



Global Evaluation of the European Union Engagement on Counter-Terrorism

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AML	Anti Money Laundering
CASE	Civil Aviation Security
CBRN	Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (Weapons)
CBSD	Capacity Building for Security and Development
CFT	Combating the Financing of Terrorism
CoE	Centre of Excellence
CT	Counter-Terrorism
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
CVE	Countering Violent Extremism
DCI	Development Cooperation Instrument
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
EIDHR	European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights
ENI	European Neighbourhood Instrument
EUTF	European Union Trust Fund (Emergency Trust Fund for Africa)
DAC	Development Assistance Committee (OECD)
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
DG-DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
DG-HOME	Directorate-General for Migration and Home Affairs
DG-JUST	Directorate-General for Justice and Consumers
DG-NEAR	Directorate-General for Neighbourhood and Enlargement Negotiations
EDF	European Development Fund
EU	European Union
FATF	Financial Action Task Force
FPI	Service for Foreign Policy Instruments
FTFs	Foreign Terrorist Fighters
GCERF	Global Community Engagement Resilience Fund
GCTF	Global Counter-Terrorism Forum
ICCT	International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Hague
IcSP	Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace
IJS	Instrument for Stability
IGAD	Inter-Governmental Authority for Development
IJ	International Institute for Justice
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
ODA	Official Development Assistance
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
P/CVE	Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism
RAN	Radicalisation Awareness Network
RUSI	Royal United Services Institute
SSR	Security Sector Reform
STRIVE	Strengthening Resilience to Violent Extremism
TAIEX	Technical Assistance and Information Exchange Instrument
UN CTED	UN Counterterrorism Executive Directorate
UNDP	UN Development Programme
UNODC	UN Office on Drugs and Crime



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report presents the findings of an evaluation of the EU's external interventions in counter-terrorism (CT), including preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) carried out in the first semester of 2018. The evaluation does not cover the entirety of the EU's CT interventions, but only those financed by the EU's external instruments.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, coherence, efficiency and impact of the EU's interventions in order to determine the extent to which the objectives and desired outcomes of the EU's CT policy have so far been achieved.

The evaluation found that the EU has become a major actor in CT and P/CVE external assistance, and the scale and speed of investment (from a standing start in 2011) has been impressive. In addition to its global actions, the EU's CT and P/CVE interventions financed via the external instruments cover around 40 countries in all high-threat regions and many areas where the threat may be lower, incipient or in abeyance, but significant nonetheless. The EU succeeds in balancing operational priorities and opportunities with comprehensive coverage. The EU's ability to mobilise resources on such a scale demonstrates responsiveness, while the geographical scope of its actions speaks of reach.

The evaluation confirms that the EU has responded to the thematic and geographic priorities outlined in the Council Conclusions on Counterterrorism (2015 and 2017).

Looking at the ongoing external programmes, it can be assessed that the EU is active (implementing ongoing initiatives or developing specific actions) in thematic areas prioritized in the Council Conclusions, including an increasing involvement in P/CVE, countering terrorist financing and money laundering, supporting partner countries to strengthen their criminal justice response and aviation security.

Geographically, the EU has increased external efforts in the areas privileged by the Council Conclusions maintaining and/or increasing CT activities in the following regions: Middle East and North Africa (MENA), Western Balkans, Turkey, Sahel and the Horn of Africa.

The EU can however do more to explain what it is seeking to achieve in CT and P/CVE and how external interventions support its strategic aims. To build upon these impressive achievements, the EU should update its 2005 CT Strategy to better reflect its ambitions for external CT and P/CVE assistance, and develop an external assistance plan anchored to the Strategy. In particular, the EU should consider the relationship between internal and external CT and P/CVE activities, and the balance of investment between the four pillars of the 2005 CT strategy in external assistance. There would be significant benefit in codifying the various sources of objectives and policy into a single statement that combines strategic vision with more tactical direction, setting out what the EU is seeking to achieve in its external actions, how it will use its resources and capabilities to do so, and the criteria for success. Regional and country strategies, whether limited to CT and P/CVE or concerned with the EU's engagement more broadly, should reflect this updated strategy.



The EU undoubtedly adds value to and complements the bilateral assistance of EU member states and other national and multilateral donors in CT and P/CVE. An almost unique advantage of the EU is its multilateral nature, which the EU exploits effectively, but not excessively, in its external CT and P/CVE assistance.

It is too soon to say with confidence that the EU's impact in this area justifies its expenditure. However, we found promising evidence at project/programme level and in qualitative insights from the perceptions of respondents. Some more mature or completed projects are not only delivering effect but have also been recognised as innovative and influential. Also, the EU's interventions appear to be achieving secondary benefits in addition to the capacity and capability they are designed to build, including improved relationships between officials and decision-makers in beneficiary countries and the EU, facilitation of diplomatic links, and promotion of gender equality and the centrality of human rights to CT and P/CVE.

Gender equality has been designed into several CT and P/CVE projects and is prominent in DG DEVCO's two sets of operational guidance for CT and P/CVE actions. However, relatively few respondents mentioned gender issues except in relation to P/CVE interventions, so the EU may need consider further awareness raising and monitoring in this area.

The EU is not making life easy for itself in terms of both evaluating effectiveness and impact and demonstrating that impact to its stakeholders. Officials need to pay more attention to evaluation, and a few simple steps – methodological training, awareness, and refinement of processes – will lead to better and easier evaluations.

The EU's external assistance has largely focussed on two pillars of the CT Strategy: Prevent and Pursue. Future investment decisions should be informed by a comprehensive four-pillar analysis of existing programmes, giving consideration as to whether more investment is required in Protect and Respond capabilities, in areas such as protection of critical infrastructure, crowded places and iconic sites, emergency services capacity building, and crisis response.

Technical assistance facilities are a useful model for delivering targeted, responsive and sustainable support; capacity building through training is also essential, but needs proper targeting and support.

The EU benefits from efficient, capable and well-regarded agencies which are in high demand, and which support external interventions on a 'best endeavours' basis. However, the EU should consider revising the agencies mandates to be able to add even greater value through increased leverage of its internal capabilities. At the same time, EU policy makers need to consider how to develop more in-house CT expertise, on the assumption that EU member states will wish to retain their national experts.

The structure of funding instruments and EU organisations working on CT and P/CVE is complex; at the same time, they allow for flexibility and variety of responses which have been beneficial to implementing external CT assistance. As such, simplification may be



counterproductive, and there is instead an argument for mainstreaming CT and P/CVE even more broadly across EU institutions and instruments while clarifying functions, roles and responsibilities.

Formal inter-service coordination and informal coordination mechanisms as well as communication with respect to external CT and P/CVE actions is good and, according to interviewees, has improved significantly since 2011. The EU could do more to ensure coherence with EU member states' contributions and activities in beneficiary countries.

The evaluation has led to a number of recommendations:

1. The EU's 2005 Counter-Terrorism Strategy should be updated to address the relationship between internal and external CT objectives and policy, to reflect the 2015 and 2017 Council Conclusions, and to re-emphasise the relevance of the four pillars to external actions in order to provide strategic guidance for the development of external CT actions.
2. Future strategic investment decisions should be informed by a comprehensive four-pillar analysis of existing programmes to determine whether the balance of investment is appropriate; consideration should be given to greater investment in protective security actions, and actions to support overseas partners in managing the impact of terrorism (physically, socially and economically).
3. The EU should consider an increased mandate for EU agencies (especially Europol and Eurojust) in external capacity building assistance, beyond the increased operational cooperation foreseen in the 2017 Council Conclusions.
4. The EU should consider how its internal CT and P/CVE expertise might be further developed, through additional training and development to the CT and P/CVE workshops already offered, as well as external recruitment and more secondments to/from EU member states' CT agencies.
5. The EU should continue to use the most flexible funding instruments (including the short term IcSP Article 3) in CT and P/CVE where appropriate and use more long term and global instruments to create flexible capabilities such as CT technical assistance facilities. The use of so-called delegated acts, delegating implementation tasks to member state agencies for CT and P/CVE programmes should be reconsidered given the nature of the CT actions and in order to ensure EU ownership and visibility.
6. Capacity building projects should ensure sustainability and uptake of learning by including preparation and follow-up activities before and after training workshops.
7. While piloting should be encouraged, especially in fields like P/CVE which have a weak evidence base, it is not risk and cost-free, and sustainability risks should be explicitly addressed in the design phase.
8. Dialogue between EU institutions and beneficiaries must avoid the risk of raising beneficiaries' expectations beyond what the EU can deliver by ensuring maximum clarity over what can be offered to which bodies and under what conditions.



