Counterterrorism in the European Union

How should the European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy be changed after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?

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# Executive summary

More than ten years ago, the European Union established the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. The aim of the strategy was to ‘’combat terrorism globally while respecting human rights, and make Europe safer, allowing its citizens to live in an area of freedom, security and justice’’ (Council of the European Union, 2005, p.2). However, this strategy appears to be insufficient to combat terrorism as seen in the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016. On that account, it is of great significance to study the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. The objective of this research is to study both the actual and recommended changes to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy in order to improve the EU´s role in the fight against terrorism. Consequently, the central research question of this thesis is: How should the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy be changed after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks? Before studying this question, a theoretical framework describing the EU’s counterterrorism approach was created. The EU applies a comprehensive approach including aspects of coercive, proactive, defensive and long-term counterterrorism approaches where main attention is aimed at soft power measures. Furthermore, the prevention of radicalisation is the most significant part in combating terrorism.

In order to answer the central research question, both primary and secondary data consisting of an in-depth interview and desk-research was collected and analysed. This research shows that the EU and its member states have been criticised for failing before, during and after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. As a reaction to both the attacks and the criticism, the EU has taken measures to improve its counterterrorism activities. This suggests that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy is not completely sufficient. Since most failures have been made in the area of prevention of radicalisation, information sharing, intelligence sharing and border control, most changes and recommendations have been made in these areas as well.

On the basis of this research and analysis, it is recommended that the EU should take measures regarding counterterrorism. The recommendations are aimed at upgrading the prevention of radicalisation, increasing and improving information sharing as well as at enhancing border controls. Consequently, the EU’s fight against terrorism will improve. However, these measures will not change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Instead, they will specify and complete the strategy in order to make it sufficient to combat the current terrorist threat within the EU with a unified counterterrorism strategy throughout the Union.

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# Preface

This thesis is written as part of the bachelor program of European Studies at The Hague University of Applied Sciences. The topic of this thesis has been chosen due to the current attention to counterterrorism. Furthermore, the topic correspond to my political interest. The researching this topic and writing the thesis was challenging sometimes. However, I am very thankful for this opportunity to further develop my research, analytical and writing skills.

# Acknowledgements

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# Introduction

On November 13, 2015, the worst and deadliest terrorist attacks in Europe since the Madrid terrorist attack took place. Only four months later, on March 22, 2016, the most fatal terrorist attack in Belgium’s history occurred. The two attacks combined left 162 dead and almost 700 people injured (Barker, 2016). Although for the European Union counterterrorism is not a phenomenon from the last years, inter alia due to the extensive numbers of victims, the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks caused developments within the EU’s counterterrorism policy. It is said that the EU failed to guard its society from terrorism. Furthermore, the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks led to the view that the EU should increase its cooperation in the area of counterterrorism (Karagiannis, 2016). Before the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU already obtained a counterterrorism strategy, that is the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. However, the events led to requests from the European society, counterterrorism researchers as well as several EU institutions to reshape this strategy (European Parliament, 2016). The Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks show the overall threat of jihadist terrorism to the EU and challenge the EU’s ability as a union to prevent and respond to terrorist attacks. Therefore, the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy established in 2005 appears to be ineffective regarding this contemporary wave of terrorism within the EU. Although it seems to be an illusion to totally banish any form of terrorism from the EU, certain changes to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy may contribute to a more effective and unified counterterrorism policy of the EU. The question is how the EU can and should change its strategy in order to improve its counterterrorism activities and the protection of the society from terrorism.

Accordingly, the research topics of this study are the changes to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and by means of an analysis, the changes the EU could and should make after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. In order to study this, several subjects are covered within this research. Firstly, the theoretical framework covers the variety of approaches to counterterrorism and explains the EU’s approach to counterterrorism. This theoretical framework is necessary to understand the EU’s, scholars’ and the researcher’s opinions and decisions regarding the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Thereafter, the first part of the research results analyses and explains the relationship between the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks and the changes to the EU’s counterterrorism policy. Then, in the second part of the research results, recommendations towards the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy established by researchers and experts are described and explained.

More precisely, the central research question of this paper is: How should the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy be changed after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks? In the chapters 1, 2 and 3 this research question will be answered by explaining the findings on the following sub questions:

- What was the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy before the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?

- How did the EU react to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?

- What changes have been made to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?

- What proposals have been made to change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy further after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?

- What changes to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy are recommended after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?

This research topic is of theoretical as well as of practical relevance. Since the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks in 2015 and 2016, the topic of counterterrorism is of broad and current interest. Theoretically, there is no single literature stream which covers a combination of several scholars’ theories regarding the recommended EU’s counterterrorism strategy after the Paris and Brussels attacks. On the contrary, there are several studies consisting of individual theories and perceptions. Thus, there is a research gap here allowing for research. As mentioned previously, after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, there is a need for increased cooperation on EU level. Since there are different theories on how the EU could realise this, it is necessary to analyse and compare these theories in order to fill the research gap. The fulfilment of this research gap will result in recommendations for the EU on how to change its strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

Besides the theoretical relevance, this research is of practical relevance as well. Several scientists and researchers argue that the EU needs to adjust its strategy to the type of terrorism the EU is facing nowadays (Bigo et al., 2015). The EU and its member states are responsible for the protection of its citizens and thereby, responsible to protect them from terrorism. Besides this, it is necessary to change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy for the reason that the latest pattern of terrorist attacks suggest that Europe is a target of IS (Parkes, 2016). Therefore, it is likely that in the future there will be more terrorist attacks in the EU. Furthermore, the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks show the overall threat of jihadist terrorism to the EU and challenges the EU’s ability to prevent and respond to the terrorist attacks (Delivet, 2016). Thus, further research is necessary in order to provide recommendations for the EU. The recommendations provide guidelines for the EU to change its counterterrorism policy and strategy in order to improve its counterterrorism role and to convince its society that it makes every effort to secure its society from terrorism after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

All in one, this paper attempts to show the changes the EU could and should make to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks in order to improve the counterterrorism policies and activities of the EU and its member states. In order to provide this, the paper is composed as follows: Firstly, a theoretical framework concerning the meaning of counterterrorism and its approaches is discussed. Secondly, the methodology of this research is described and explained. Thirdly, the research results are covered. By means of the research results gathered by answering the aforementioned questions, the writers’ own analysis and recommendations regarding the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy are described and explained. Finally, a conclusion answering the central research question is drawn and the specific recommendations are summarised in a list .

# Theoretical framework

This chapter explains the main concepts of this research and is the theoretical outline of the dissertation. In order to make the right recommendations that suit the counterterrorism approach of the European Union it is important to understand the types of counterterrorism approaches and the motives for the European Union to adopt a certain approach. Firstly, the concept of counterterrorism will be defined. Secondly, a description of the various approaches of counterterrorism will be written down. Thirdly, the counterterrorism approaches and policies of the United States and the EU will be explained and compared. Furthermore, the factors influencing the decision of a counterterrorist approach will be discussed. Finally, a conclusion from this theoretical framework in relation to the research question will be composed.

## 1. Definition of counterterrorism

In line with terrorism, there is no global definition of counterterrorism. Various countries have several definitions of counterterrorism and apply different approaches to counterterrorism. Therefore, all states have specific individual means to combat terrorism. This variety results from the fact that every country is facing its own degree and type of terrorist threats (Wilkinson, 2006, p. 203). By reason of these circumstances, it is genuinely complicated to arrange a definition of counterterrorism that fits the purpose. The Cambridge Dictionary (2016) defines counterterrorism as: ‘’Action intended to prevent violence for political purposes’’. This definition is very broad and general. Consequently, it is not sufficient to apply to this research, since it does not fully cover the academic aspect of the subject. The definition of terrorism that the Department of the Army (2006) of the US implements is: “Operations that include the offensive measures taken to prevent, deter, pre-empt, and respond to terrorism ‘’(p.2-4). Since it is the army that established this definition, it is quite logical that the definition covers military action. This definition of counterterrorism reflects the US’ approach towards counterterrorism as will be explained later on in this chapter. In comparison to the previous definition, the definition of the US Department of the Army provides a more specific and detailed concept of counterterrorism. It takes into account the several aspects of counterterrorism, resulting in the description of counterterrorism as a wide-ranged concept. This wide-ranged concept is emphasised by academia and therefore, more appropriate for this research.

However, the definition is still unsatisfactory. According to Rineheart (2010), the concept is not sufficient, as it does not provide any distinctions between various types and degrees of terrorism. This might result in insufficient counterterrorism strategies due to the lack of suitable and appropriate counterterrorism measures. Despite this, the fact that this definition of counterterrorism does not provide any distinctions between various types and degrees of terrorism acknowledges the complicatedness of counterterrorism, and with that, the arduousness of solving terrorism (p.32). Besides this, the unsatisfactory part of the US definition of counterterrorism is that this research focuses on the counterterrorism policy and strategy of the EU. Therefore, the EU definition of counterterrorism would be more appropriate as starting point of this research. Bureš (2011) argues that the EU, despite the actions taken by the EU in the area of counterterrorism, for example with establishing the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, does not obtain a common definition of counterterrorism that covers the concept completely (p.8). Therefore, it might be effective to look at the aim of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. The Council of the European Union (2005) defined the aim of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy as a means ‘’to combat terrorism globally while respecting human rights, and make Europe safer, allowing its citizens to live in an area of freedom, security and justice’’. This actually reflects the lack of an EU unified definition of counterterrorism. Assuming this strategies’ aim, one could state that the EU’s definition of counterterrorism is simply combating terrorism in order to ensure the continuation of the core characteristics of the EU. Despite the quite broad and general definition, it does comply with this research for the reason that it is adjusted to the geographical area of the EU and to the EU’s core values. Furthermore, this concept does not only entail ‘operations’ and ‘offensive measures’ conforming the US definition. Therefore, the concept of counterterrorism documented in the aim of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy is the most appropriate definition for this research.

## 2. Counterterrorism approaches

Besides the different definitions of counterterrorism, there are different approaches towards counterterrorism. The two broadest approaches towards counterterrorism are the war or military type of counterterrorism with hard power measures and the criminal justice type of counterterrorism with soft power measures. Through applying the war type of counterterrorism, governments seek to combat terrorism by military exercises to defeat the terrorists. It is a rather straight forwarded and aggressive method to combat terrorism and therefore, it falls under the category hard power. The disadvantage of this approach is that it is likely to conflict with morally and legitimately accepted application of violence in that it might violate fundamental human rights. On the contrary, the criminal justice type of counterterrorism is less direct and focuses on areas other than the military area that do not have a direct link with terrorism, for example the economic and social areas. Furthermore, it tends to concentrate on radicalisation and combating radicalisation as a means to reduce terrorism. It is thus more focused on the prevention of terrorism. The disadvantage of this approach is that there is no concrete evidence that the aforementioned measures have the desired effect (Rineheart, 2010, p.37-38). Additionally, the great variety of signals deriving from the several areas to detect radicalisation and terrorism might result in less specific combating strategies (Eijkman & Schuurman, 2011). Therefore, one cannot be sure whether or not this approach to combat terrorism is effective. Apparently, it actually seems like both of these two broad approaches lack to offer the perfect method to combat terrorism effectively. Despite this, it does guide governments in selecting the broad type of approach towards counterterrorism.

