestra seguridad.

Sin embargo no debemos perder de vista otras amenazas y peligros tan importantes como el terrorismo, y que en muchas ocasiones se refuerzan, como el crimen organizado y la radicalización ideológica. No se trata sólo de un problema de seguridad.

**2. ¿Cree que la amenaza y el riesgo que supone ISIS para Europa ha mutado después su derrota militar en Siria e Iraq? ¿Cómo se podría describir la amenaza actualmente?**

La derrota militar no significa ni mucho menos que hayan perdido su capacidad de atentar en Europa. Tras las derrotas en la construcción del “califato” en Siria e Irak los líderes de Daesh y sus aliados en todo el mundo buscan como objetivo global crear una nueva red terrorista mundial.

Su estrategia ha mutado, y ahora disponen de menos recursos, pero no necesariamente son menos peligrosos. Debido a sus estructuras, en la UE persistirá el modelo de los lobos solitarios o de los atentados de pequeñas células. Hay que tener presente que actualmente existen miles de retornados, esos yihadistas europeos que han luchado en Siria e Irak y que han vuelto a Europa más radicalizados y endurecidos por la experiencia militar, y que están dispuestos a atentar. El creciente número de estos soldados extranjeros supone un

reto totalmente nuevo para los países de la UE. Los retornados son uno de los principales retos de las fuerzas de seguridad europea.

**3. En relación con la pregunta anterior ¿Cree que dicha mutación de la amenaza se ve reflejada en términos de radicalización y reclutamiento de jóvenes en Europa?**

La mutación debida en gran parte a las derrotas militares con la consiguiente pérdida de control de territorio urbano y refugios seguros en Siria e Irak ha conllevado una producción de medios también cada vez más reducida. Los productos de propaganda se están volviendo menos diversificados y se concentran principalmente en cubrir las batallas del grupo en los pocos lugares que permanecen bajo su control.

Sin perjuicio de que el grupo islamista aun cuenta con la capacidad para efectuar golpes terroristas de alto impacto sobre población civil en ciudades occidentales, la pérdida de grandes ciudades como Mosul y Raqqa, donde los medios de comunicación de ISIS podían operar libremente, sin duda ha contribuido a esta disminución en la producción propagandística. Por consiguiente, sus herramientas para convertir y reclutar a nuevos jóvenes se ven reducidas. Sin embargo esto no quiere decir que no puedan surgir nuevas formas de reclutamiento y radicalización. Habrá que estar muy atentos a las nuevas vías de reclutamiento que puedan surgir, y sobre todo poner el énfasis en las políticas de prevención, para lo cual es esencial que, ante amenazas globales, tengamos soluciones y políticas de prevención globales. Por suerte en Europa estamos cada vez más vigilantes ante las nuevas formas de radicalización, tanto en las mezquitas como en las redes sociales y en internet.

**4. ¿Considera que dicha amenaza supone un riesgo para los principales valores que caracterizan a la UE?**

Sin ninguna duda. Los casos de jóvenes europeos radicalizados son un fracaso de los valores europeos. Un fracaso que explica fenómenos muy diferentes a la radicalización, como el creciente populismo o la xenofobia. Y es un problema que apela, sin duda, a las fuerzas de seguridad y a los servicios de inteligencia, pero también a todas las instituciones políticas responsables de impulsar la construcción europea, el sueño europeo de libertad, igualdad y fraternidad.

Los problemas sociales siempre están interconectados. La radicalización yihadista, unida a la crisis económica y a un modelo de ciudades que en muchos casos fomenta la

segregación racial y el excesivo aislamiento cultural son un caldo de cultivo para futuros conflictos sociales y de valores. En un estudio llevado a cabo en España por el “Pew Research Center” en abril de 2016 se observa que, tras los atentados de París y Bruselas, las actitudes negativas hacia los musulmanes han incrementado en un 50%. El aumento de la islamofobia en occidente genera un excelente caldo de cultivo para seguir reclutando y radicalizando a jóvenes musulmanes de todo el mundo. Por lo tanto tenemos que hacer frente al auge de varios tipos de radicalismo y extremismo.