9. The EU should develop an external assistance CT plan, anchored to a refreshed CT Strategy, and expressing a theory of change that guides all of the EU's activity in this area, together with a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress against objectives.
10. The proposed plan for the EU's external assistance should articulate the EU's comparative advantage – and its comparative disadvantage vis-à-vis both EU member states and other international donors.
11. EU delegations should be brought into the Commission's planning processes at the programming and needs identification stages of the programming life cycle.
12. Regional and country strategies should be developed across the geographical scope of the EU's external CT and P/CVE activity, and all projects and programmes should be clearly anchored to these. These could be limited to CT and P/CVE cooperation, or CT and P/CVE could be addressed as part of a broader statement.
13. Consideration should be given to clarifying of the scope and purpose of the relevant funding instruments in order to increase coherence by reducing competing or overlapping projects, but not a wholesale simplification or consolidation of them.
14. The EU needs to articulate intended impact at the needs assessment stage and to reflect this more clearly in logical frameworks/results frameworks, and design impact evaluation activities into projects and programmes.
15. The EU needs to develop clearer theories of change at the strategic as well as project/programme levels, to explain what it intends to achieve through external activities, and how and why the interventions are expected to work.
16. The EU should investigate the need for further awareness raising and monitoring with respect to gender equality in CT.
17. The EU should action the IcSP mid-term evaluation's finding that 'do no harm' principles need to be explicitly worked into theories of change for CT and P/CVE interventions.¹ The Operational Human Rights Guidance should be adopted as the required standard and toolset by all services.
18. The EU should remain flexible and agile in the geographical scope of its external CT and P/CVE activity, and be alert to emerging threats or new terrorism hotspots as reported by its agencies, delegations and EU member states, in order to be able to respond quickly and effectively to changing threats.

1. INTRODUCTION

The aim of the project was to evaluate, for the first time and at a high level, the EU's external assistance on counter-terrorism (CT) and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE), including development and cooperation activities, against the policy and operational aims of the EU. The evaluation does not cover the entirety of the EU's CT

¹ See External Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (2014-mid 2017), Final Report June 2017, p.4.



and P/CVE actions, but only those funded by the EU's instruments for financing external action. The terms of reference (ToRs) specify that the evaluation should be against the OECD DAC's five criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact), together with coherence and the EU's added value. In addition, the evaluation examined three cross-cutting issues – gender equality, the observance of human rights, and the geographical scope of the EU's external CT assistance.

This evaluation sought to answer ten research questions, deriving from the seven criteria and three cross-cutting themes:

- What is the impact of the EU's external CT assistance?
- To what extent are the EU's activities relevant to its operational and policy aims?
- How effective has the EU been in achieving its operational and policy aims?
- How efficient have the activities been?
- How sustainable are the benefits deriving from the assistance?
- Taken as a whole, how coherent are the EU's actions?
- What value is the EU adding to the activities of member states and multilateral bodies?
- How have the EU's actions advanced gender equality?
- How far have the EU's actions been consistent with the promotion of human rights principles, norms and laws?
- To what extent does the geographical scope of EU's activities reflect the terrorist threat?

It should be emphasised that this evaluation was purely desk-based and carried out at the macro level, and as such does not consider project-specific issues. The purpose of this evaluation was to assess the EU's external response to terrorism/violent extremism in order to determine the extent to which the planned objectives and outcomes defined in the EU policy were so far achieved; identify factors of success or failure; assess the sustainability of the benefits that might have been generated and to draw conclusions and recommendations to inform the future implementation of EU funded CT and P/CVE activities.

2. METHODOLOGY

This evaluation addressed these questions from three perspectives.

First, drawing on existing mapping documents and data provided by DG DEVCO, an analysis was conducted of the reach, purpose and coherence of the full range of the EU's external CT activity. Second, evidence was gathered and assessed on the EU's effectiveness, sustainability, added value, coherence and impact in a representative selection of projects and in case studies of two regions (the Middle East and Horn of Africa). Documents consulted during the evaluation are listed at Annex A. Third,



interviews of 21 stakeholders in the EU's CT and P/CVE activity – including leaders and managers directing the activities, and implementation agencies – were conducted and analysed in order to develop qualitative insights into the EU's effect in CT and P/CVE, and more general evidence of its effectiveness, sustainability, added value, coherence and, where possible, impact. (A list of organisations consulted is at Annex B.) Underpinning the analysis will be an assessment of the EU's policy and operational aims, drawn from the 2005 CT Strategy, Council Conclusions on terrorism of 2015 and 2017, and other documents.

2.1 Scope

The terms of reference made clear that the geographical scope of the project was global (but, evidently, outside the EU). The evaluation covered the full range of projects and programmes in its high-level analysis and included projects from all relevant regions in our sample of project documents, the evaluators looked more closely at two regions where the EU has been especially active – the Middle East (centred on Iraq and Jordan), and the Horn of Africa (centred on Somalia and Kenya).

2011 was selected as a start-point for three reasons: it predates the formative 2015 Council conclusions (and therefore enables us to evaluate post-2015 activity against a baseline); it marks the beginning of substantial EU investment in external actions with the CT Sahel project; and a seven-year timeframe enabled the evaluation to examine completed projects and, hence, some project evaluations and mid-term reviews.

In order to maintain a manageable scope for the project, the study's reference group agreed that it should be limited to CT and P/CVE specific projects, thereby ruling out the substantial number of projects deemed to be CT or P/CVE relevant. Inevitably, this potentially excluded important and useful material, but was a necessary step given the project's limited timeline and budget.

All relevant funding instruments or tools were within the scope of the project. These included the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP) Articles 3, 4 and 5; the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI); the European Development Fund (EDF); the Development Cooperation Instrument (DCI); the Instrument for Pre-Accession (IPA); the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR); and the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa.

The focus was on evaluating the effect of projects financed via the EU instruments for financing external actions. Other EU external action including diplomacy (e.g. the role played by the External Action Service, the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator and the EU Special Representatives) or other instruments (such as CSDP missions supporting CT capacity building in third countries) were not evaluated in this project.

2.2 Study Limitations

Given the focus of this evaluation, the decision to make it entirely desk-based without fieldwork, and the limited time for research and analysis, it is important to highlight its limitations.



First, although the study's scope was global, it was not foreseen to examine every project and every country and region in order to examine the EU's impact fully and comprehensively: instead, the study intended to be high-level and strategic, and draw inferences from a sample of projects and regional case studies in order to make judgements about the whole.

Second, a more detailed evaluation would have engaged in fieldwork and consult beneficiaries in order to gather evidence of real change on the ground, thereby testing the value chain from policy to operational intent to intervention to achievement. As this was not the intention of the study, evidence of impact was derived from those documented evaluations that were available to us.

Third, in any evaluation project, impact is notoriously difficult to demonstrate in the absence of control groups or other objective means of demonstrating causality. This study therefore used a contribution analysis approach, i.e. exploring alternative explanations for an observed change alongside an analysis of the intervention's theory of change. The study focused on a small number of completed or ongoing projects, and on two regions (MENA and Horn of Africa). A larger and longer study would be able to determine impact more comprehensively.

2.3 Sources

To answer these questions, the evaluators used four categories of source material. Taken together, these sources provided high-level information on the EU's strategic CT aims, the range, scope and purpose of its actions, evidence of the achievement of the EU's aims in a sample of specific cases and regions, and qualitative information on the EU's CT impact from a broad range of stakeholders.

- (i) **The most important documents setting out the EU's CT policy and operational requirements.** These included three that were specified in the study's terms of reference: the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2005), the EU Global Strategy (2016), and the Council Conclusions on EU External Action on Counterterrorism (2015, 2017). In addition, we consulted documents including 'The European Agenda on Security' (2015), the 'Renewed EU Internal Security Strategy' (2017), the 'Revised EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism' (2014), 'The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism: Relevance, Coherence and Effectiveness', carried out for the LIBE Committee (2017), 'Operational Human Rights Guidance for EU External Cooperation Actions Addressing Terrorism, Organised Crime and Cybersecurity' (2016), and 'Operational Guidelines on the Preparation and Implementation of EU Financed Actions Specific to Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Third Countries' (2017). These sources provided information on the aims and objectives of the EU's external CT assistance.
- (ii) **Data and mapping documents of EU-funded external CT actions for three years (2015, 2016 and 2017).** These data and documents provided high-level



snapshots of the totality of the EU's external CT activities up to the time of writing, including quantitative data.

- (iii) **Project and programme-level action documents and evaluations, and mid-term evaluations of funding instruments.** These provided detailed, qualitative information on the delivery, outputs and outcomes of external actions. A sample of projects were collected on the basis of availability (relatively few projects have completed reviews or evaluations). This data provided information particularly relevant to efficiency and effectiveness.
- (iv) **Key Informant Interviews.** In order to gain detailed qualitative information and analysis, we conducted key informant interviews with 21 stakeholders in the EU's external CT and P/CVE actions. In order to balance consistency with flexibility, we chose a semi-structured format so that interviews could probe the issues in greater depth than would be possible with a more rigidly structured approach. The interviews focussed on questions related to relevance, coherence, effectiveness, sustainability, and added value. An interview protocol is included in the inception report, and a list of organisations which provided interviewees is at Annex B.

2.4 Synthesis and Analysis

Information from these sources was collated and synthesised into a detailed picture of what the EU has done, and how it has done it. Part of this synthesis exercise included the interpretation of information from key informant interviews. This information was then analysed against the evaluation criteria and cross-cutting issues. (For more details of the approach, please see the study's inception report.)