According to Crelinsten (2014), besides the ‘hard’ war or military type and the ‘soft’ criminal justice type of counterterrorism, governments apply several sub approaches to specify their counterterrorism approach. Two out of the five types of these sub counterterrorist approaches are applied to both the war and criminal justice type of terrorism. Firstly, coercive counterterrorism. Coercive counterterrorism on the one hand emphasises hard power, particularly the government’s exclusive right to apply violence, that a government is allowed to use to combat terrorism, in order to deter people from executing terrorist attacks. On the other hand, it emphasises soft power, since it perceives terrorism as an extraordinary violation against the law with the aim to deter people from executing terrorist crimes. Therefore, the procedures and punishments are stricter. Thus, the coercive approach is a forcible approach, rather than a military or legally approach. However, since the application of one approach alone limits the efficiency of combating terrorism, the second approach, proactive counterterrorist approach with the objective to avoid terrorist attacks mainly by improving intelligence, is often combined with the coercive counterterrorism approach. Several methods to prevent terrorist attacks from happening have been developed, for instance amended mandates for border control and intelligence authorities as well as strict military observations and inspections. Thus, both hard and soft power types of counterterrorism utilise aspects of a proactive counterterrorist approach.

Next to this combination, there are three other sub approaches to counterterrorism. Those are generally only applied by governments with a predominantly ‘soft’ criminal justice counterterrorism approach. The three approaches can be applied by governments in combination with one another, since they cover several areas to operate in and together form a comprehensive counterterrorism strategy. However, they are not necessarily connected with each other. The third approach is persuasive counterterrorism, which entails methods to deal with the more expanded group than purely the terrorists themselves and focusses on proponents of terrorism as well. Here, communication strategies are the most significant means to track proponents and reduce the act of advocating terrorism. Governments decide on a strategy by adjusting the right type of communication to the right audience with the aim to deter people from joining terrorist organisations. Additionally, they seek to influence people into sharing information of terrorist organisations with national authorities in order to reduce terrorism. No military methods are applied here, resulting in the application by governments following the ‘soft’ criminal justice type of approach, rather than by governments following the ‘hard’ war or military type of approach. This approach as well as the aforementioned two approaches are mainly focusing on prevention, yet this is not enough to combat terrorism. Therefore, there is another approach where the focus is put on the result of terrorism. This fourth approach is defensive counterterrorism and consists of minimising the results of a terrorist attack. Main focus is put on the physical and mental wellness of the citizens. Methods to achieve this are solidifying certain spots; controlling and administering movements of for example citizens and currencies; and critical infrastructure protection. Enhancing these systems in the field of crisis response may improve a countries’ ability to minimise physical and mental damage after a terrorist attack. These activities are perceived as part of a soft power counterterrorism strategy.

Besides the variety of approaches regarding the activities to combat terrorism, there is one approach left that focuses on the sustainability of counterterrorism policies and strategies rather than on the actual activities. That is the final approach, long-term counterterrorism. This approach to counterterrorism is focused on durable strategies to combat terrorism by concentrating on the seeding motives to join in terrorist activities. Here, attention is paid to equal opportunities for all citizens as well as to progress and the fundamental rights of the society (pp. 2-11). The war or military approach to counterterrorism often focusses on short-term actions and therefore, lacks a long-term counterterrorism approach. Since there is not one perfect, flawless, all-embracing approach to counterterrorism, most governments decide on a comprehensive approach, combining certain aspects from the different approaches. Every government develops its own unique approach by aiming more attention to certain aspects than other governments. The differences in counterterrorism approaches can be seen in for example the counterterrorism approaches and strategies of the US and the EU.

## 3. Counterterrorism approach of the US

The counterterrorism approach of the US can be defined as a mainly coercive approach with the application of the war or military counterterrorism type to combat terrorism. This is inter alia reflected in its definition of counterterrorism in which the terms ´operations´ and ´offensive measures´ are used. In the aftermath of the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the president of the US of that time, President George W. Bush, provided a global war on terror approach signifying ‘’global efforts to mobilise against terrorism can be compared with those required for a world war’’ (Keohane, 2005, pp.6-7). The aim of the war on terror is to prevent terrorist attacks from happening by combatting terrorism and terrorists mainly at the military level. Therefore, the US military is allowed to use force and execute assaults to prevent potential terrorist attacks (Jackson, 2011, p. 393). This resulted in, inter alia, the beginning of the Afghanistan war in 2001 and the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Main attention was aimed at Islamic radicalism in general and at terrorist group Al Qaeda, who executed the 9/11 attacks and had their bases in these countries, in particular. Besides the military aspect, the US additionally developed instruments for intelligence, police and financial authorities to detect and lay hold on terrorists. Those instruments belong to the proactive approach to counterterrorism.

Especially during the Bush government, the counterterrorism approach of the US had been highly criticised by academia and other governments as well as by a part of the US society. Although this counterterrorism approach had been criticised by a part of the US society, this war on terror approach continues to be the dominant counterterrorism approach of the US until the present-day. The war on terror has become regulated and materialised by the US government through institutionalisation and therefore, is simply rather complex to change. Despite the changes provided by the successor of President George W. Bush, President Barack Obama, for example by prohibiting mistreating methods to examine terrorist defendants and the resignation of the military from Iraq, it is said that the war on terrorism approach itself did not change. It is rather the methodology to realise the war on terror that has changed. Moreover, it is argued that the war on terror approach to counterterrorism is not likely to change in the nearby future, due to the fact that it has become a significant implanted part in both the political and social field (Jackson, 2011, pp. 394-406).

Despite the argument that the war on terror approach continues to be the dominant approach for the US, others argue that there have been alterations after all. Wittendorp (Personal communication, November 24, 2016) argues that although the US counterterrorism approach is quite aggressive and coercive, the US is now additionally increasingly concentrating on counter-radicalisation, thus moving towards a more criminal justice type of counterterrorist approach. The main reason for this is the fact that the Islamic society in the US was perceived as being supple and therefore, less likely to turn to radicalisation or terrorism. On that account there was no focus on domestic terrorism. With the rise of Islamic State and the emergence foreign fighters, this perception has changed resulting in this gradual shift in focus and the application of a long-term counterterrorism approach in addition to the existing approaches.

To put it briefly, looking at the US counterterrorism strategy and policy one could conclude that the US applies a predominantly military or war type coercive and proactive approach, which is reflected in the war on terror. It concentrates on rather aggressive methods to combat terrorism globally and to protect the US from attacks similar to the 9/11 attacks. Although the war on terror and with that, the use of hard power, remains to be the dominant part of the US counterterrorism approach, there are certain noticeable focus shifts, for instance the relatively recent attention for counter-radicalisation.

## 4. Counterterrorism approach of the European Union

As mentioned previously, the counterterrorism approach of the US is highly criticised by other governments, particularly by European governments. Accordingly, the counterterrorism approach of the EU is considerably different from the US. However, this is not the exclusive reason for the differences between the counterterrorism approaches. The analysis and examination of the contrasts between the EU and US counterterrorist approaches are quite complex and problematic, due to the fact that the US is a state and the EU is a union of states (Stef Wittendorp, personal communication, November 24, 2016). The EU does not obtain the sovereign power in the area of counterterrorism. Therefore, it is limited in its counterterrorism approach. Furthermore, the EU does not possess its own military force and consequently, simply cannot have a military approach comparable to the US. The EU thus focusses on the legal approach of counterterrorism. This implies that the EU makes legal decisions concerning counterterrorism, which national governments then convert into the national legislation. Furthermore, it is important to note that not all member states have the same approach for the reason that every member state is facing its own level and type of terrorist threats and therefore develops its own approach (Wittendorp, personal communication, November 24, 2016).

Despite the limitations for the EU in the field of counterterrorism, one can still identify a distinct counterterrorism approach that all member states, at least to some extent, seem to follow. According to Wahl (2009) ‘’in the phase between the attacks in the United States of 9/11 and the attacks of Madrid of 11/3, the terrorism threat was perceived as an attack to a third country that must be assisted by the European Union‘’ (p.119). One could claim that this is another reason for the lack of focus on hard power. The threat of terrorism was simply not big enough for and close enough to the EU to result in hard power methods.

Until 2004, the counterterrorism approach of the EU was event-driven, meaning that only after terrorist events occurred, counterterrorism became a greater point of interest and led to revised policies. Subsequently, as the terrorist attacks diminished and there was an era of relative calmness, developments in counterterrorism policies slowed down (Hillebrand, 2013, p.98). The EU is convinced that terrorism is not just relying on or concerning one factor and therefore, there is a necessity for a broad approach towards counterterrorism, meaning that it combines different factors and areas with one another. In this case, those areas are intelligence, military, police and judicial factors (Keohane, 2005). However, a law enforcement approach is predominating the counterterrorism policy, which results in a major focus on the police and judicial sector (Hillebrand, 2013, p.98). Consequently, the EU applies a coercive counterterrorism approach with major focus on the criminal justice type of counterterrorism. The motto of the EU regarding counterterrorism, that is ‘fight against terrorism’, reflects the view of the EU on combating terrorism. Moreover, it reflects the difference with the approach of the US, which focuses on the ‘war of terror’. The EU and the member states’ governments disagree with this approach, because the EU favours a long-term political challenge of terrorism with the use of soft power rather than short-term and military means to combat terrorism (Keohane, 2005). The EU thus applies a long-term counterterrorism approach.

Europe’s history with terrorism led to the view that the EU needs to focus on the use of terrorism as a means, on reasons explaining why people decide to join terrorist groups and why these terrorist groups get loyalty from civilians. Additionally, the EU kept in mind the fact that instead of people from outside the EU, local citizens executed terrorist attacks, sometimes after returning from recruitment and training abroad (Dickey, 2005). Another point the EU stresses with its approach towards combating terrorism is to take into account the European Muslims. On the one hand, it wants to protect the minority rights and its Muslim population from counter reactions on terrorist activities. On the other hand, it seeks to reduce radicalisation and recruitment of European Muslims (Bureš, 2011, p. 74). Additionally, the EU approach towards counterterrorism after 9/11 has been mainly defined by the Madrid and London terrorist attacks. The terrorists that executed these attacks barely had connections with Al Qaeda or Islamic radicalisation as the terrorist were rather home-grown terrorist groups (Eijkman & Schuurman, 2011). Therefore, one could argue that the EU additionally follows a proactive approach in that it seeks to prevent terrorism before it results in terrorist attacks.