## **Parte Segunda - Acción de la UE para contrarrestar la amenaza**

### **5. ¿Opina que la estrategia de seguridad y contra el terrorismo de la UE para contrarrestar el terrorismoihadista es coherente y lineal? ¿Por qué?**

El punto de inflexión que supusieron los atentados de Madrid y Londres de 2004 y 2005 impulsó el compromiso de la UE con la lucha antiterrorista que dio forma a la Estrategia de la Unión Europea en esta materia. Desde entonces la UE ha recibido críticas al respecto de su falta de respuesta frente al extremismo islámico y el terrorismo. Dichas críticas no han tenido en cuenta la existencia de múltiples instrumentos puestos a disposición de los Estados Miembros para hacer frente a las incesantes amenazas relacionadas con estos fenómenos. Una de las últimas medidas lanzadas por la UE ha sido la **directiva en materia de justicia** penal de marzo de 2017 mediante la cual se tipifican los siguientes casos: los viajes con fines terroristas desde y hacia la UE, y dentro de sus Estados Miembros; la organización de este tipo de viajes; la captación y adiestramiento para el terrorismo; la recepción de adiestramiento en este sentido; recabar o aportar fondos con la intención de utilizarlos para cometer actos terroristas o relacionados con grupos terroristas; y la provocación pública a la comisión de un delito de terrorismo.

La cantidad de herramientas de la UE y su entramado institucional puede dar la impresión de construir una maquinaria burocrática gigantesca y lenta si no hay una eficaz interconexión y un feedback constante y ágil entre sus elementos. Por eso, uno de los asuntos prioritarios en la agenda de la UE es lograr una sinergia cada vez mayor, que lleve a la interoperabilidad de los sistemas de información para intercambiar más rápido y eficazmente la información dentro de la UE, con y entre sus instituciones, entre la UE y los terceros países, y con los organismos internacionales; en definitiva, crear un sistema

de intercambio de información global para hacer frente al terrorismo, ya que este no es un fenómeno propio de un determinado país o de una región en concreto.

Desde mi punto de vista la UE ha sido coherente y lineal, adaptándose a los nuevos acontecimientos y teniendo en cuenta hasta dónde llega su capacidad de actuación, ya que la lucha contra el terrorismo es responsabilidad primordial de los Estados Miembros, ayudados por la UE que desempeña una función de apoyo, actualizando y poniendo a disposición nuevas herramientas para ser puestas en práctica a nivel interno de cada país. Si los Estados Miembros tienen la voluntad política, entonces la Unión Europea podrá hacer más y mejores estrategias contra el terrorismo.

**6. ¿Cree que ha habido un proceso de securización en la UE con motivo del aumento de los ataques islamista-jihadistas en Europa (sobre todo después de los ataques de Charlie Hebdo de 2015)? ¿Por qué?**

Los atentados perpetrados en suelo europeo han puesto de manifiesto las lagunas existentes en materia de seguridad de los Estados Miembros. Además han demostrado el hecho de que debemos lidiar con una realidad incómoda, la de la radicalización de la población musulmana europea.

Desde luego hemos asistido a un proceso de securización, pero siempre equilibrado y proporcional a las circunstancias. A nivel legislativo, por ejemplo, se ha ampliado la definición de terrorismo, incluyendo a los combatientes extranjeros para dotar a los Estados Miembros de un marco legal para poder afrontar eficazmente este fenómeno, y tipifica por primera vez como delito la tentativa de comisión, la complicidad y la inducción a la comisión de actos terroristas. Asimismo, contempla su alcance hasta el ámbito de las redes sociales, y a internet en general, con miras a eliminar, a ser posible en origen, y en estrecha colaboración con los terceros países, aquellos contenidos “que constituyan una provocación pública de un delito de terrorismo”.