2.5 Timeline of Study

The study was conducted from February to May 2018. An initial draft report was presented to the study's reference group on 5 June 2018. This version reflects detailed feedback provided to the authors at that meeting and in written responses.

3. MAIN FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

3.1 EU Operational and Policy Aims

The EU aims to reduce the risk of terrorism within its borders, and its 2005 CT Strategy, with its four pillars of Prevent, Pursue, Protect and Respond, is explicitly a risk management strategy: it aims to reduce threat (the first two pillars), and reduce vulnerability and impact (the third and fourth pillars). Increasingly, the EU's strategy and policy recognises that the security of the Union depends not only on internal measures, but also on reducing terrorism risks outside, both in the neighbourhood and in high-threat regions (such as the Horn of Africa).

In addition to the 2005 Strategy, those working on external assistance rely on a corpus of policy and operational documents, including the Global Strategy (2016), the EU Strategy for Combating Radicalisation and Recruitment to Terrorism (revised, 2014), the Security



Sector Reform doctrine, the European Consensus for Development, as well as the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, Plan of Action for Preventing Violent Extremism etc. Above all, officials identified the Council Conclusions on Counter-Terrorism of 2015 and 2017 as key texts to guide action and investment decisions. They confirm that, while primary responsibility for combating terrorism rests with the member states, the EU can add value in many ways. In particular, the EU has an extensive set of instruments at its disposal which makes it well positioned to counter terrorism and violent extremism in an integrated manner. Furthermore, the conclusions set the ground for an increased focus on external CT and P/CVE projects, through highlighting the need for external action to complement CT and P/CVE work within the EU. The 2015 Conclusions state that “[t]he actions taken in the area of justice and home affairs need to be complemented by external engagement and outreach, especially to countries in the Middle East, North Africa, the Sahel and the Gulf. Close coordination between internal and external action on the one hand, and between relevant EU actors and EU Member States on the other hand, will enhance the impact of our common efforts”. To address this, the Conclusions call for increased international cooperation, the mainstreaming of CT in the EU external relations, and relevant capacity-building projects in third countries.

The Conclusions highlight the need for more emphasis on the prevention of terrorism, and to address the root causes of radicalization and violent extremism, through supporting social and economic development, rule of law, good governance and respect for human rights. In the 2017 Conclusions seven thematic areas are prioritized in which the EU should strengthen its response: P/CVE, with a focus on the “role of women, youth, civil society, victims of terrorism and religious and community leaders as change agents in society”; online recruitment and radicalization; foreign terrorist fighters and in particular the issue of returnees; countering terrorist financing and money laundering; supporting partner countries to strengthen their criminal justice response; the links between serious and transnational crime; and aviation security.

3.2 Mapping of EU CT Activities

3.2.1 EU Spending on CT AND P/CVE External Projects

During the past three years (2015, 2016 and 2017), DG DEVCO has conducted annual mapping exercises providing a detailed overview of the external EU-activities in the domains of CT and P/ CVE on a specific date (the last day of a given calendar year). The activities included in the mapping are those which are funded by the EU institutions and are on-going at the time of the survey. This allows for an assessment of developments over the past three years, with a comprehensive overview of the type of activities that have been launched since approximately 2012-13 (as most of these actions would be ongoing at the time of the first survey).

The overview is based on data provided by all relevant services (DG DEVCO, FPI, and DG NEAR) on the CT and P/CVE projects funded from the financial instruments these services are responsible for, namely the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP), the European Neighbourhood Initiative (ENI), the Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance



(IPA), the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), the Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF), and the African Peace Facility (APF).

By the end of 2017, the EU was funding ongoing projects in CT and P/CVE totalling €274 million, an increase from €138 million being spent on CT and P/CVE projects at the end of 2015, representing a two-fold increase over a two-year period.

The last two years have also seen a changing priority of P/CVE over CT funding. Compared to similar figures from 2016, there has been a rise in the share of P/CVE-specific projects in 2017. This trend reflects a change over the past two years: in 2015 CT-specific projects constituted two-thirds of funding, whereas in 2017 more than half of the total was allocated to P/CVE projects.

EU funding of CT and P/CVE projects was implemented by three key DGs/Services: DG DEVCO, DG NEAR and FPI. The chart below shows the total spending per DG/Service on both CT and P/CVE specific projects from 2015-2017. The chart clearly demonstrates the general trend of increased spending on CT and P/CVE across the three DGs/Services.

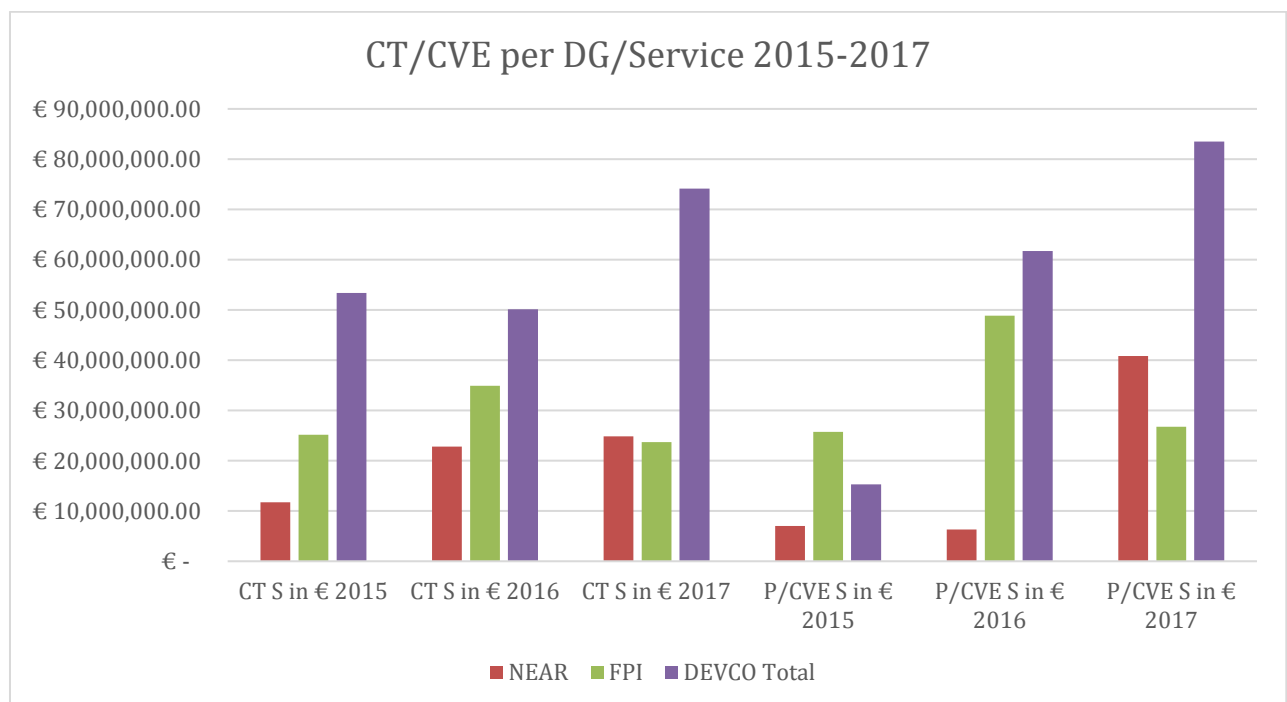


Fig. 1 Total spending per DG/Service on CT S and P/CVE S in Euros.

3.2.2 Funding Instruments

Funding for EU external CT and P/CVE projects is drawn from a wide variety of EU funding instruments. These include: Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (IcSP Articles 3,4 and 5), Instrument for Pre-accession Assistance II (IPA), European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR), European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI), the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) and the European Development Fund (EDF).



The chart below shows the total spending on CT and P/CVE specific projects per instrument from 2015-2017. This illustrates both the general trend of increased spending on CT and P/CVE, and the entry of new funding instruments into CT and P/CVE actions, notably the EUTF from 2016 onwards investing strongly in P/CVE.