Besides the focus on domestic radicalisation as a result of the type of terrorist attacks that have been executed in the EU, it furthermore led to the focus on protection of inter alia the EU’s transportation and financial infrastructure. This is called critical infrastructure protection and belongs to the defensive counterterrorism approach (Wahl, 2009). The EU approach towards counterterrorism remained the same over time, the only developments can be seen in terms of target groups. This means that, instead of home-grown terrorists, the EU counterterrorism approach had been aimed at jihadist terrorists, particularly at Al Qaeda. Since the Paris and Brussels attacks, the EU is facing a new wave of terrorism which could have led to a different counterterrorism approach. However, this is not does not seem to be the case. The EU counterterrorism approach did not change substantially after the Paris and Brussels attacks, it rather has been intensified by the Paris and Brussels attacks (Wittendorp, personal communication, November 24, 2016) . However the focus group has shifted from Al Qaeda and home-grown terrorism to the IS and foreign fighters, thus slightly shifting away from the domestic approach.

In conclusion, the EU is influenced by its history of terrorism and applies a comprehensive approach including aspects of coercive, proactive, defensive and long-term counterterrorism approaches. Main attention is aimed at the criminal justice type and soft power in several policy areas concerned with counterterrorism. The prevention of radicalisation is the most significant point that the EU attempts to improve in order to combat terrorism. Although the EU is facing a new type and wave of terrorism, its approach did not change over time. The only change is the increased attention to a more foreign approach.

## 5. Factors contributing to the determination of a counterterrorism approach

Taking into account the different cases of the US and EU counterterrorism approaches, the case that the determination on a certain counterterrorism approach depends on several factors could be made. Firstly, an assumption of a government’s or a union’s counterterrorism approach can be identified by the definition it uses to describe the concept of counterterrorism. For instance, details related to military actions and repressive measures can indicate a war or military type of coercive and proactive approach towards counterterrorism as reflected in the US counterterrorism approach. On the contrary, a broad and general definition as described by the EU can indicate a comprehensive approach combining a variety of aspects from several approaches.

Although a definition may already reflect the counterterrorism approach of a government or union, it lacks to offer reasons and motives as to why a certain counterterrorism approach is utilised. Thus, a second factor is the size of terrorist threats. The counterterrorism approach of the US accompanied by the war on terror concept developed rapidly after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The 9/11 terrorist attacks have been the deadliest terrorist attacks of the US and one of the deadliest terrorist attacks in the world. Despite the fact that these attacks influenced the whole world, it did not result in similar counterterrorism approaches. Since the 9/11 attacks had been executed in the US, it is quite logical that the US felt a bigger size of terrorist threats than other governments or the EU. This may be a major reason for the US government to approach counterterrorism with a rather hard power concept, whereas the EU did not perceive the terrorist threat as considerable or close as the US and therefore, it did not move towards a hard power counterterrorism approach.

However, even after the terrorist threats increased in Europe after the Madrid and London terrorist attacks, the EU did continue its soft power approach. Therefore, there must be other factors contributing to the determination of a counterterrorism approach. The third factor, the type of terrorism, can further influence this determination. The terrorist attacks in the US had been executed by terrorist from outside the US with Islamist radical motives. On the contrary, the attacks in Europe in that period had been executed by domestic terrorists and had little to no connection with outside sources as for instance Al Qaeda. This could have contributed to the fact that the US focusses at a global level of counterterrorism, whereas the EU rather focusses on the EU level. Nevertheless, it does not explain the reason behind the lack of change in counterterrorism approaches after the increasing threats of Al Qaeda and more recently, after the Paris and Brussels attacks. Those attacks have been executed by both domestic terrorists and foreign fighters and therefore, one would assume that the EU’s counterterrorism approach could have changed into a counterterrorism approach more similar to the US’ counterterrorism approach. However, research found that this is not the case since after all, the counterterrorism approach of the EU is only intensified instead of altered. Therefore, there have to be more factors.

The history of a country or a region might contribute to the determination for certain counterterrorism approaches. Europe had been facing home-grown terrorism in the past and therefore, possesses a proactive criminal justice approach of counterterrorism with the focus on soft power tools, for instance the prevention of radicalisation of EU citizens. The US government did not perceive this type of domestic terrorists, or at least not to a degree equally to the EU and therefore, did not focus on these tools and approaches. Additionally, the composition of the EU and US contributed to the counterterrorism approaches of these two cases. The EU does not possess the same legal powers as the US, since it does not obtain sovereignty in the field of counterterrorism. Therefore, the EU simply cannot militarise its counterterrorism approach as it lacks its own military army. Knowledge of the factors contributing to the determination of a counterterrorism approach is a significant part of this research. As this research will provide recommendations for the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, one must be aware of the nature and roots of the current counterterrorism approach leading to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and policy. Only then one may be able to provide the appropriate and accurate recommendations for the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

## 6. Conclusion

There is no universal definition of counterterrorism and there is no universal approach towards counterterrorism. However, in order to research the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, it is important to define the concept of counterterrorism. Therefore, the concept of counterterrorism defined in the aim of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy seems to be the most appropriate definition for this research. Besides the various definitions, there are several approaches towards counterterrorism. The two broadest types are the war or military type of counterterrorism with hard power and the criminal justice type of counterterrorism with soft power. These two types can be further specified by applying coercive, proactive, persuasive, defensive and long-term counterterrorism approaches. Most governments rather seek to combine the several approaches than to simply focus on one approach. All governments have their own unique counterterrorism approaches and several factors contribute to the governments determinations of certain approaches. As explained by means of a comparison between the US and the EU, these factors can result in quite different counterterrorism approaches. A government’s approach towards counterterrorism can already be detected by its definition of counterterrorism. Besides this, factors contributing to the determination of a counterterrorism approach are the size of terrorist threats; the distance to terrorist attacks and threats; the type of terrorism threatening the area; the history of a government in relation to terrorism; and the composition of the government. These factors and the various types of counterterrorism approaches are significant to this research for the reason that they are inevitable to provide appropriate recommendations for the EU and its counterterrorism strategy and policy.

# Methodology

For the research methodology literature has been used. In order to: review literature critically; study research ethics; collect data through an in-depth interview; analyse the data; and eventually, write the thesis, the methods described by Lewis, Saunders and Thornhill (2012) were applied. This book is actually meant for business researches, however, the methods described in the book were also applicable to this thesis. The following methodology was applied in this thesis. The methodological approach taken in this thesis was a mixed methodology based on primary and secondary data derived from qualitative methods.

The secondary data consisted of desk research. First of all, the research data in the theoretical framework was drawn from several theories and studies concerning the definition of counterterrorism and the various approaches to counterterrorism. Journals, news articles, academic essays, reports and literature have been consulted in order to collect the current available information concerning the European Union’s counterterrorism strategy and policies. Furthermore, reports, press releases and EU documents providing research data of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and the development of the strategy have been utilised. Additionally, various studies and theories concerning the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, its perpetrators, the EU´s role in counterterrorism and possibilities to improve the EU´s counterterrorism policy have been applied in this thesis. Collecting and analysing secondary data through desk research and literature reviews was the first step in this research. This allowed for the discovery of the available information concerning the research topic and of the absent, yet necessary information. For the absent information, primary data, that is an in-depth interview, was applied. Each individual sub question was dealt with differently. Therefore, the specific methodology of each sub question is described in more details below.

The first sub question is: ‘’What was the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy before the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?’’. To answer this question, secondary data consisting of desk research was applied to create a policy and strategy analysis. Documents from the Council of the European Union present the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy before the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. This helped to describe the former strategy. Furthermore, literature was used. There are several academic books written about the EU’s counterterrorism policy and the issues, challenges and shortcomings that the EU faces regarding this policy. Several scholars on political sciences and terrorism contributed to the aforementioned books. Therefore, individual works from these scholars were used here. Moreover, there are books presenting the approach of the EU towards counterterrorism before the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Additionally, academic journal articles as well as academic studies were utilised to answer this research question.

The second, third and fourth sub question were put into one chapter within research results. However, the methodology of each sub question is explained differently. For the second sub question, that is: ‘’How did the EU react to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?’’, the following methods have been used. By means of news articles and scholars’ studies, the reaction of the EU and its member states were studied and applied to the research results. Thus, secondary data provided the necessary information to describe the reaction and with that, to answer this sub question. More precisely, different news articles from newspapers as well as press releases from the EU websites present the reaction of, for example the European Parliament and the European Commission, to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Moreover, the European Parliamentary Research Service provides research on the response of the EU to the terrorist attacks. Finally, researchers’ reports studying the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks provided an objective and academic view on potential shortcomings of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and the EU’s response to the terrorist attacks. The reaction of the EU implies the proposals and adoptions the EU made to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy as well as to the overall counterterrorism policy. Additionally, the priorities and focus of the EU after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks were classified as the reaction of the EU.

The third question is: ‘’What changes have been made in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy?’’. To answer the third sub question, a combination of primary and secondary data was used. A policy and strategy analysis through the use of secondary data consisted of Europol documents describing and explaining the adjustments made to EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and the role of several EU institutions in it. The website from the European Council and the Council of Europe provided an overview of documents about the developments of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, the overall counterterrorism policy and the legislation regarding counterterrorism. Furthermore, the Centre for European Policy Studies established studies on the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and the changes made after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, as well as the challenges the EU faces with changing its strategy and policy.

Besides gathering and analysing this information, primary data was used in order to gain more detailed knowledge about the changes made to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Through an in-depth interview with counterterrorism expert Stef Wittendorp, it was possible to find motives for the particular changes. Furthermore, by means of follow-up questions, information about the practical effect of the changes was gathered. Moreover, it allowed for the clarification of information given by secondary data which was not precise enough. Additionally, it provided new and specific high quality information suitable for this research since the researcher was able to ask specific questions and got information different from secondary data. A semi-structured interview was done including prepared questions based on the information derived from secondary data. However, additionally, questions as a reaction to the answers given during the interview were asked. The types of questions used during the interview were open, clarifying questions and probing questions (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill, 2012, pp.391-393). Additionally, short reflective questions were asked, in order to assure that the answers given during the interview were interpreted correctly by the researcher. This combination of primary and secondary data resulted in a more detailed description and answer to this sub question.