También se aprobó recientemente el **Registro Nacional de Pasajeros** (PNR), para que los datos personales de los pasajeros puedan ser utilizados por las autoridades policiales de los Estados Miembros en pos a prevenir, detectar, investigar y enjuiciar delitos relacionados con el terrorismo. Para no vulnerar los derechos fundamentales de los pasajeros, la directiva contempla una serie de limitaciones necesarias de transferencia, tratamiento y conservación de los datos.

**7. ¿Piensa que la acción de la UE para combatir la narrativa del Estado Islámico y de este modo prevenir la radicalización es suficiente? ¿Por qué?**

En la UE se han llevado a cabo reformas y progresos en este sentido. Europol creó en 2015 la Unidad de Notificación de Contenidos de Internet de la UE para detectar la propaganda extremista de los grupos terroristas en línea y asesorar a los Estados Miembros. El órgano policial ha sido dotado paulatinamente de más poderes para luchar contra el terrorismo, y se ha reforzado hasta convertirse en la actualidad en una agencia clave para la seguridad de la UE que intercambia información con las autoridades policiales de los Estados Miembros, de la Unión y de terceros países.

La mencionada Directiva en materia de justicia contempla su alcance en las redes sociales, y a internet en general, con miras a eliminar, a ser posible en origen, y en estrecha colaboración con los terceros países, aquellos contenidos que constituyan una provocación pública de un delito de terrorismo

Además la UE ha creado una *Red* para la Sensibilización frente a la Radicalización (*RAN*) que dota de financiación a colectivos de la sociedad civil, y también a autoridades locales, para hacer frente a la narrativa del Estado islámico y para prevenir la radicalización. Sin embargo desde mi punto de vista el funcionamiento de esta red deja mucho que desear, puesto que financia proyectos sin una estrategia global clara a medio y largo plazo. Supone el gasto de una gran cantidad de fondos económicos destinados a financiar proyectos “ad hoc” que no cumplen con una visión global y holística. No existe una visión a largo plazo para coordinar y crear una estructura europea de organizaciones de la sociedad civil, e incluso de autoridades locales, que desarrolle una verdadera política europea contra la radicalización. Y esta es clave, porque son las entidades locales y la sociedad civil quienes actúan e interactúan directamente sobre el terreno implementado las políticas preventivas.

En todo este asunto algo que la Unión Europea debería de hacer, algo imprescindible y necesario, es crear una estructura común, que para entendernos podríamos llamar, una “Plataforma Europea de Ciudades Contra la Radicalización” que debería servir para dar soporte a la coordinación de los agentes locales a nivel europeo y para establecer unas políticas comunes, con una monitorización, un control y un seguimiento permanente. Su importancia en la prevención y lucha contra la radicalización es vital.

Por último me gustaría también apelar a la necesidad de crear estructuras europeas en todos los ámbitos de la lucha contra la radicalización. En este sentido es vital crear un servicio de inteligencia común, donde se eliminen las trabas burocráticas y donde se comparta toda la información relevante. Todo esto facilitaría mucho la labor de detección y prevención en la UE. Por supuesto, de aquí se deriva la necesidad de una política de defensa verdaderamente común, tal vez con un ejército europeo. Y, naturalmente, necesitamos una política exterior común mucho más ambiciosa y potente que la actual. Son retos políticos que nos remiten a una mayor integración europea y de los que podríamos hablar largo y tendido, pero que exceden el propósito de este acto.

Existen pues las bases académicas, las iniciativas y la voluntad de muchas personas de implicarse en esta causa. Pero nos falta coordinación e impulso institucional para crear una verdadera política europea contra la radicalización, que sistematice, comparta y replique los casos de éxito y la experiencia acumulada de multitud de personas, organizaciones y ayuntamientos.