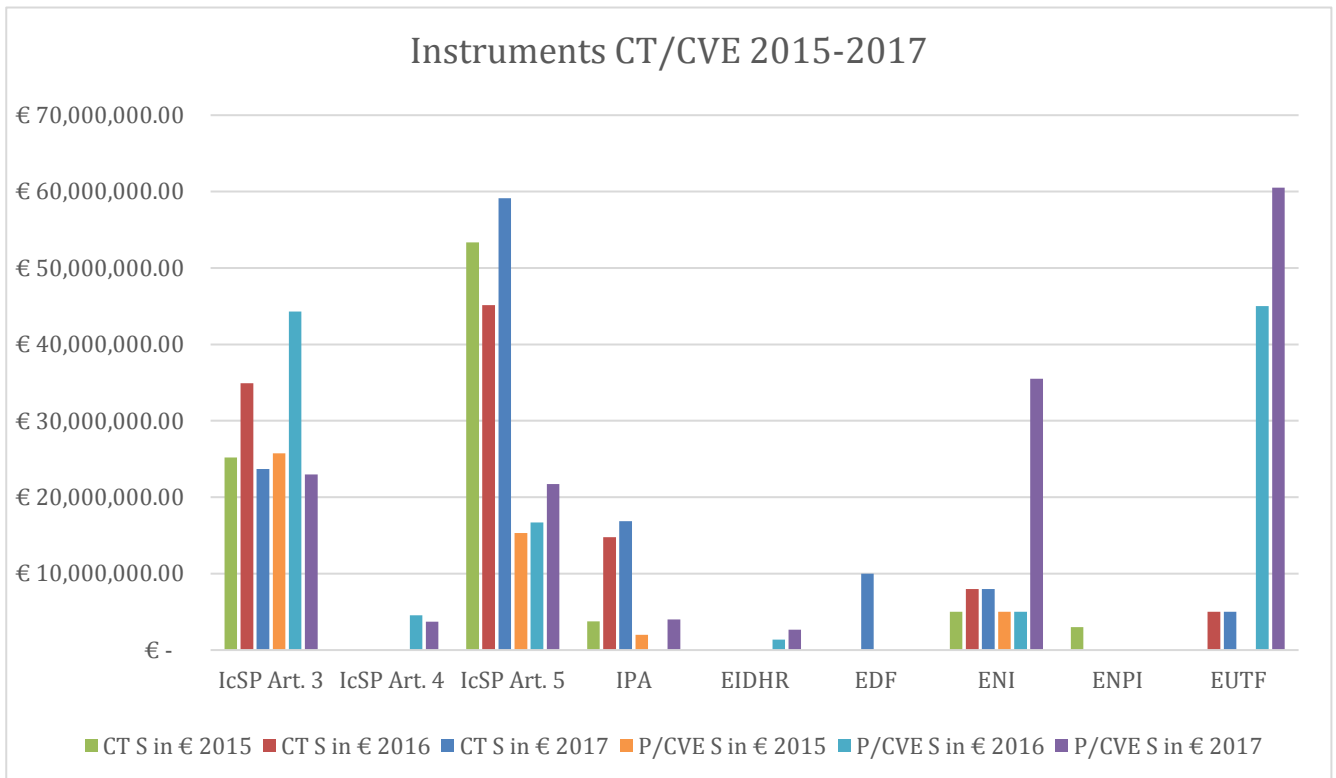


Fig. 2 Total spent (€) on CT S and P/CVE S projects per instrument.

3.2.3 Geographical Focus of EU External CT AND P/CVE Projects

The geographical focus of the EU's external CT and P/CVE projects has been the MENA, and West and East Africa regions, and to a smaller extent Asia and the Western Balkans/Turkey. Around a fifth of the budget by 2017 addresses global/trans-regional projects. The chart below outlines the division of EU funding across geographical areas from 2015-2017.

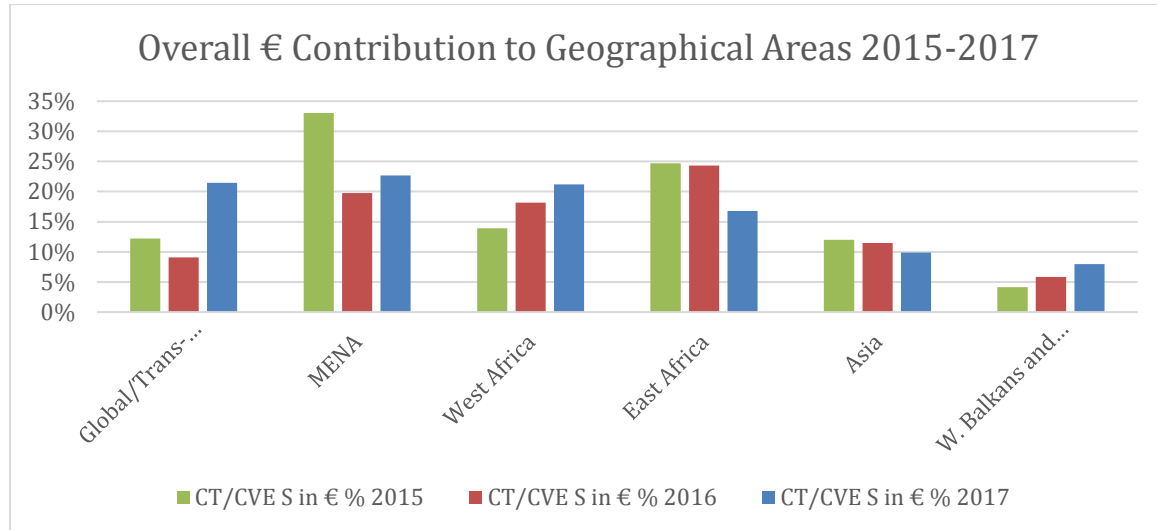


Fig. 3 Overall percentage in contribution in Euros to geographical areas.

3.2.4 The EU CT Strategy's Four Pillars

The EU's 2005 CT Strategy is based on four pillars of Prevent, Protect, Pursue, and Respond. The chart below shows three snapshots of spending per pillar from 2015 to 2017, assessed by the evaluation team on project title and description. The categorisation is imperfect as some projects are likely to have been relevant to more than one pillar, and some projects which may be relevant have not been included in the mapping data provided to the evaluators. However, the broad conclusion is likely to be valid: whilst spending has grown over the last three years, the EU has largely focused on two pillars, Prevent and Pursue. Although CT MENA is one example of a CT-specific project which is largely concerned with Pursue capabilities but which includes components relevant to Protect and Respond, the evaluators could identify few projects specific or relevant to Protect (such as CASE), and very few projects in the dataset specific or relevant to Respond. One project, CBRN Centres of Excellence project funded under IcSP Article 5, is concerned with Protect and Respond, but is not classified as CT-specific or relevant and does not therefore feature in the dataset.

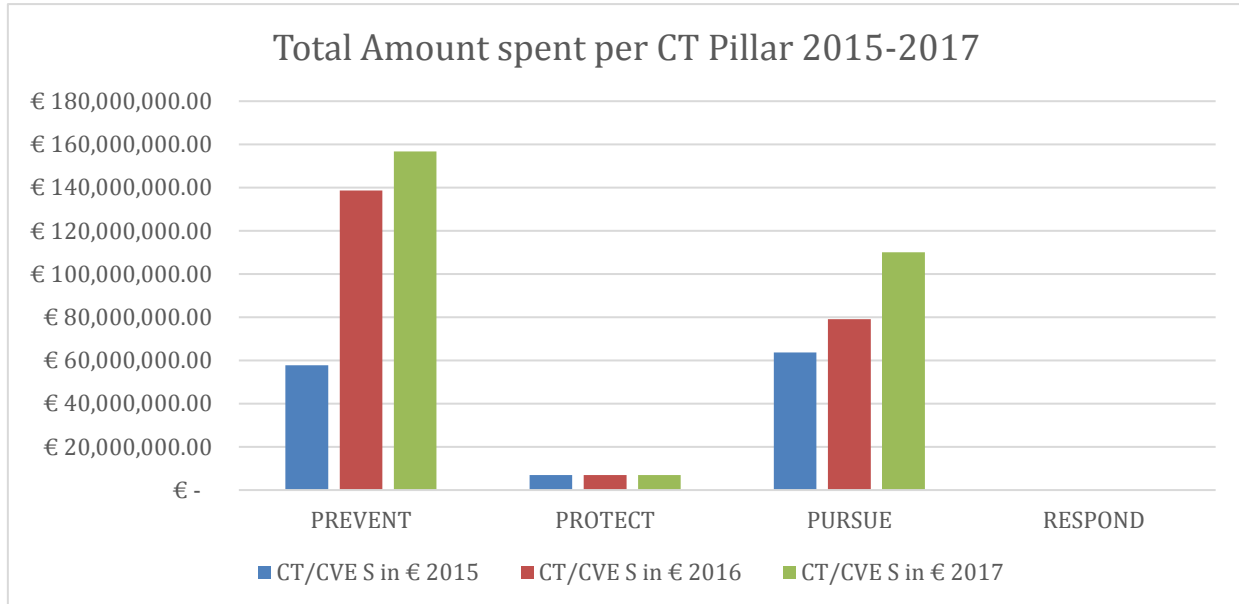


Fig. 4 Total amount spent per CT Pillar on CT and P/CVE.

3.2.5 Thematic Scope

The evaluation confirms that the EU has responded to all the thematic and geographic priorities outlined in the Council Conclusions on Counterterrorism (2015 and 2017).

Looking at the ongoing external programmes, it can be assessed that the EU is active (implementing ongoing initiatives or developing specific actions) in thematic areas as prioritized in the Council Conclusions, including those that are calling for an increasing involvement in P/CVE, countering terrorist financing and money laundering, supporting partner countries to strengthen their criminal justice response and aviation security.