The fourth sub question, ‘’What proposals are made to change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy further?’’, is an extension of the second and third sub question. Due to the recentness of this situation, some initiatives and proposals will be made during the next months or years. Therefore, only current initiatives have been studied in order to provide potential further changes of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. To answer this question, the researcher applied secondary data, mainly consisting of EU news articles, academic articles and documents to provide an overview of recent initiatives. By means of the interview with the EU counterterrorism expert, primary data has been used as well. This allowed for increased knowledge about current discussions regarding the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

The fifth and final sub question is: ‘’What changes of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy are recommended?’’. To answer this question, once again a combination of primary and secondary data was used. Regarding secondary data, various scholars and researchers analysed the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and provided their views and theories on the way the strategy should be shaped differently in order to be more effective. These views and theories were combined into a set of recommendations. Furthermore, primary data was of great importance to answer this question. Therefore, the arranged in-depth interview with Stef Wittendorp established additional recommendations. The types of questions used during the interview were open, clarifying and probing questions (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill, 2012, pp.391-393). The clarifying questions contributed to the answer why certain recommendations were made. Additionally, the researcher applied short, reflective questions here in order to assure the correct interpretation of the answers.

After the research results, an analysis was made. The researcher applied the research results combined with new information derived from literature as well as primary data and compared several theories, opinions and recommendations. Subsequently, the researchers’ own argument and recommendations concerning the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy were discussed, substantiated and concluded. Thereby, the research question of this thesis was answered.

To resume, suitable methods for this research were desk-research, meaning literature research, policy/strategy analyses and an in-depth interview. These methods matches this research since the combination of the aforementioned methods gave the researcher the ability to gather all the changes made within the EU organizations and its strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Furthermore, it provided recommendations from several scholars and counterterrorism experts. Finally, it allowed for an analysis on how the EU should change its counterterrorism strategy after the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussel terrorist attacks.

Besides the clarification of the research methodology, an ethical examination is necessary. As mentioned previously, primary data was gathered through an interview with Stef Wittendorp. The interviewee participated voluntary in this research. By means of an informed consent form, the interviewee was informed about the aims of research. Furthermore, the interviewee additionally gave permission to record the interview. The recording was only accessible by the researcher. Besides this, the interviewee allowed to use his name when referencing to the interview. The formulation of the interview as well as the research as a whole was established with great discretion in order to guarantee the use of respectable, non-discriminatory language and terminology. Besides this, the research has been executed with the maximum degree of objectivity. Finally, all works of other writers utilised during this research have been noticed by means of APA referencing described in the APA Ethics Code as part of the Students Ethics Form.

# 1. The European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy

## 1.1 Towards a European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy

The European Union has been working together in the area of combating terrorism for several decades. During the late 1970s, the EU was facing waves of ethno federalist terrorism which arose from within the EU, for instance the IRA activities in Ireland and Britain. Therefore, the EU decided to start cooperating and installed the TREVI Group, a group in which police officials gathered to exchange information and develop strategies to combat terrorism (Keohane, 2005). After the signing of the Maastricht Treaty, this type of police cooperation became the third pillar of the EU. Other foreign and security policies including terrorist aspects fell under the second pillar, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (Delivet, 2016). The most significant steps towards a common counterterrorism strategy were taken after the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States. The first step was the adoption of the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism in 2002, calling for convergence of legislation concerning sentences of terrorists and terrorist acts with a Union-wide definition of terrorism (Kaunert & Léonard, 2013, p.4). Furthermore, Europol received more resources to combat terrorism as well as initiatives for converging national police forces operations. Additionally, the EU established Eurojust, a judicial cooperation unit that helps member states with transnational crime investigations. Moreover, the European External Borders Agency FRONTEX supported cooperation in the area of national border control (Keohane, 2005). In short, before the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, cooperation and efforts to unify national counterterrorism policies and legislation already existed.

In 2004, the Madrid train bombings made the EU a victim of radical Islamic terrorism rather than ethno federalist terrorism. The EU’s response was the establishment of the Hague Programme, providing for security and judicial cooperation as well as Union-wide counterterrorism measures. Furthermore, an EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator was appointed to monitor and evaluate the developments of the EU as a counterterrorism actor (Keohane, 2005). Accordingly, one could state that the EU took significant measures to fight terrorism and, especially after the Madrid bombings, intensified its efforts to become a more important counterterrorism actor.

## 1.2 The European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy

Despite the previous steps taken by the EU, especially after the Madrid terrorist attack, the EU was not convinced that these measures were sufficient to combat terrorism effectively. The ultimate objective of the EU is to have an EU-wide common strategy to combat terrorism. Therefore, in December 2005, the Council of the European Union adopted the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. This strategy consists of four main points, notably prevent, protect, pursue and respond. The overall aim of the strategy is: ‘’To combat terrorism globally while respecting human rights, and make Europe safer, allowing its citizens to live in an area of freedom, security and justice’’ (Council of the European Union, 2005, p.2). Although this is a quite broad and general aim, the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy seeks to specify more explicit objectives in the four fields of counterterrorism, corresponding to its comprehensive criminal justice counterterrorism approach.

The first point, prevent, implies to deter people from joining terrorist groups. The method to achieve this is to work on the causes leading to radicalisation and recruitment, with a main focus on Al-Qaeda and similar religious terrorist groups. The EU needs to investigate motives of people to join terrorist groups, as well as the manners of terrorist groups to attract and recruit people. Special focus is put on the easy access to radicalism and terrorism through the Internet as well as on the increased opportunities to travel within the EU. Combating radicalisation is the responsibility of national governments, yet national governments are unable to do this alone. Therefore, the EU supports information sharing, coordination of the various national policies and criteria for good practices. Furthermore, the EU supports integration and intercultural communication to decline feelings of discrimination and thereby potential motives leading to radicalisation. Additionally, cooperation with non-EU countries is necessary to combat radicalisation and recruitment effectively on the international level.

The second point is protect and entails protecting the society and infrastructure from terrorist attacks, for instance by diminishing weaknesses. Furthermore, an objective in this area is to decrease the consequences if a terrorist attack occurs. Despite the national responsibility to protect citizens, there still are various means left for the EU to act in this field. Border security is agreed upon on EU level. Therefore, the EU can act to improve border security, although it requires enhanced cooperation between member states to share experiences and establish new, unified strategies. Border security institution FRONTEX is the EU institution used to increase border controls and provide risk analysis. Moreover, in order to refuse someone perceived as being a potential threat access to the EU, the Council of the European Union initiated the establishment of the Visa Information System, VIS, and the second generation Schengen Information System, SIS II, to collect and share travelling data with one another and other EU or national institutions. Moreover, improving transport security and the protection of public areas are objectives written down in the strategy. On the international level, the EU must engage in inter alia the transport security in non-EU countries, since it affects the security of the EU (Council of the European Union, 2005). Considering the numerous objectives, the ‘protect’ part seems to be the most extensive part of the strategy.

The third point, pursue, signifies actions to detect and arrest suspects of terrorist attacks. Since security on EU level is of equal importance as security on national level, the EU encourages member states’ attempts to stop terrorists and establishes common investigations of risks and threats. Moreover, a significant aspect to respond effectively and unified to terrorists is cooperation and convergence in law enforcement.Due to the free movement of people within the EU, it can be difficult for member states to locate and arrest terrorists. The European Arrest Warrant is a rather effective tool to do this and needed to be adopted by the member states in order to provide evidence sharing between member states.

Moreover, Europol and Eurojust need to be used more frequently and efficiently to exchange information between member states. Transnational investigations need to be executed through Joint Investigation Teams, consisting of investigators of several member states established by Europol and Eurojust. Besides these measures, the EU perceives the block of funding and access to material as well as the breakdown of communication and terrorist networks as necessities. Therefore, the EU creates a comprehensive strategy to combat terrorist financing. This strategy should be evaluated and, if necessary, be changed in order to improve. Finally, if required, it needs to assist non-EU countries in pursuing terrorists. One significant point in the area of pursuing is that these measures should be executed whilst respecting privacy and protection laws and international fundamental rights laws.

Responding is the fourth and final point of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Obviously, Europe without terrorism seems to be a utopia since the EU could never fully stop terrorism. Therefore, it is necessary for the EU to create means to respond to terrorist attacks. The EU already possessed various means, for instance the Civil Protection Mechanism, to accommodate support from member states to a certain member state in crisis. However, in order to further improve and unify its response plenty more measures need to be taken, for example the sharing of member states´ resources in transnational crises. Then the Mechanism can additionally be used by the EU as a tool to complement resources if necessary. Another point stressed here is the need for scenarios discussing attacks that are most likely to happen combined with the most accurate response of member states to those attacks. Furthermore, each member state needs to examine whether or not it possesses the capabilities to respond to terrorist attacks. Finally, on the international level it is important for the EU to take care of its citizens outside the EU who have been affected by terrorism (Council of the European Union, 2005). ‘Respond’ is by far the smallest area of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and seems to get the least attention from the EU.

As mentioned previously, member states have the main responsibility in combating terrorism. By means of this strategy, the EU seeks to initiate Union-wide counterterrorism methods as well as to contribute and enrich the national means. The EU’s research & development programmes could contribute to studies and subsequently to changes to various parts of the EU Counterterrorism Strategy. This strategy is the first EU-wide plan to combat terrorism in different fields and can be seen as a manual for the EU as a counterterrorism actor. To monitor the implementation and the progress of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, the European Council is assigned to evaluate this every six months. The EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator and the European Commission provide reports on the progress of a more detailed action plan. In order to achieve the objectives laid down in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, the strategy is extended with a revision of the 2004 Action Plan, consisting of explicit measures and goals together with the division of tasks in each category of the strategy.

## 1.3 Challenges

Equally to other policies and strategies formed by the EU, the EU did face and still faces several challenges whilst composing its counterterrorism policy. The first and foremost challenge is that the EU seeks to operate in an area where the sovereignty lays with the national governments of member states. The former EU CTC Gijs de Vries, as noted by Bureš (2013, p.90), states:

Police forces, intelligence agencies, the judiciary, customs officers and other officials all remain instruments of national governments, under the control of national parliaments. The EU’s role is to support these national authorities, not to replace them or to duplicate their work.

Therefore, the EU can simply not act the way it probably desires. In addition to this, the EU faces several institutional challenges. Monika Boer, as written by Lugna (2006, p.117), states that counterterrorism is

a crowded policy area, which harbours a multiplication of actors who may not all be seeking to achieve the same policy objectives leads to obstructions along the decision-making process, or – seen from a slightly more optimistic perspective - to duplications and inefficiency regarding the achievement of policy objectives.

Since the counterterrorism policy and strategy includes various institutions, agencies and policy areas, coordination of the policy and strategy is quite a challenge. For example, EU legislation on cash transfers implies the involvement of financial interests of national governments in the EU counterterrorism policy. This contributes to the complexity of the EU counterterrorism policy. In other words, the extended cooperation of member states in the area of counterterrorism actually made and will make the counterterrorism strategy and policy more complex. The national governments of member states are already facing complexities whilst coordinating its domestic counterterrorism policy due to the involvement of several national institutions and agencies (Lugna, 2006). Obviously, a counterterrorism policy and strategy on EU level combining the national policies, institutions and agencies of all the EU member states is an even greater challenge. Despite these challenges, it is important to recognise that after all, the EU did create a counterterrorism strategy with common objectives that, at least partly, had been reached.

