

CONTRIBUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE

TO

THE REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL OF THE UNITED NATIONS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECLARATION ON MEASURES TO ELIMINATE INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

The Council of Europe co-ordinates and co-operates with all relevant United Nations bodies and agencies and, in particular, with the Counter Terrorism Committee (CTC) and its Executive Directorate (CTED) and the United Nations Office of Counter-Terrorism (OCT), to assist in the proper implementation at regional level of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy and relevant resolutions and relevant resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council.

In close cooperation with its 46 member States, the Council of Europe actively contributes to preventing, combating and eliminating terrorism in all its forms and manifestations in the European region. This is done in co-ordination and co-operation with the European Union (EU), the International Criminal Police Organization (CPO-INTERPOL) and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). At the global level, the Council of Europe, in addition to working with the United Nations, co-ordinates and co-operates with the Organization of American States (OAS), the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF) on a regular basis.

The Council of Europe provides a regional binding legal framework for the intergovernmental co-operation on preventing terrorism and bringing terrorists to justice in the form of *the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (2005) and its Additional Protocol (2015)*. The Convention currently has 43 ratifications and the Additional Protocol 32. Both treaties have been ratified by the European Union.

The Council of Europe also operates a *24/7 network of contact points on foreign terrorist fighters* and a *Network for the exchange of procedural information regarding the legal standing of victims of terrorism*. In order to enhance the efficiency of international co-operation to prevent and combat terrorism and protect victims of terrorism, both networks are also open for participation by non-member States of the Council of Europe and relevant international and regional organisations (e.g. Interpol).

The Council of Europe recognises that member States have the primary responsibility for preventing and combating terrorism. To support these efforts, the Council of Europe works to promote international co-operation and co-ordination, to provide a platform to discuss and elaborate means to prevent and combat terrorism and ensure that all counter-terrorism measures respect human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

This work is primarily done through the Council of Europe's Steering Committee on Counter-Terrorism (CDCT). The CDCT is responsible for formulating the Council of Europe counter-terrorism policy, inclusive of its counter-terrorism strategy, and binding and non-binding legal instruments. It also provides a venue for exchanges between members on practices regarding implementation of different counter-terrorism tools. In addition, monitoring of the implementation of the *Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism and its Additional Protocol* is being done through the Conference of Parties (CoP), composed of parties and signatories to the Convention (and its Additional Protocol), as well as other member States and Observers to the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe considers it essential to ensure that the gender perspective is sufficiently considered in all its standard-setting activities. In the area of counter-terrorism a member of the CDCT has been elected to function as rapporteur on all gender-related issues relevant for that Committee's work.

In 2023, the CDCT completed the first *Council of Europe Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2018 – 2022)* with adoption of the Compilation of Best Practices with regards to Deradicalisation, Disengagement and Social Reintegration. The Compilation provides an overview of current programmes aimed at deradicalisation, disengagement or reintegrating individuals who have been convicted of terrorism-related offences or those at risk of becoming involved in terrorism or violent extremism, with an aim to support States in developing their own programmes by learning from what has been shown to be effective in other countries.

Following the adoption of the new *Counter-Terrorism Strategy (2023 – 2027)* by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers in February 2023, the CDCT embarked upon its first activities under this strategic document, namely:

- Development of draft Guidelines for public and private sector authorities on preparedness and emergency responses to the immediate aftermath of terrorist attacks;
- Preparation of Comparative practices on the use of information collected in conflict zones as evidence in criminal proceedings for terrorist offences;
- Development of draft Guidelines on strategies for the prosecution of violent extremism conducive to terrorism;
- Analysis of terrorist abuses of the Internet; and
- Organisation of an International Conference on the Abuse of Livestreaming, Gaming and Virtual Reality Services and Platforms by Terrorist Actors.

Two out of the five activities above were already finalised by the CDCT in 2023. This are namely the draft *Guidelines for public and private sector authorities on preparedness and emergency responses to the immediate aftermath of terrorist attacks*, adopted by the Committee of Ministers in May 2024, and the *International Conference on the Abuse of Livestreaming, Gaming and Virtual Reality Services and Platforms by Terrorist Actors*, which took place in November 2023. While the former provides concrete advice to States and practitioners on conceptualising and putting in place different aspects of emergency response plans, the latter served as a venue to discuss particular aspects of and possible responses to terrorist abuses of livestreaming, gaming and virtual reality.

In addition to the above, in 2023, the CDCT also opened up the formal negotiations on the pan-European definition of terrorism. The agreed definition is expected to replace the current Article 1 of the Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 196) by providing a clear and contemporary understanding of the terrorist offences to be covered by the Convention. After two rounds of negotiations, held in May 2023 in Strasbourg, France, and in December 2023, in Helsinki, Finland, the CDCT agreed on the text of the definition that should be introduced into the Council of Europe counter-terrorism framework through a suitable instrument such as an amending protocol.

Throughout 2023, representatives of different United Nations agencies collaborated closely and contributed greatly to the success of the work done within the framework of the CDCT. This was done through written contributions and participation in CDCT events and working groups, including through the organisation of a joint side event during the June UN Counter-Terrorism Week. The event *Good practices for managing violent extremist prisoners: preventing radicalisation to violence while promoting disengagement and rehabilitation*, co-organised with UN CTED, and in partnership with Austria, Finland, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), and the Organization for

Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), demonstrated once again the impact that can be achieved through close cooperation between the UN and its regional partners. The Council of Europe remains committed to the aim of the United Nations to eliminate international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and will continue its close co-ordination and co-operation with the United Nations to achieve this aim.