3.3 Relevance of the EU's Activities

Our findings, based mostly on interviews and on analysis of programming, are that the EU has responded swiftly and impressively to the terrorist threat since 2011, and especially since the rise of the Islamic State group in 2013-14 and the terrorist attacks in Western Europe from January 2015. Prior to 2011, external activity on CT and P/CVE focused more on investment in the framework of international cooperation, e.g. through the UN, and the EU's external support to capacity building was limited. After the launch of CT Sahel in 2011 – largely an opportunistic response to a clear security gap together with the availability of fairly modest sums for project work – EU investment in external CT assistance increased to the point that by the end of 2017 actions were underway totalling €274 million. This demonstrates relevance in that CT investment follows the trajectory of both the terrorist threat and of the EU's strategic intent. Moreover, we found a clear understanding across all EU DGs/services of the relevance of external intervention to the EU's internal security.



How could the EU's external CT and P/CVE assistance become even more relevant? First, at a foundational level the EU needs to give more consideration to the relationship between internal and external EU CT policy. Whilst this connection is implicit in EU policy documents, it is largely undefined and requires further development of what it means in practice. The 2005 EU counter-terrorism strategy is mainly focussed internally within the EU, with limited mention of external CT and P/CVE assistance – which is unsurprising for a document that pre-dates the start of major EU external CT and P/CVE assistance. Whilst the Council Conclusions in 2015 and 2017 provide more up-to-date guidance, these are by their nature more reactive than strategic.

Second, we point out that investment is not spread evenly over the four pillars of the 2005 Strategy. The Pursue pillar until recently was most strongly supported, although as the global focus shifted to prevention, the EU's priorities have followed, so that P/CVE now accounts for 55% of 'specific' programming.

The question for the EU here is whether this resource allocation is appropriate and in line with its strategic aims and objectives. It could be argued that Protect and Respond are more in the competence of EU member states. However, the evaluation did not find evidence that this was a conscious decision, and responses from interviewees suggested that the four pillars are not at the forefront of their considerations. Moreover, of the four pillars it is arguably Pursue that is most within national competence, and the fact that the EU invests in protective security projects in respect of serious and organised crime (e.g. the Critical Maritime Routes programme) demonstrates that it has capacity and the potential to add value. Protect and Respond are largely about capacity, and the EU has shown itself to be successful in capacity building actions.

Recommendation 1: the EU's 2005 Counter-Terrorism Strategy should be updated to address current developments. In particular, further consideration should go into the nature of the relationship between internal and external CT objectives and policy, to reflect the 2015 and 2017 Council Conclusions, and to re-emphasise the relevance of the four pillars to external and internal actions, in order to provide clear strategic guidance for the development of external CT actions.

Recommendation 2: future strategic investment decisions should be informed by a comprehensive four-pillar analysis of existing programmes to determine whether the balance of investment is appropriate; consideration should be given to greater investment in protective security actions, and actions to support overseas partners in managing the impact of terrorism (physically, socially and economically).

3.4 Effectiveness of the EU's Activities

Are the EU's actions evaluated in this study succeeding in achieving desired outcomes? We found plenty of evidence of projects which have already achieved positive outcomes, and overall interviewees were confident that the EU is succeeding in building capacity, particularly in the law enforcement, criminal justice and security sector and also, for P/CVE projects, in civil society organisations. Projects funded under IcSP Article 3 have



rapidly mobilised resources to build capacity in, for example, Lebanon and Jordan. The Capacity Building for Stability and Development (CBSD) initiative was praised as an innovative means of providing operational assistance to third countries, pushing at the boundaries of traditional development cooperation.² The short-term nature of this funding also enables FPI to take more programmatic risk, which was seen as especially beneficial in a world of fast-moving threats.

Similarly, projects funded under IcSP Article 5 were also praised by interviewees for their pioneering methods (leading the way for other donors or EU funding instruments) and combination of 'soft' and 'hard' benefits (e.g. combining technical capability with knowledge transfer with trust-building). CT MENA and STRIVE Horn of Africa were both mentioned by several interviewees as positive examples, and the GCTF bodies supported by the EU were generally felt to be making a positive difference: several respondents identified the International Institute for Justice (IIJ) as having achieved more than expected (with limited resource) in building capacity and trust among judges and prosecutors, while GCERF was identified by some as a promising means of reaching local beneficiaries and grassroots communities. ENI-funded projects in the EU's neighbourhood have built capacity in, for example, law enforcement agencies dealing with CFT/AML issues in the Western Balkans (see also 3.9 below). For all funding instruments, interviewees identified important collateral benefits in building networks and improving relationships between the EU and partner countries: even hard-to-reach countries have become more open to EU assistance and international cooperation more generally.

Obstacles to effectiveness include political sensitivities, poor human rights standards in beneficiary countries, security conditions, and the lack of a diverse field of capable, effective implementers. Many obstacles are an unavoidable aspect of working in such a sensitive field, but there may be scope for a more strategic approach from the EU, using the levers of funding, diplomacy and security cooperation in combination, especially in countries that are most resistant to human rights-compliant support of the kind that the EU can provide (which are often also countries where the terrorist threat is particularly high).

The EU is increasingly mainstreaming CT and P/CVE into development and diplomacy, rather than placing them in specific and specialised projects: this is a positive development, and there is scope for further CT mainstreaming across the full range of the EU's external activities.

The most significant effectiveness gap is the EU's own internal expertise in CT and P/CVE. Some positive attempts are being made to address this, such as current P/CVE and planned CT trainings for EU Delegation Staff. However, the gap is nonetheless evident across the EU's institutions and is a function of two factors – the relative scarcity of experienced CT professionals in the European Commission, the EEAS and delegations

² In January 2018 an amendment to IcSP came into force, allowing EU budgetary support for capacity building for security and development (CBSD) in exceptional circumstances. This means that training and equipment can be provided to partner countries' militaries for activities in support of development objectives in exceptional circumstances.



(national CT experts are in high demand in member states), and the high demand for the EU's specialist agencies, notably Europol, Eurojust, and CEPOL. While all three agencies have made important and valued contributions to external assistance, despite this not being their primary mandate, a clear theme of the interviews was that the EU could achieve more externally if the agencies had more resources and a clearer mandate to assist. This is echoed by the references in the 2015 and 2017 Council Conclusions that call for an increased role of the agencies. Much has been achieved on a 'best endeavours' basis, but the esteem in which the agencies are held presents significant opportunities.

Recommendation 3: the EU should consider an increased mandate for EU agencies (especially Europol and Eurojust) in external capacity building assistance, beyond the increased operational cooperation foreseen in the 2017 Council Conclusions.

Recommendation 4: the EU should consider how its internal CT and P/CVE expertise might be further developed, through training and development in addition to the CT and P/CVE workshops already offered, as well as external recruitment, and more secondments to/from EU member states' CT agencies.

3.5 Efficiency of the EU's Activities

The evaluation looked at overall efficiency, rather than the costs and returns on investment of individual projects. Given the scale of the EU's investments, especially since 2014, and the speed with which these have been developed – itself an indicator of efficiency in mobilising resources – it would be surprising to find a high level of cost-efficiency across the portfolio. Indeed, one of the benefits of the EU's approach is that it has sufficient resources at its disposal to be rather more experimental and to take on more programmatic risk. Moreover, we found few examples of projects which did not appear to justify their investment, although some interviewees criticised a lack of reporting on the returns on the EU's investment, and a lack of oversight in some beneficiary countries.

Capacity building projects by their nature can seem cumbersome: needs identification is time-consuming, funding decisions require consultation and investigation, and any major action is likely to take years to implement. It was therefore not surprising to hear some, especially in more operational parts of the EU structure, comment on the time and bureaucracy involved in some CT projects (two years to mobilisation in some cases). Where external assistance has emerged from development cooperation, the same mechanisms required to deliver major infrastructure projects (for example) are also being used for CT actions – only the latter tend to need more speed and agility. The PAGODA mechanism, for example, designed to share the burden of risk and oversight with implementing agencies, may be too slow and imprecise for CT and P/CVE activities, and has limited appeal for EU member states, which own most of Europe's CT expertise. Instrument-wide reviews and evaluation have also pointed to inflexible, cumbersome and lengthy processes (including IcSP, ENI and DCI).³

³ See discussions in: External Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (2014-mid 2017), Final Report June 2017; External Evaluation of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) (2014-mid 2017), Final Report Vol 1: Main Report June



However, we also heard that the EU can be agile in CT and P/CVE – in creating CT technical assistance facilities, for example, that can provide short-notice support to beneficiaries, or in using pilot methodology to trial what works in P/CVE and identify interventions that can be scaled up. One of the benefits of piloting and increasing risk tolerance is opportunities to learn lessons which contribute to efficiency: the EU is already doing so, and DG DEVCO has led the field for instance in P/CVE by publishing lessons learned from completed projects. The EU can also bring to bear more flexible funding instruments, notably IcSP Article 3 but also TAIEX. One interviewee summed up the desired goal in an apt metaphor: if the EU's CT capability is an aircraft carrier, strategic and powerful but slow, it should develop the equivalent of helicopters and fast aircraft which it can deploy swiftly and tactically.