## 1.4 Realisation and developments of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy

An important question to research is to what extent the objectives laid down in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy had been carried out until the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Until the year 2015, that is before the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU achieved several objectives of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. One reason for this is the fact that the Lisbon Treaty of 2009 abolished the pillar structure of the EU and simplified decision-making processes in many areas, some including terrorist aspects (European Commission, 2009). Therefore, it became easier to provide legislation and directives for the EU counterterrorism policy.

In the area of prevention, the main achievement is an improved framework decision in 2008, leading to the convergence of national legislation on the prosecution of terrorists, as three types of criminal acts concerning terrorism became prohibited in all member states (European Union, June 2015). In the field of protection, improvements have been made in border security, especially with the establishment of the SIS II and the VIS. These two systems allow for the exchange of personal and visa data, including finger prints, in order to improve the EU’s external border control (European Commission, 2010). However, the challenge is to comply these systems and measures with data protection rules and privacy protection of the citizens.

In the third area, pursue, many improvements have been made, for instance legislation and policy actions in addition to the 2005 Money Laundering Directive to reduce terrorist funding (European Commission, 2010). Moreover, especially with regard to information sharing, the EU carried out considerable developments with, for instance, the 2006 Data Retention Directive concerning information of terrorist’s telecommunication use. Since this data remains on the national level, the EU tried to enhance the capacities of Europol in EU-wide information sharing in order to pursue terrorists. Consequently, in 2010, Europol became an EU agency with additional tasks and with that, a counterterrorism actor of increased importance (Council of the European Union, 2012). Nevertheless, Zimmerman, as noted by Bureš (2013, p.88), argues that the lack of a powerful mandate leaves Europol less effective than it potentially could be, since it needs to rely on the information that national authorities deliver to the database of Europol, while member states generally are reluctant to share information. However, the EU Terrorism Situation & Trend Reports established by Europol became a major element in the constitution and amendments of counterterrorism policies of the EU and individual member states. Europol thus has become of increased importance, and its activities contributed to the overall development and effectiveness of the EU’s counterterrorism actions and policies. Besides this, through the Passenger Name Record system among the EU and the US, the EU made progress in external information sharing (European Commission, 2010). Although a PNR system within the EU had been proposed, this system had not been adopted before the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels took place.

Regarding the fourth area, respond, the EU Civil Protection Mechanism certainly developed, however, it still needs further improvement. Additionally, in 2009, an important article regarding cooperation in counterterrorism had been added to the Treaty on the Function of the European Union. Article 222 of the TFEU created the solidarity clause, an option for EU member states to cooperate in the prevention of and response to terrorist attacks in an EU member state with the formulation of rules and procedures (European Union, n.d.). Thus, despite the fact that response seems to be the least focused strategy area, the strategy actually significantly developed here.

Considering all these developments, it can be concluded that in the period between the establishment of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU accomplished various objectives documented in the strategy. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the EU additionally argued that further improvements are necessary.

## 1.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, one could state that since the 9/11 and Madrid terrorist attacks, the EU has become increasingly important in combating terrorism. The EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and its Action Plan have been established to combat terrorism as a Union. The objectives laid down in the strategy and action plan can be divided in prevent, protect, pursue and respond and comply with the counterterrorism approach of the EU. One could argue that over the years, various objectives laid down in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and its Action Plan were met, and therefore, the counterterrorism policy should be improved. In all four areas, significant developments have been made, especially towards radicalisation, financing, information sharing and the role of Europol. Despite this, further improvements are still necessary.

All in one, since the establishment of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy the EU expanded its role in counterterrorism. However, there is still much work left in order to create a more unified and effective EU counterterrorism policy. Moreover, as shown by the terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels in November 2015 and March 2016, the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy was not effective enough to prevent the terrorist attacks nor to rapidly pursue the suspects of the attacks, as will be discussed in the next chapter. One can assume that, equally to the Madrid terrorist attacks, the Paris and Brussels attacks give rise to the idea that the EU’s counterterrorism policy must alter. As a result the question evokes whether or not the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy should change and, if so, by what means.

# 2. Development of the European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks

In the years 2015 and 2016, the European Union faced several terrorist attacks. However, there are two terrorist attacks that mobilise the EU to act and adjust its counterterrorism policy to the contemporary terrorist threats. These attacks are the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015 and Brussels terrorist attacks in March 2016. Firstly, the terrorist attacks will be described, and secondly, the failures that emerged in relation to the terrorist attacks will be argued. Thereafter, the reaction of the EU, including the most significant developments of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy will be discussed. Subsequently, the relation between the EU’s reaction and the EU’s counterterrorism approach and strategy will be explained. Finally, a conclusion will be made.

## 2.1. Description of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks

On November 13, 2015, the Paris terrorist attacks took place. The attacks included several assaults, for example bombings and shootings, and were carried out at various places in Paris. The attacks were executed by a total of nine attackers. Seven of them died during the attacks. The day after, Islamic State claimed responsibility for the attacks. Hereafter, two people, identified as Salah Abdeslam and Mohamed Abrini, were left suspected of involvement in the Paris attacks (BBC, 2015). The terrorists turned out to be linked to Belgium. The majority of the attackers in Paris were Belgian citizens or had connections with Belgian jihadists. This was further confirmed by the arrests of Salah Abdeslam and Mohamed Abrini on March 18, 2016 and April 8, 2016, since the two had been arrested in Belgium.

On March 22, 2016, three bomb explosions took place in Brussels. Once again, IS claimed responsibility for the attacks. Three attackers died during the explosions, however, one suspect escaped the scene at the airport and fled. This suspect turned out to be Mohamed Abrini, the man who was already suspected of involvement in the Paris terrorist attacks in November 2015. He remained at large until the police arrested him on April 8, 2016. Additionally, the Belgian, French and German police arrested several other people suspected of engagement in the Brussels attacks. Once again, the attackers and suspects had been born and/or raised in Belgium. Another link with the Paris attacks found by the police was the type of explosives used for both of the attacks (BBC, April 9, 2016). Due to the facts that at least one person was involved in both of the attacks and that the terrorists used the same type of explosives, the presumption that the terrorist attacks were linked with each other was confirmed.

## 2.2 Failures

After several studies of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, one could argue that various failures have been made. On the one hand, some experts argue that France, Belgium and the EU failed at several points. It is even claimed that the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks could have been prevented if these failures, for instance the lack of exchange of information between national security and intelligence services, would not have been present (Chrisafis, 2016). This suggests that the EU can improve its counterterrorism policy and strategy in order to prevent terrorist attacks equally to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks from happening. Wittendorp (Personal communication, November 24, 2016) on the other hand questions this, since prevention work involves human activities. Therefore, the possibility of failures is inevitable. Moreover, the EU already possesses a variety of means to prevent terrorism, thus there is only a little remainder left for the EU to improve. In addition to failures before the attacks, France, Belgium and the EU got criticised for failing in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Although there are different opinions on criticising the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy with regard to the Paris and Brussels attacks, it is important to discuss the failures in order to provide recommendations for the EU to change its counterterrorism strategy and subsequently, to improve its role in counterterrorism.

One result of the investigations is that several terrorists turned out to be noted by the Belgian and/or French intelligence services. However, the intelligence services lacked to exchange information with one another. Therefore, the Paris attackers were able to travel to Belgium after the Paris attacks. Besides this, in both of the countries a few attackers were able to disappear from the radar, travel to Syria and come back to Europe without getting caught on the radar of the intelligence and security services (BBC, April 27, 2016). As a result, both of the countries as well as the EU as a whole got criticised for the lack of information and intelligence sharing and for failures in external border security.

In addition to these failures, another issue which can be seen as a failure is the fact that France and Belgium did not completely follow the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and the EU counterterrorism policy. For example, after the Paris attacks, France utilised the mutual assistance article to oblige other member states to help France in combating IS in Syria. However, France did not utilise the solidarity clause, which is part of the strategy, in order to receive assistance by member states in preventing new terrorist attacks in France. The mutual assistance consists mainly of military support in the fight against IS in Syria. Besides this, the assistance from member states seems to stay at bilateral levels without the use of EU institutions (European Political Strategy Centre, 2015). Therefore, one could argue that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy was not used as desired, for the reason that France sought to utilise the mutual assistance clause, which is not documented in the strategy, rather than applying the solidarity clause, which is part of the EU’s strategy. Additionally, cooperation remained at the bilateral level, while the article on mutual assistance is aimed at EU-wide cooperation. Despite this, France additionally took measures that do comply with the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. President Hollande called for investments in the security sector, for example in border security, in order to better protect France from terrorism. Furthermore, the law on blocking websites with a jihadist character was revised with the aim to stop recruitment and propaganda of IS through the Internet (McPartland, 2016). These measures do follow the lines of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

In the case of Belgium, the neglect of existing databases led to criticism. Belgium lacked the implementation and effective use of the EU databases, for example SIS II (HLN, 2016). Because of this neglect, the Paris attackers were able to enter Belgium and to remain at large for quite a while. Furthermore, Belgium got criticised for the reason that it neglected an EU note about shortcomings in the airport safety of Belgian airports (BBC, April 15, 2016). The SIS II as well as aviation protection are important points written down in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy thus making it significant parts of the EU counterterrorism policy.

All in one, failures concerning the periods before and after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks can primarily be found in the areas of prevention, information sharing, intelligence sharing and external border control. One could argue that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy was not fully implemented by the member states before as well as after the terrorist attacks. Although several measures taken by national governments after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks themselves comply with the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, the level at which these measures are executed is not the level that is emphasised in the strategy. In other words, the objective of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, that is to have an EU-wide common strategy to combat terrorism, is not reached, due to national governments lacking to entirely follow the objectives laid down in the strategy to the extent that it necessary to combat terrorism in a unified way. This suggests that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy should change in order to prevent failures equally to those seen before and after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

## 2.3 The reaction of the European Union

After the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the issue of counterterrorism is highly prioritised on the EU agenda. For instance, the European Commission starts infringement procedures on member states lacking the implementation of earlier adopted decisions and regulations concerning counterterrorism (Bigo et al., 2015). Besides this general measure, in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU has several ideas on how to improve its counterterrorism policy. Despite the several ideas and proposed measures, only a few proposals have already been adopted. An overview of the EU’s most significant adoptions as reaction to the terrorist attacks in combination with the potential changes to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy will be described and clarified in chronological order. Thereafter, a number of noteworthy current proposals for further changes will be argued.

### 2.3.1 The establishment of the European Counter Terrorism Centre

One particular point of concern for the EU after the Paris and Brussels attacks is information and intelligence sharing. The EU stresses to intensify cooperation and information exchange from member states to one another as well as to Europol. Moreover, the EU points out the importance of the quality of data within the data systems (EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator, 2016). However, there are disagreements on the means and the extent by which this should be achieved. For instance, some EU institutions aim major attention on the interoperability of the several EU information and intelligence databases, whereas the other institutions seek to increase the databases themselves (Council of the European Union, October 2016). Despite the disagreements, the EU did adopt several measures concerning information sharing in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

One significant measure is the establishment of the European Counter Terrorism Centre. After the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU decided on the ECTC within Europol which, besides information sharing, should enhance operational cooperation in combating terrorism by establishing cross-national investigation teams. This ECTC came into existence in January 2016. The ECTC is a new platform where member states can share and exchange information and coordinate their counterterrorism operations. According to Europol (November 25, 2015), the ECTC will be:

focusing on foreign terrorist fighters, the trafficking of illegal firearms and terrorist financing. Member States will second counter-terrorism experts to the ECTC to form an enhanced cross-border investigation support unit, capable of providing quick and comprehensive support to the investigation of major terrorist incidents in the EU.

Barely two months after its establishment, the ECTC was already required to operate on a major case. Immediately after the Brussels terrorist attacks, Europol provided the ECTC to help with the investigation and detection of the suspects of these terrorist attacks (Council of the European Union, May 2016). The establishment of the ECTC is a major addition to Europol’s counterterrorism role. It is a method for member states to work towards increased information sharing and cooperation while being under the supervision of an EU agency. This way, the EU increases its role in counterterrorism and contributes to a more unified counterterrorism policy for all EU member states. The ECTC aims special attention to foreign fighters, although they are not a point of focus in the initial EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. This supports the statement that the focus of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy changes as a result of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

### 2.3.2 The adoption of the Passenger Name Record System

A good example of the disagreements within the EU concerning information sharing is the Passenger Name Record system. After the Paris terrorist attacks, the proposal of a European PNR system was partly favoured, while others questioned its effectiveness (Justice and Home Affairs, 2015). Additionally, it is important to note that only two years earlier the PNR system directive was rejected by the Council of the European Union for the reason that, in their view, it might challenge the protection of data and fundamental rights of the citizens (European Parliamentary Research Service Blog, 2015). However, after the Brussels terrorist attacks, in April 2016, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the directive after all. Therefore, one could conclude the Paris and Brussels attacks led to a new perception on the PNR system.

The directive provides guidelines on the exchange of passengers data from all arriving and departing flights into and out of the EU. This exchange takes place between air services and national authorities concerned with terrorism and is facilitated by a national Passenger Name Unit. Furthermore, it defines situations in which exchange is allowed to take place. Additionally, the protection and duration of storage of information is described in this directive. Before the directive, PNR systems already existed and various member states already applied PNR data to investigation purposes. However, each member state possessed its own regulations, and there was a lack of guidelines at EU-level. One remarkable aspect is that the directive advises member states to additionally apply the PNR system to flights within the EU, yet this is not compulsory. As a result of the contemporary threats, particularly after the Paris and Brussels attacks, all member states commit themselves to follow this advice (Home Affairs Council, 2016). This directive replenishes the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy as it provides an information sharing manual for member states, and information sharing is a significant objectives within the strategy. However, the directive does not change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Rather, it is a measure to further intensify the strategies’ objective concerning information sharing within the EU.

### 2.2.3 Extended mandate for Europol

In addition to the aforementioned measures, the EU requested the Commission to propose a modified mandate for Europol in order to increase its contribution to increased information sharing and subsequently, its contribution to counterterrorism. Therefore, besides the establishment of the ECTC, the EU adopted a regulation for Europol in May 2016, consisting of new principles to increase Europol’s power. As mentioned previously, the challenge for Europol is to increase the information submission of member states. Therefore, the new regulation sets up rules to urge member states to share information with Europol. Moreover, Europol’s new task is to inform EU institutions about the degree of information sharing of member states. In this way, the EU may consider to take further measures to compel member states to share information.

Besides the improvement of information sharing, the new regulation additionally seeks to improve Europol´s role in preventing terrorism. Firstly, the regulation improves the responding abilities of Europol, since it reduces the criteria and simplifies the process to establish specific investigation groups to react to upcoming threats. Secondly, it enables Europol to cooperate with the private sector, for example with Internet providers and social media companies, in order to detect and remove terrorist propaganda and with that, to prevent terrorism (Police Cooperation/Justice and Home Affairs, 2016). Since prevention and information sharing are important points within the strategy, this extended mandate complements a substantial part of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. However, it is important to note that Europol’s extended mandate augments the strategy rather than it changes the strategy.

### 2.3.4 Plan supporting prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism

Besides information and intelligence sharing, as seen in the adoption for an extended mandate for Europol, the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks bring up reactions regarding prevention. As a result of the Europol’s investigations, Europol published a report with its main findings of IS and the Paris terrorist attacks in addition to its annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report. It discusses the modus operandi of IS, for example the use of foreign fighters, and describes possible motives for young people to join IS or to operate in the name of IS. The investigations and results are complemented with possible scenarios of future terrorist attacks in Europe (Europol, January 2016). Although not every scenario can be included and one should always keep in mind other tactics, this report may be useful to develop common operational actions to prevent and react to future terrorist attacks.

Another trend revealed by Europol’s investigations is the connection between terrorism and criminality. Criminality seems to be connected to terrorism for the reason that all of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attackers had a criminal background (Walt, 2016). The EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator agrees with Europol that one should pay attention to the criminal background of suspects in order to detect suspects and prevent attacks. As mentioned previously, the EU focusses on foreign fighters as main threat to the EU (Justice and Home Affairs, 2016). Therefore, the EU CTC argues that radicalisation is one of the most important things to tackle in order to reduce the number of foreign fighters, and that prevention should take place at the local level rather than at the national level (Banks, 2016). Thus, after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, in the area of prevention the EU focusses on foreign fighters, IS, criminality and radicalisation. This focus is reflected in the EU’s new plan to prevent radicalisation.

In addition to the extended mandate for Europol, one significant measure in the area of prevention is a plan supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism, adopted by the EU in June 2016. With this plan, the EU seeks to assist member states to prevent radicalisation. Before the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU already addressed the problem of radicalisation and the need to prevent radicalisation in accordance with the ‘prevent’ part of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. However, only after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, explicit measures to support the prevention of radicalisation have been discussed and adopted. The plan consists of the following seven fields where the EU can assist member states:

1. Supporting research, evidence building, monitoring and networking;
2. Countering terrorist propaganda and hate speech online;
3. Addressing radicalisation in prisons;
4. Promoting inclusive education and EU common values;
5. Promoting an inclusive, open and resilient society and reaching out to young people;
6. The security dimension of addressing radicalisation and;
7. The international dimension (European Commission, June 2016, p.3).

In order to provide this assistance, all EU institutions and agencies engaged in counterterrorism should follow the measures laid down in the plan. The EU Counter Terrorism Strategy already pointed the urge for the EU to support member states in their actions to prevent radicalisation, however, this was very broad and general. After the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the ‘prevent’ part of the strategy has been extended with this plan. This measure can be seen as an addition to and an intensification of the existing objectives documented in the ‘prevent’ area of the strategy, as it addresses specific roles for EU institutions and agencies to contribute to prevention while respecting the national sovereignty and responsibility in this area. Therefore, one could state that the Plan supporting prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism augments the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

### 2.3.5 Establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard

After the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, another particular point of concern for the EU is border control. Therefore, the EU emphasises the further improvement of border control and border management with the cooperation of Europol and FRONTEX and the use of existing databases, for instance the SIS II (Bigo et al., 2015). Furthermore, the EU stressed that mandate of FRONTEX needed to be extended in order to achieve inter alia this cooperation. This resulted in the adoption of the European Border and Coast Guard. The EU was already occupied with a EBCG. However, no proposal had been made until December 15, 2015, one month after the Paris terrorist attacks (European Commission, 2015). A reason for this is the migratory movement that terrorists might have used to enter Europe. Therefore, it is said that the Paris terrorist attacks led to the rapid proposal of the EBCG.

In September 2016, the Council of the EU approved the proposal for the establishment of the EBCG. The task of the EBCG is to manage external border control. This complies with the view of the Council of the EU to improve border control by improving its management. The agency actually replaced FRONTEX, only the EBCG possesses additional powers and tasks. It does not replace the external border control executed by national authorities. Instead, it facilitates the evaluation of member states’ border control performances. If necessary, it additionally assists member states in improving their work. Furthermore, the agency is allowed to share information gathered during border controls with other EU agencies as well as with national agencies if the information contains terrorist or other criminal threats. Finally, the EBCG agency is able to obtain information from the SIS II and VIS (FRONTEX European Border and Coast Guard, 2016). The EBCG thus has a comprehensive package of tasks.

The EU Counter Terrorism Strategy discusses the importance of FRONTEX as main actor in external border control. However, after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, as the request for increased border controls arises, additionally, the request to position FRONTEX as main actor in external border control management emerges (Nogueroles Garcia, 2016). This measure thus changes the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy for the reason that it adds a new focus point, that is border control management. The new mandate and tasks of FRONTEX resulting in the establishment of the EBCG seek to improve both external border security of the EU and information sharing within the EU. The EBCG thus augments multiple areas of the strategy since information sharing and border controls are important objectives in the areas of ‘prevent’, ‘protect’ and ‘pursue’. In conclusion, this measure both changes and complements the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

### 2.3.6 Measures in progress

Besides the adopted measures, various proposed measures concerning counterterrorism are currently in progress. Since it is not within the scope of this research to discuss every individual proposal, only the most significant proposals as a result of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks are discussed. One action of the EU after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks is the adoption of the proposal to extend the amount of criminalised terrorist activities within the Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and its 2008 amendments on combating terrorism. The draft was already composed after the Paris terrorist attacks and shortly after the Brussels terrorist attacks, the proposal has been adopted. Thus, one could argue that the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks led to this rapid adoption, particularly since in these two cases this specific travelling and training was present. With this directive, the following activities will be criminalised throughout the EU: travelling, training or being trained abroad for terrorist purposes; inciting terrorism; and financing terrorist activities (Council of the European Union, October 2016). According to Wittendorp (Personal communication, November 24, 2016), this can be seen as a change to the strategy. This directive expresses a counterterrorism approach equally to the approach of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and the amended Framework Decision of 2008 for the reason that training was already prohibited. Nevertheless, this is focused on domestic training (Council Framework Decision 2008/919/JHA, 2008). This proposal contains the prohibition of travelling and training outside the EU for terrorist purpose and therefore, reflects the shift in focus towards foreign fighters. The directive to upgrade Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and its 2008 amendments on combating terrorism is currently in progress.