That said, one theme of the interviews was a degree of inefficiency in decision-making structures and processes with respect to external CT investments. Those with longer institutional memories commented that inter-service working is now far more efficient and consultative, with effective formal and informal mechanisms and networks. But some still feel a level of frustration with the number of funding instruments, the number of potentially competing centres of decision-making authority, the complexity of decision-making processes, variations in how EU delegations and their CT specialists are involved, the potential for lack of coordination with EU member states, and the apparent lack of formal EU strategy on external activity beyond the 2017 Council Conclusions. We do not wish to exceed our brief and make recommendations on EU policy and operational structures, however the EU may want to consider whether strategic direction – what does the EU want to achieve, and how should it marshal its resources to do so? – is sufficiently clear.

One possible consequence of the lack of a controlling centre for CT investment abroad would be over-investment in some priority countries and regions and under-investment in others. This may be happening to a certain extent in MENA, where Tunisia and Lebanon were repeatedly identified as 'donor darling' countries (not just for the EU, but also for EU member states, the US and the UN). Tunisia in particular has experienced a degree of security and development assistance saturation since the Sousse attack. However, we were also told that the structure of IcSP helps mitigate the risks of under-investment: Articles 3 and 5 according to their own distinctive principles can take care of topics, countries and regions which lose out under other funding instruments.

Recommendation 5: the EU should continue to use the most flexible funding instruments (such as IcSP Article 3) in CT and P/CVE where appropriate and use more unwieldy instruments to create flexible capabilities such as CT technical assistance facilities. The use of so-called delegated acts, delegating implementation tasks to member state agencies for CT and P/CVE programmes should be reconsidered given the nature of the CT actions and in order to ensure EU ownership and visibility.



3.6 Sustainability of the EU's Activities

Will the benefits from the EU's actions evaluated in this study persist or be sustained in the longer term? Given that the EU's activities are so recent – the overwhelming number of projects have only been initiated in the last four years – this cannot yet be answered definitively, although we can make some judgements based on the desired results and theories of change of the interventions, supported by the perceptions of interviewees.

First, investment in enduring institutions is likely to be more sustainable than finite projects. Support to the GCTF-inspired institutions (GCERF, Hedayah and IJ) was welcomed by most interviewees as a sustainable approach to CT and P/CVE investment, although some commented that benefits would be more sustainable if the EU was able to contribute core funding (which at present it does not). Moreover, most of the EU's investment in CT and P/CVE comes under the broad heading of capacity building, which by its nature is designed to support sustainability by investing in institutions. Some projects, commendably, have sustainability objectives built into their design, and long-term cooperation agreements between EU agencies (Europol, Eurojust and CEPOL in particular) and beneficiary governments are also positive developments in terms of sustainability. We also note that evaluation of ENI-funded interventions (not just in CT and P/CVE) commended its focus on institutional capacity building.

However, some interviewees expressed concern that capacity building activities may, in practice, not contribute to sustainability if the support is inadequately targeted, monitored and evaluated. Turnover of staff in beneficiary organisations, hoarding of training opportunities by powerful and influential beneficiaries, and a lack of follow-up to workshops all serve to undermine sustainability.

Recommendation 6: capacity building projects should ensure sustainability and uptake of learning by including preparation and follow-up activities before and after training workshops.

Second, there is a trade-off between innovation and sustainability, evident for example in projects which rely on piloting. An obvious assumption of a pilot project is that it will be discontinued or redirected if unsuccessful or if better options are identified; pilot projects often raise expectations and increase short-term capacity, which may then be disappointed or put at risk. Piloting is particularly beneficial in P/CVE, which is notoriously under-evidenced: the STRIVE Horn of Africa project was designed to use pilot approaches partly in order to build the evidence-base and show 'what works'.⁴ But piloting needs to be managed with care. Piloting in CT may be considered more challenging, given the legal, operational and security risks associated with this field, but should not be ruled out.

⁴ Royal United Services Institute, STRIVE Horn of Africa: Lessons Learned, April 2017.



Recommendation 7: while piloting should be encouraged, especially in fields like P/CVE which have a weak evidence base, it is not risk and cost-free, and sustainability risks should be explicitly addressed in the design phase.

Third, the prospect or promise of EU assistance and investment may raise expectations among beneficiary governments of financial and material support which may be practically difficult to deliver, or which will inevitably be time bound.

Recommendation 8: dialogue between EU institutions and beneficiaries must avoid the risk of raising expectations beyond what the EU can deliver by ensuring maximum clarity over what can be offered to which bodies and under what conditions.

Fourth, the lack of long-term strategic planning for external CT and P/CVE assistance militates against sustainability. The partial eclipse of the 2005 CT Strategy means that officials understandably look to the Council Conclusions for guidance, but these are by their nature reactive rather than strategic. We heard very clear articulations (summarised above under EU Operational and Policy Aims) of what external assistance in this area is intended to achieve and how. However, the EU lacks operational policy clearly setting out strategic guidance for the development and implementation of external CT assistance. In order to ensure sustainability, the EU's external CT and P/CVE assistance needs to be led by a clear strategy and advocating an actionable theory of change. To achieve this, the EU should take stock of what it has achieved, and its previous operational policy, building on these to develop an external CT assistance plan for the next stage. This will provide those responsible for external CT and P/CVE assistance with the necessary strategic guidance to deliver sustainability and greater coherence.

Recommendation 9: the EU should develop an external assistance CT plan, anchored to a refreshed CT Strategy, and expressing a theory of change that guides all of the EU's activity in this area, together with a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess progress against objectives.

3.7 Added Value of the EU's Activities

What does the EU bring to CT and P/CVE that others (EU member states, and other national and multilateral donors) cannot? The EU's comparative advantage derives from four factors: its access to finance, the diversity of its constituent parts, its political weight, and its perceived independence from national agendas and histories.

The EU's access to finance is an obvious advantage. With external CT and P/CVE-specific projects worth €274 million being underway by the end of 2017, the EU has both the resource and the financial flexibility to fill gaps left by bilateral assistance – whether in terms of 'orphaned' countries, regions or topics, or in areas where global standards and controls are less effective. We note, and support, the findings of the IcSP mid-term review which found that IcSP Articles 3, 4 and 5 “created entry-points and taken risks that other donors could or would not do”.⁵

⁵ P.3, External Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (2014-mid 2017), Final Report June 2017



The EU's size and diversity means that it can deploy a very wide range of national expertise, bringing to bear the comparative advantage of different states (in, for example, P/CVE or countering the financing of terrorism) as well as the EU agencies. Although there is more the EU can do to leverage national experts (as opposed to hired consultants), interviewees recognised that it has significant potential to be a recognised and credible contributor to global security. More broadly, we heard that individual EU member states may favour particular approaches, whereas the EU can draw on a greater range, and therefore be more targeted and more sensitive to specific conditions and requirements.

Interviews consistently highlighted the EU's perceived independence as a comparative advantage over EU member states acting independently (and over major non-EU nations). This point is also made in the 2017 review of DCI-funded projects, which found that the "EU is perceived as a reliable dialogue partner, more neutral than individual Member States because it has no national interest to defend or advance but act in the EU common interest"⁶. Although the former colonial powers for example are often highly active in their spheres of influence, their activities can sometimes be perceived as neo-colonialist and/or animated by vested interests, while the EU is usually perceived to be free of historical and cultural burdens. Moreover, this perception, combined with political weight, enables the EU to be more assertive on human rights principles and gender equality (see 3.10 below).

At the same time, it is important for the EU to recognise the comparative advantage of others. EU member states, for example, may be stronger at short-term, tactical, bilateral assistance. They may also have an advantage in some aspects of CT (especially with respect to capabilities clearly within national competences).

Recommendation 10: the proposed plan for the EU's external assistance should articulate the EU's comparative advantage – and its comparative disadvantage vis-à-vis both EU member states and other international donors.

3.8 Coherence of EU Activities

To what extent do the EU's activities evaluated in this study fit together, complementing each other rather than conflicting or duplicating? Analysis of projects and programmes and perceptions of interviewees suggest a mixed picture.

First, the EU has undoubtedly focused on Pursue and Prevent activities, potentially leaving gaps in Protect and Respond (see 3.2.4 above).

Second, although cooperation between agencies has (by common consent) improved significantly in recent years, with in-year and multi-year plans now subject to wide consultation within the EU alongside much stronger informal communication and relationships, there is still scope for competing or overlapping projects: several interviewees referred to two almost identical projects proposed by different DGs in Central Asia, while assistance to Tunisia and Lebanon is viewed by some as having reached saturation levels. Some attributed this to a proliferation of actors within and

⁶ P.V, External Evaluation of the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) (2014-mid 2017), Final Report, June 2017.



beyond the EU, especially in P/CVE, while others highlighted the number of funding instruments which now support CT and P/CVE outcomes.

Third, there is nevertheless evidence of good planning and coordination in, for example, a reduction in the share of projects funded by IcSP Article 3 in response to greater investment from other funding instruments, and DG DEVCO's focus on the development-security nexus. Effective CT experts in delegations were seen as particularly important in facilitating coordination.

Fourth, interviewees identified good examples of knowledge sharing, such as workshops focusing on regional or thematic interventions.

Fifth, the biggest challenge is perceived by some to be coordination with EU member states rather than between EU institutions, and this is corroborated by the 2017 review of ENI which concluded that "there is still scope for reinforcing EU added value by increasing the incentives for coordination and division of labour with EU MS and donors".⁷

In order to further increase coherence, we suggest that the EU considers developing regional and country level strategies for external CT assistance. This will provide the necessary strategic guidance for the planning and development of external CT and P/CVE activity. Through anchoring individual projects to such strategies, it will help to ensure they build together to deliver the EU's strategic objectives and to avoid duplication or gaps in project implementation.

Recommendation 11: EU delegations should be brought into the Commission's planning processes at the programming and needs identification stages of the programming life cycle.

Recommendation 12: regional and country strategies should be developed across the geographical scope of the EU's external CT and P/CVE activity, and all projects and programmes should be clearly anchored to these. These could be limited to CT and P/CVE cooperation, or CT and P/CVE could be addressed as part of a broader statement.

Recommendation 13: consideration should be given to clarifying of the scope and purpose of the relevant funding instruments in order to increase coherence by reducing competing or overlapping projects, but not a wholesale simplification or consolidation of them.

3.9 Impact of EU Activities

What difference is EU activity evaluated in this study making, now and in the longer-term? Impact is the most difficult dimension to measure, and for many projects it is too early to judge, with data on impact unlikely to be available for ongoing projects and programmes, points reiterated in instrument-wide reviews and evaluations.⁸ Nevertheless, we can

⁷ External Evaluation of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) (2014-mid 2017), Main Report June 2017, p. vii.

⁸ See External Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (2014-mid 2017), Final Report June 2017; External Evaluation of the European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI) (2014-mid 2017), Final Report Vol I: Main Report June 2017; External Evaluation of the Development Co-operation Instrument (DCI) (2014-mid 2017), Final Report, June 2017



make some judgements on effect based on our analysis of project documentation, portfolio data and interviews.

First, there is evidence of projects making a positive and externally recognised difference in more technical areas where change is easier to measure. For example, there is evidence that countries receiving CFT/AML assistance from the EU in the MENA, South-East Asia and Western Balkans regions have come off 'grey lists' kept by the Financial Action Taskforce (FATF): although we have not independently verified whether this is attributable in whole or in part to EU assistance, it was clear to us that interviewees believe that EU interventions played a significant role, and can point to a correlation between impact and EU-funded capacity gains.

Second, there is evidence of countries which have been high priorities for EU assistance achieving notable security gains: Lebanon, for example, was identified as a success story in terms of border and aviation security, judicial capacity, and P/CVE strategy. Again, given that Lebanon is also a priority for other international donors, we cannot be sure that all benefits are attributable to the EU, there appears to be a correlation between EU investment and security benefits.

Third, there is evidence of softer benefits in terms of improved communication and relationships between beneficiaries and the EU: for example, security agencies in the Western Balkans have provided lists of foreign terrorist fighters to Europol, evidence of a high level of trust which may be attributable to interventions as well as diplomacy.

Fourth, and more generally, there is corroboration from mid-term and final reviews of relevant funding instruments, such as ENI and IcSP, that positive impact can be discerned at project/programme level, including in CT and CBRN risk mitigation.⁹ Examples available to us included CT CAPRI (Pakistan), STRIVE Horn of Africa, CT Sahel and the EU-UNODC Joint Initiative for 'Supporting Southeast Asian Countries to Counter Terrorism' project, all funded under Article 5 of the IcSP.

However, it is also clear from interviews and analysis of project documentation that the EU struggles to measure and articulate impact in this area. As one interviewee put it, the EU lacks the right information, the right indicators, and the right conceptual framework (given that security is a public good, and therefore not susceptible to the kind of cost-benefit analysis that can be used for other kinds of intervention.) We also note, and agree with, the finding of the IcSP mid-term evaluation that the EU needs to develop better baselines against which to measure progress.¹⁰

We believe that these issues reflect a need for greater rigour in the EU's strategic planning, needs identification and project/programme formulation. While there is undoubtedly plenty of monitoring and evaluation *activity*, judging by the action documents, reviews and evaluations we have seen, there is sometimes insufficient clarity at the design stage

⁹ See for example External Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (2014-mid 2017), Final Report June 2017, p.2.

¹⁰ see p.4 See External Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (2014-mid 2017), Final Report June 2017;



as to what impact the EU is seeking to achieve, an explicit theory of change to show how activities will lead to outcomes and impacts, and how impact will be measured. Even a project like CT MENA, which includes monitoring and evaluation as a distinct workstream, could be clearer about overall aims and desired impact. A CT or P/CVE intervention cannot be effectively evaluated without a clear and specific vision of what it is intended to achieve, both immediately in beneficiary countries and, ultimately, in terms of the EU's own security.

Recommendation 14: the EU needs to articulate intended impact at the needs assessment stage and to reflect this more clearly in logical frameworks/results frameworks, and design impact evaluation activities into projects and programmes.

Recommendation 15: the EU needs to develop clearer theories of change at the strategic as well as project/programme levels, to explain what it intends to achieve through external activities, and how and why the interventions are expected to work.

3.10 Cross-Cutting Issues

To what extent has the EU advanced gender equality and delivered interventions that promote human rights principles and norms? As discussed above, one of the EU's comparative advantages is its ability to promote equality and human rights agendas, and there is plenty of evidence that it has sought to do so, especially in the P/CVE field where some EU projects have included dedicated gender programming alongside interventions taking a more gender-mainstreaming approach, such as STRIVE Horn of Africa. Addressing gender issues is an important theme of DG DEVCO's *Operational Guidelines on the Preparation and Implementation of EU Financed Actions Specific to Countering Terrorism and Violent Extremism in Third Countries*.¹¹ But even in a 'securitised' field such as counter-terrorism, the EU has sought to ensure that due regard is paid to gender issues (such as the importance of promoting gender equality in capacity building workshops). CT MENA, for example, proposes to "ensure Gender Balance/Equal Participation in all committees, workshops etc." and that "Gender Equality will be taken into account in all activities".¹² However, relatively few respondents mentioned gender issues except in relation to P/CVE interventions, which suggests it is not yet in the mainstream of the EU's planning in CT.

Recommendation 16: the EU should investigate the need for further awareness raising and monitoring with respect to gender equality in CT.

Moreover, across the CT and P/CVE portfolio it is clear that human rights compliance is at the heart of the EU's approach, in that the implicit logic behind much of its activity is that security objectives cannot sustainably be achieved without maintaining and promoting human rights norms and principles. That said, intervening in highly securitised

¹¹ See for example 'Gendered Approach to CT-P/CVE Projects', p. 40.

¹² CT MENA Inception Report, p. 86.



or conflict-affected environments, with political pressure to accomplish swift and compelling effects, always risks doing inadvertent harm.

To address this risk, DG DEVCO developed in 2015 *Operational Human Rights Guidance for EU external cooperation actions addressing Terrorism, Organised Crime and Cybersecurity- Integrating the Rights-Based Approach*.¹³ This guidance and accompanying tools are intended to provide a comprehensive practical framework on how to incorporate human rights safeguards in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of EU external actions in the realm of counter-terrorism, the fight against organised crime and the promotion of cybersecurity.

Recommendation 17: the EU should action the IcSP mid-term evaluation's finding that 'do no harm' principles need to be explicitly worked into theories of change for CT and P/CVE interventions.¹⁴ The Operational Human Rights Guidance should be adopted as the required standard and toolset by all services.

To what extent does the geographical scope of the EU's activities reflect the terrorist threat? As fig. 4 above shows, around 80% of the EU's activity at the end of 2017 was region-specific, and the rest was global or transregional. The bulk of the regional programming was divided fairly evenly between MENA (23% of expenditure), West Africa (21%) and East/Horn of Africa (17%), with smaller shares for Asia (10%) and the Western Balkans (8%). This distribution reflects not only the terrorist threat, which is particularly acute in the Middle East, South Asia and the Sahel, but also the proximity of the Western Balkans and MENA to the EU's southern and eastern borders. Arguably, East/Horn of Africa receives a relatively high proportion of EU investment given its distance from the EU's borders and the terrorist threat (obviously very high in Somalia and parts of Kenya, but still some way behind Nigeria, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Syria and Iraq). However, this also possibly reflects opportunity and political willingness in Somalia and Kenya especially.

The one region absent from current EU external CT and P/CVE activity is Latin America and the Caribbean, although DG DEVCO is currently planning activities in Trinidad and Tobago, in response to the high incidence of foreign terrorist fighters from that state. This highlights the changing nature of the terrorist threat, and the need for the EU to be flexible in the geographical scope of its external CT and P/CVE activities: regions previously off the CT radar can quickly become hot-spots needing attention. Further, although many terrorist threats have long been transnational in nature, greater mobility and technological developments in communication and finance mean that terrorist groups such as Islamic State can operate with a greater global reach than before. It is therefore important that the EU maintains and potentially expands its global and regional programming.

¹³ <http://ct-morse.eu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/Human-Rights-Guidance-Tool-ENG.pdf>

¹⁴ See External Evaluation of the Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (2014-mid 2017), Final Report June 2017, p.4.