In addition to this measure, the EU is operating on another measure as a reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. This notable reaction to the terrorist attacks is the EU’s plan to work towards a Security Union by providing for the Europeanisation of national security and counterterrorism policies. Although the Commission already established an agenda on security in 2015, the objective was very broad and unspecific. Only after the Brussels terrorist attacks, the president of the Commission explicitly called to work towards a Security Union and appointed a commissioner to direct the process (European Commission, November 2016). With the idea of the Security Union, the EU is actually following the United States’ response to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. After the 9/11 attacks, the US critically assessed its security and intelligence services which resulted in the establishment of the Department of Homeland Security as an umbrella department where all services and state institutions are coordinated from, with the aim to achieve increased interoperability (Bureš, 2016). The Commission sees this as an example to apply to the EU. Currently, the EU is proposing, discussing and adopting measures to work towards this Security Union.

## 2.4 The European Union’s reaction in relation to its counterterrorism approach and strategy

Considering the response of the EU to the Paris and Brussels attacks, one can recognise the EU´s counterterrorism approach. According to Wittendorp (Personal Communication, November 24, 2016), the EU, being in a crisis situation, actually initiates new efforts, for instance the Security Union, to combat terrorism. This complies with the event-driven approach discussed by Hillebrand (2013, p.98), since the EU is amending its counterterrorism policy in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Additionally, one can recognise a certain direction. The failures concerning the Paris and Brussels attacks can primarily be found in the areas of information sharing, intelligence sharing, prevention and external border control. The dominant reaction of the EU institutions to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks can be found in the those areas as well. Moreover, one could state that the EU continues to follow its comprehensive approach, including coercive, proactive, defensive and long-term counterterrorism as main concepts with measures as, for instance, the additions to terrorist offences, intelligence and border control improvements and the prevention of radicalisation. In other words, the reaction of the EU complies with the EU´s counterterrorism approach.

Furthermore, the EU’s overall reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks partly complies with the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. The main focus after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks continues to be on the improvement of information sharing and border control, and these objectives are laid down in the ‘prevent’, ‘protect’ and ‘pursue’ parts of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Furthermore, after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU acknowledged and proposed the increased powers of Europol. The significant position of Europol as a pan-European agency as well as the urge to develop Europol are discussed in the strategy. However, the EU’s response partly exceeds the objectives laid down in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. The PNR directive at European level, a Security Union following the US example and the phenomenon of foreign fighters have not been identified as focus points or objectives in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Therefore, it could be argued that the EU’s response to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks reflects the view that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy is no longer completely relevant or sufficient and needs to be amplified in order to improve the overall EU counterterrorism role and policy.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The Paris and Brussels attacks resulted in the recognition of failures caused by France and Belgium, and subsequently, by the EU in its entirety. The main failures arose in the areas of information sharing, intelligence sharing and external border control. As a result, the EU took and still takes several measures as an attempt to rectify these failures and to improve the EU’s role in counterterrorism. However, on the whole one could state that the EU’s counterterrorism approach and the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy do not change drastically as a result of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. The majority of the adopted and proposed measures established in the aftermath of the attacks only intensify and complement the strategy.

Admittedly, some measures do reflect a certain change of focus in several areas of the strategy. The establishment of the ECTC and the proposal to upgrade Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and its 2008 amendments on combating terrorism reflect the changes in focus of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Moreover, the EBCG additionally focuses on border management rather than solely on border control. The EU’s reaction to the Paris and Brussels attacks complies with the EU’s counter terrorism approach by taking event-driven, coercive and proactive measures to combat terrorism. However, several measures exceed the objectives documented in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. One could thus argue that the EU recognises the failures concerning the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks and, with that, the partial irrelevancy and insufficiency of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

# 3. Recommendations to change the European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy

It is clear now that the Paris and Brussels attacks influence the European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy. According to Parkes (2016), after the Paris and Brussels attacks the EU seeks to point out its capability to secure EU citizens to the same degree that member states can. This is reflected in the changes and adjustments to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Several scholars express their view on the EU’s response to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Although there is a certain degree of endorsement, the majority of the reactions consist of criticism on the EU’s response and of recommendations for the EU to change its counterterrorism strategy. In accordance with the EU’s reaction, scholars mainly recommend measures in the areas of prevention of radicalisation, information and intelligence sharing, and border control. In that order, several views and recommendations from different scholars will be discussed. Subsequently, a conclusion of recommended changes to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy will be made.

## 3.1 Prevention of radicalisation

Within the strategies’ area of prevention, the prevention of radicalisation is described as a major objective. Different perceptions concerning the prevention of radicalisation result in numerous recommended measures for the EU. The prevalent opinion on the EU’s action in this area is that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy describes an objective that is too broad and general, which hinders the EU to develop sufficient measures. The strategy states that the EU needs to work on the causes leading to radicalisation, yet it lacks to proof what these causes are. However, this is not something that the EU can simply correct. According to Schmid as noted by Coolsaet (2016), the definition of radicalisation is rather unclear due to different perceptions on radicalisation (p.45). Considering the fact that the EU consists of 28 member states, one could state that the EU is suffering from numerous perceptions of radicalisation. This leads to the lack of a unified perception and subsequently, the lack of acknowledgement of the root causes of radicalisation. A unified definition may thus increase the knowledge of radicalisation and lead to the establishment of effective measures.

On the contrary, scholars argue that the concept of radicalisation and the measures to prevent radicalisation are too narrow, since the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy is aiming excessive attention to religion and to the Islam in particular (Hegemann & Kahl, 2016). Recent conducted studies to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks reject the EU’s idea that links radicalisation to ideology or religion. Instead, radicalisation and terrorism seem to be linked with criminality and homicidal fanaticism (Coolsaet, 2016). As mentioned previously, Europol and the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator already addressed the link between terrorism and criminality. Thus, it is argued that the EU should broaden the concept of radicalisation in order to recognise the root causes of radicalisation and subsequently, to improve its role in preventing radicalisation. In addition to this, it is claimed that the EU’s measures to prevent radicalisation with a particular focus on the Islam can be perceived as discriminatory. Then, preventive measures can have the opposite effect, that is the alienation of certain groups, and ultimately lead to radicalisation (Eijkman & Schuurman, 2011). The prevention of radicalisation is discussed in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Therefore, the recommended change to the strategy is the conceptualisation of radicalisation. The recommended method is rather a specification and thereby an addition to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

The EU Counter Terrorism Strategy underlines the sovereignty of the member states in countering radicalisation. Despite this, the EU possesses the power to support the member states. Therefore, the EU can take on the assisting role agreed upon after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks in the plan supporting prevention of radicalisation. The plan nonetheless lacks to describe methods to achieve the objectives of the plan. This leaves space for scholars to bring in recommendations on how the EU could bring about this supporting role.

Although the EU is unable to oblige member states to follow one EU-wide strategy to prevent radicalisation, the EU can contribute to the improvement of member states’ preventive measures in various ways. Firstly, the EU can distribute the evaluation results of member states’ preventive radicalisation measures. However, it is recommended that the evaluation itself is conducted by independent actors instead of the EU, in order to prevent the evaluation from being subjective or politically biased (Eijkman & Schuurman, 2011). Consequently, the EU can improve the facilitation of the exchange of best practises derived from the evaluation within the Radicalisation Awareness Network, often shorted to RAN. The EU can bring this about by acknowledging the lack of similarities between member states in the area of radicalisation. Furthermore the EU can allow the exchange of multiple practises and strategies instead of one EU-wide strategy.

Member states themselves are recommended to prevent radicalisation on the local level in order to, instead of the general factors, discover more specific factors contributing to radicalisation. This idea is shared by Bossong as noted by Hegemann & Kahl (2016), and is defined as ‘’a community of practice’’ (p.20). By following this recommedation, member states might be able to establish a more precise identification of factors leading to radicalisation. Consequently, the EU can establish more efficient strategies to prevent radicalisation. If necessary, member states can still make adjustments to these strategies in order to make it a perfect fit. However, there would be a certain degree of unification.

Since the Action Plan and the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy already point out the supporting role of the EU in combating radicalisation, the recommendations are not actual changes. Instead, it specifies methods to achieve the objectives of the strategy and the Action Plan. However, the method of evaluation by independent actors is new and changes the evaluating role of the EU into a more facilitating role. This could be seen as a recommended change to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Furthermore, a unification of radicalisation strategies would contribute to the objective of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy to have an EU-wide common strategy to combat terrorism.

Next to these actions, the EU can elaborate the international dimension discussed in the Plan supporting the prevention of radicalisation. Since the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks took place through the international network of IS, the prevention of radicalisation at national and EU level is not sufficient (Eijkman & Schuurman, 2011). Despite member states’ individual efforts to cooperate internationally, the EU can proof its added-value in this field. The EU Counter Terrorism Strategy lays down the objective of international cooperation to prevent radicalisation on the international level, however it lacks to describe any measures. Therefore, it remains rather imprecise on how to achieve this international cooperation. The international dimension could imply that the EU utilises its international relationships with non-EU countries. In particular, useful countries in the area of prevention of radicalisation, for example Morocco, can be consulted for their best practises in preventing radicalisation (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, S., 2015). In this way, the EU can collect practises from outside the EU and provide an overview of best practises available for member states to consult and apply.

The change in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy would not lie in the mention of international cooperation as a means to prevent radicalisation. Alternately, the change would lie in the aimed objective of this international cooperation. In the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, the international cooperation is aimed to be used for inter alia the international prevention of radicalisation. However, the recommendation focusses on the use of international cooperation with the aim to gather methods for member states’ strategies. The recommendation is thus more focused on the benefits for member states than on the benefits at the international level.

As a result of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, foreign fighters have become a central point of attention in the EU’s counterterrorism policy. Especially in the area of prevention, it is now the predominant target group and replaces the traditional target group of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, that is home-grown terrorists. In this area scholars have different opinions. On the one hand, the focus on foreign fighters is viewed as an adequate measure for several reasons. Firstly, an increased number of people have joined Islamic State and although only a minority comes back to Europe, this number additionally increased. Secondly, the terrorist attacks reflect the severe threat of returned foreign fighters (Renard, 2015). Therefore, the EU’s focus is justified.

On the other hand, the EU’s focus on foreign fighters is criticised. According to Wittendorp (Personal communication, November 24, 2016), the increased focus on foreign fighters as a reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks is not entirely appropriate. The majority of the terrorists of the Paris and Brussels attacks were not foreign fighters. Only a minority of the group went abroad for training and came back to the EU to execute the attacks. Thus, the focus on foreign fighters is too restricted. Furthermore, member states are dealing with different types of foreign fighters. Therefore, the EU cannot simply establish one unified method to combat foreign fighters. The inclusion of other target groups would complement the target group laid down in the strategy and thereby, change the focus EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

## 3.2 Information and intelligence sharing

Information and intelligence sharing is a significant part of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy since it is documented as an objective in all four areas. The EU focusses on measures to improve information and intelligence sharing, for example with an increased contribution of information to SIS II. Nevertheless, the amount of data is not necessarily sufficient as seen in the Paris attacks where the data of terrorists was present in several data bases but not shared among the member states. Therefore, the focus on the interoperability of the databases instead of the expansion of databases is emphasised by several scholars (Bigo et al., 2015). The majority of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attackers were under the radar of intelligence services and could have been caught if the interoperability between the systems would have been better.