Recommendation 18: The EU should remain flexible and agile in the geographical scope of its external CT and P/CVE activity, and be alert to emerging threats or new terrorism hotspots as reported by its agencies, delegations and EU member states, in order to be able to respond quickly and effectively to changing threats.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

4.1 Conclusions

The EU has become a major actor in CT (including P/CVE) external assistance. This is from a standing start in 2011, and the scale and speed of investment has been impressive. By the end of 2017, according to DG DEVCO analysis, 100 EU-financed projects assessed to be relevant or specific to CT or P/CVE were ongoing, with a total value of €900 million. €274 million of this investment was assessed to be CT and P/CVE-specific. Trends over the past three years have seen an increasing investment across the board, but particularly so in P/CVE actions (both specific and relevant.)

The geographical scope of this activity has also been impressive. In addition to its global actions, the EU's CT and P/CVE external interventions cover around 40 countries in all high-threat regions (MENA, West Africa, East/Horn of Africa, South Asia, Central Asia) and many areas (such as the Western Balkans or parts of South-East Asia) where the threat may be lower, incipient or in abeyance, but significant nonetheless.

In the global South, only Latin America is not covered by CT and P/CVE actions. And while some countries and regions receive particularly high levels of support – Tunisia and Lebanon were frequently mentioned – it is also clear that the funding instruments have been designed to ensure that lower-priority regions, countries and themes are also provided for. We concluded that this is the right approach: the EU succeeds, perhaps more than other donors, in balancing operational priorities and opportunities with comprehensive coverage.

The EU undoubtedly adds value to and complements the bilateral assistance of EU member states and other national and multilateral donors in CT and P/CVE. An almost unique advantage of the EU (shared arguably only by the UN) is its multilateral nature. We concluded that the EU exploits this advantage effectively, but not excessively, in its external assistance. And this advantage is especially helpful in P/CVE, which also plays to the EU's strength in soft power. However, there is perhaps scope to examine how the EU and EU member states can best work together in providing CT and P/CVE assistance, and make the best of comparative advantages.

It goes without saying that the scale of funding and scope of activity are not in themselves measures of effectiveness, let alone impact. However, they should not be discounted in an impact assessment: the EU's ability to mobilise resources on such a scale demonstrates agility and responsiveness, while the geographical scope of its actions speaks of reach.

The difficulties in evaluating impact are well known and, given that almost no projects started before 2011 and relatively few before 2014, it is too soon to say with confidence



that the EU's impact in this area justifies its expenditure. However, we found some promising evidence at project/programme level and from the perceptions of respondents. For example, there is a correlation between CFT activity and improved national and regional capacity in MENA, Western Balkans and the Horn of Africa which indicates positive impact from the EU's investment. Meanwhile, at specific project level we have seen mid-term reviews and final evaluations that identify positive impacts, and some projects that are not only delivering effectively but have also been innovative and influential.

In addition, the EU's interventions appear to be achieving collateral, 'soft' benefits in addition to the capacity and capability they are designed to build. These soft benefits include improved relationships between officials and decision-makers, facilitation of diplomatic links, and promotion of the EU's values, notably gender equality and the centrality of human rights to CT and P/CVE.

That said, we have concluded that the EU is not making life easy for itself in terms of both evaluating effectiveness and impact and demonstrating that impact to its stakeholders. The EU's projects and programmes are, in general, increasingly well designed and there is evidence that, through trial and error, EU officials and implementing agencies are getting better at design and monitoring. However, there is in general insufficient attention at the needs identification and programme/project design stage to set out what will be evaluated and how. This issue is not unique to the EU and as CT practitioners ourselves we recognise the sensitivities, complexities and uncertainties of working in CT and P/CVE. But a few simple steps – training, awareness, and refinement of processes – will lead to better and easier evaluations. And this in turn will provide evidence for the EU to demonstrate and communicate more powerfully the value that it adds.

The 'Operational Guidelines on the preparation and implementation of EU financed actions specific to countering terrorism and violent extremism in third countries' developed by DG DEVCO in November 2017 are intended to provide guidance to EU staff working in these areas.¹⁵ This is considered an important effort in creating an improved awareness and share some of the experiences gathered from the various actions having been implemented so far. In addition to the above, since 2013 DG DEVCO has organised P/CVE region-specific workshops addressed to EU Delegations, EU member states as well as representatives from local governments and civil society with the aim to increase understanding of P/CVE concepts, terminology and policy, as well as to provide methods, tools and approaches to design and implement P/CVE programmes.

Most external assistance is capacity building of one kind or another – on-demand technical assistance, material assistance (which is problematic in CT, but the EU is making some bold steps forward), and training. We concluded that technical assistance facilities are a very useful model for large-scale programmes in particular, as they can deliver targeted support that combines responsiveness with sustainability. But training programmes will inevitably continue to be the mainstay of much activity in this field and

¹⁵ <http://ct-morse.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/EU-CT-CVE-guidelines.pdf>



we found a clear recognition among officials that this needs to be properly targeted and supported.

At the strategic level, the EU can also do more to explain what it is seeking to achieve in CT and how external interventions support its strategic aims. Officials across the EU have a very clear concept of their mission in CT and P/CVE, but this appears to us to be tacit rather than explicit knowledge. Moreover, the principal sources of guidance in this area are evidently the Council Conclusions of 2015 and 2017. It is not for us to recommend how the EU manages its strategy and structures, but we conclude that there would be significant benefit in codifying the various sources of direction into a single statement that combines strategic vision with the more tactical direction of the kind expressed in the Conclusions – ideally an external assistance CT plan that is anchored to an updated version of the 2005 CT Strategy. Such a statement would set out what the EU is seeking to achieve in the short, medium and long terms, how it will use its resources and capabilities to do so, and the criteria for success. This would yield benefits for CT and P/CVE external interventions in providing clearer direction to planners, implementers and beneficiaries, and clarify in particular the important relationship between the EU’s internal security and its external assistance and development and cooperation activity. It would also identify gaps: our high-level analysis suggests a significant under-investment externally in Protect and Respond capabilities (protection of critical infrastructure, public spaces and iconic sites; emergency service capacity; crisis response). Moreover, the very process of strategy development tends to be productive, and would, we suggest, assist officials in honing their portfolios and maximising the EU’s capacity to deliver.

One point on the EU’s capacity became clear: the EU benefits from efficient, capable and well-regarded agencies which are in high demand. As the agencies’ mandates are internally focused, support to external interventions is as far as we can tell provided on a ‘best endeavours’ basis. We recommend that this be reconsidered on the grounds that the EU can add even greater value through increased leverage of its internal capabilities. More problematic is the scarcity of CT and P/CVE expertise across EU institutions but particularly in the Commission, the External Action Service and in EU delegations. National CT experts tend to be in high demand from their home countries’ institutions, so EU institutions are competing in a buyer’s market. For this reason, EU policy makers need to consider how to develop more in-house CT expertise, on the assumption that EU member states will wish to retain their national experts.

Although the EU’s ability to muster finance is very impressive, the structure of funding instruments and EU organisations working on CT and P/CVE is complex. Some respondents argued that they should be simplified. However, we would suggest that the benefits of simplification are in tension with another imperative, which is to mainstream CT and P/CVE across the EU’s external assistance portfolio. In other words, rather than having fewer instruments and directorates, mainstreaming would place CT and P/CVE on everyone’s agenda. A mainstreaming approach seems to us to have significant benefits, not only in potentially increasing even further the resources and capabilities available to CT and P/CVE, but also in aligning CT and P/CVE to the EU’s wider development and diplomacy objectives. In addition, the current structure of instruments also creates



‘variable geometry’ which supports diverse approaches: while some instruments are heavy and long-term, and therefore good for sustained, large-scale investment; others are nimble and short-term, and useful for short-term, tactical responses. There are clear benefits from having a range of instruments available.

4.2 Lessons Learned

This review identified some broad lessons that have been learned in terms of programme identification, design and delivery:

- i. Building the capacity of institutions (national, regional and multilateral) and community resilience to violent extremism is likely to support sustainability objectives;
- ii. Comprehensive and well-evidenced regional and national strategies are essential to guide needs identification and investment decisions;
- iii. Coordination and collaboration on external CT and P/CVE activities between EU services is best achieved by combining formal structures with informal networks;
- iv. Effective capacity building requires sustained activity, targeted on the appropriate beneficiaries – not just workshops delivered with minimal preparation and follow-through;
- v. Innovation is highly desirable, especially in fields like P/CVE which are known to have a low evidence-base. However, the tension between innovation and programmatic risk tolerance on the one hand, and sustainability on the other, needs active management: it is easy to raise expectations which are then disappointed, and create capacity which then becomes unsupported.



ANNEX A: DOCUMENTARY SOURCES

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United Nations Office On Drugs And Crime Vienna, Final independent project evaluation of the Sub-programme on Counter-Terrorism: East and Southeast Asia Partnership on Criminal Justice Responses to Terrorism



ANNEX B: RESPONDENTS (INTERVIEWEES)

Respondents in the following organisations were interviewed:

European Union

DG DEVCO

DG HOME

DG JUST

DG NEAR

Eurojust

Europol

External Action Service

Office of the Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, Consilium

Service for Foreign Policy Instruments

External Agencies

Expertise France