Despite this, there are some arguments against the focus on interoperability. The EU does not possess an effective evaluation procedure. Therefore, the EU cannot measure whether or not the interoperability or a certain information sharing system itself has improved (Bureš, 2016, p.60). Furthermore, the actual improvement of interoperability is hard to accomplish since some member states do not even possess a national interoperable network of information and intelligence services. Therefore, it is argued that the EU is not likely to achieve an interoperable system at EU level in the near future.

Additionally, one could state that the actual problem is the fact that the member states themselves are responsible for the increased cooperation in information and intelligence sharing. Although information sharing increased in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, member states remain reluctant to share information at EU level for several reasons. Firstly, information is valuable and member states seek to receive information of equal value in return. Therefore, member states do not prefer to share information through Europol or SIS II since there is no guarantee that they will receive information in return. Secondly, despite the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, member states do not perceive the threat of terrorism to a high enough level to increase cooperation (Wittendorp, personal communication, November 24, 2016). Since member states are responsible for the degree and amount of information sharing, the EU lacks the power to actually increase information and intelligence sharing.

Despite this view, recommendations for the EU to convince member states to increase the information and intelligence sharing on EU level have been made. Some scholars argue that with the idea of a Security Union, the EU is following the United States’ method to increase information and intelligence sharing. Therefore, it is argued that the EU could work towards a European Federal Bureau of Investigation or Central Intelligence Agency, in which there will be standardised EU-wide information and intelligence exchange. However, others claim that the establishment of a European Security Union, FBI or CIA is not likely to happen (Bureš, 2016). Firstly, member states are not in favour of a supranational information and intelligence institute. Secondly, the establishment of such an institute would imply new laws in order to make it function. Nevertheless, generally member states are not keen on adopting new laws. Although some member states are in favour of a European FBI or CIA, the majority of the member states are against it. Once again, this is mainly due to the perception of the terrorist threat. After the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, member states still do not perceive the terrorist threat to the degree that it necessary to favour such far-reaching measures. Nevertheless, the EU can convince its member states by researching the amount of prevented terrorist attacks through EU cooperation. Subsequently, it can report the potential benefits of cooperation on EU level to its member states.

Another recommendation made to the EU in this field is the allowance for, or even support of the use of non-EU platforms to exchange information and intelligence. The reason for this is that member states seem to be less reluctant to share information there. Although these platforms are excluded from the official construction of the EU, the exchange of information and intelligence results in knowledge that could be passed to decision-makers at the national level as well as at EU level (Bonfanti, 2016). This would enable the EU to improve its counterterrorism policy.

The recommendations in the area of information and intelligence sharing would both change and complement the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. The increased use of the information and intelligence systems by member states is an objective laid down in the strategy. However, scholars tend to focus on the interoperability of the systems. This objective is not mentioned in the strategy and therefore, would change the strategy. Furthermore, the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy is aimed at enriching national counterterrorism policies, whereas the recommendation to convince member states to share information and intelligence is aimed at pushing member states to a certain direction. Finally, the support for information and intelligence exchange through non-EU platforms is not mentioned in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, only the information exchange through Europol and Eurojust is an objective of the strategy. Therefore, this recommendation would complement the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy by adding a new dimension to the exchange of information and intelligence.

## 3.3 Border control

In contrast to the other areas, less recommendations are made in the area of border control. Whilst analysing the EU’s reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, one thing researchers note is the EU’s reaction to connect counterterrorism with border control. On the one hand, scholars understand the reaction of the EU to take measures in the area of border control after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks for the reason that a part of the attackers, that is the foreign fighters, entranced the EU through the external borders as part of the current migratory movement. Nevertheless, new border security measures cannot completely prevent foreign fighters from entering the EU (Wittendorp, personal communication, November 24, 2016). Therefore, these measures may be insufficient.

Despite this, other scholars argue that the intensification of border control is necessary due to the contemporary terrorist threat. However, various EU measures, for example the SIS II and VIS systems are still in development (Johansson, 2016). Therefore, the addition of new measures would only further complicate the situation. Accordingly, in the area of border control, the main recommendation is not to introduce new measures and subsequently, change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy in this area. Instead, the EU should concentrate on intensifying and finalising its existing measures, mechanisms and systems in the area border control.

## 3.4 Conclusion

Taking it all together, scholars discuss the measures taken by the EU in reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks and make several recommendations to change, complement or, on the contrary, maintain the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. In the area of prevention of radicalisation, there are different opinions. On the one hand, the EU is recommended to enhance the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy by specifying the concept radicalisation. On the other hand, it needs to complement the strategy by broadening its concept of radicalisation with other factors in addition to religion, in order to improve the prevention of radicalisation. Despite the member states’ sovereignty, the EU can play a facilitating role for the exchange of best practises among EU member states as well as among non-EU countries and EU member states. These recommendations would change the role of the EU laid down in the strategy by attributing the evaluating role to independent actors. Additionally, it would complement the strategy by specifying methods to prevent radicalisation. The major focus on foreign fighters is supported by some scholars, while others recommend to change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy by addressing foreign fighters only as one of multiple target groups.

In the area of information and intelligence sharing, there are disagreements between scholars about interoperability. Some recommend the EU to indeed change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy by focusing on the interoperability, whereas others address the EU’s shortcomings to evaluate the interoperability. Due to the sovereignty of the member states, it is recommended that the EU should not change its strategy in the area of information sharing. Instead, it should intensify its convincing efforts documented in the strategy in order to achieve more information and intelligence sharing at EU level. Another recommendation is to change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy by continuing to work towards a Security Union and the establishment a European FBI or CIA. However, others question the likeliness of a Security Union and recommend the EU to support non-EU platforms for its own good. In the area of border control, less recommendations are made. Actually, the overall recommendation for this area is not to change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Alternatively, it is recommended to intensify and develop its existing measures as a reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

# Analysis

## 1. Overview of research results

The purpose of this study is to establish an answer to the question how the European Union Counter Terrorism Strategy should be changed after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. By means of literature research and an in-depth interview, the research results have been discussed in the previous chapters. In this chapter, the research results will be further analysed. Firstly, the main results of the previous research questions will be described. Thereafter, on the basis of the results in combination with new information and a critical analysis, the writers’ recommendation whether or not the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy should change after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks will be explained. Finally, a conclusion will be made.

The first research question explains the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. This strategy is composed by the EU in the years after the 9/11 and Madrid terrorist attacks in order to combat terrorism as a union. With this strategy, one might assume that the EU has a manual to combat terrorism as a union. However, this is not the case. The EU has to deal with sovereign countries with the competencies to compose their own counterterrorism strategies. Furthermore, the issue of counterterrorism is quite complex due to its overarching nature. Despite this, the EU achieved several objectives of the strategy. Yet, this is not the answer that is essential to answer the central research question. Actually, the answer to the question whether or not the strategy is sufficient after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks is the point on which one should focus.

Considering the failures and the actions of the EU described in the second research question, it is concluded that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy is not sufficient to prevent terrorist attacks. Failures made before, during and after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks can be mainly found in the areas of information and intelligence sharing as well as in external border control. The reaction of the EU to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks complies with the EU’s counterterrorism approach and resulted in the supplementation and completion rather than in a transformation of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. This movement is to a great extent supported by scholars.

However, as described in the final research question, scholars have made recommendations to alter the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy in order to make the EU more successful in combating terrorism. The recommendations have been made in the previously mentioned areas, that is information and intelligence sharing and external border control. However, the majority of the recommendations have been made in the area of prevention of radicalisation. Therefore, one could conclude that this is the most important area to develop. Scholars clash in their arguments on what to recommend. This will be further described in the following part of the analysis.

Considering the reaction of the EU to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the ‘soft’ power approach is the approach that the EU still follows after the terrorist attacks. Recommendations made by scholars additionally follow this approach as they forecast that after the Paris and Brussels attacks, the EU should establish new or revised counterterrorism measures through regular criminal law (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015). Therefore, it is not likely that the EU would apply quite ‘hard’ power approached recommendations. For that reason, only ‘soft’ power approached recommendations are recommended in this analysis.

## 2. Recommendations for the European Union

Prior to the established recommendations in the specific areas, it is important to discuss a few points. In general, it is claimed that supranationalism and unification of counterterrorism policies do not guarantee a sufficient counterterrorist policy. Instead, it might have the opposite effect leading to increased insufficiency of the EU as an actor in counterterrorism (Parkes, 2016). This point sets the tone for the analysis. Besides this, it is important to note that it is extremely difficult for the EU to determine the precise threat of terrorism in the EU. Additionally, studies find that there is actually no insight into the most effective measures to combat terrorism (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015). This complicates the research on and analysis of sufficient recommendations for the EU to change its counterterrorism strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Despite this, in the areas of prevention of radicalisation, foreign fighters, information and intelligence sharing and border control various recommendations have been made.

### 2.1 Prevention of radicalisation

As mentioned previously, the majority of the recommendations established by scholars as reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks have been made in the area of prevention of radicalisation. According to Eijkman & Schuurman (2011), prevention is the most important part in combating terrorism. This argument is shared by other scholars who argue that prevention is of great significance to combat terrorism due to the insufficiency of a solely ‘pursue and prosecute’ strategy executed by the EU (Riga, 2016). Therefore, it is recommended that the EU develops its activities in this area.

Prior to composing these recommendations, it is important to keep in mind that member states need to make long lasting commitments and investments in order to substantially improve the prevention of radicalisation. According to Wittendorp (Personal communication, November 24, 2016), this is not likely to happen due to the lack of motivation from member states to agree on such measures. Furthermore, if member states agree on such measures, the motivations to agree are questionable. Rather than on the basis of their own opinions or urge to take measures, member states regularly agree on measures out of pressure from other member states or the society. As a result, member states are more likely to lack the implementation of the measures. Despite this, one could recognise a flow of adoptions after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Furthermore, member states’ actions exceed some regulations, for example with the previously mentioned Passenger Name Record system. Therefore, one could assume that member states are willing to act and commit themselves to measures as well as to long lasting commitments after all. It would thus make sense for the EU to develop its counterterrorism policy and strategy.

The EU already established a plan supporting prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. With this plan, it seems as if the EU is following its proactive approach with the aim to avoid terrorist attacks. However, this is not done through intelligence sharing, which is the main area to operate in according to the proactive approach. Instead, the EU is following the persuasive counterterrorism approach as the plan seeks to communicate with a larger group than solely terrorists, for example young people or a whole community. By means of this information, one could argue that the EU is headed in the right direction. However, the plan supporting prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism on itself is not enough to improve the prevention of radicalisation for several reasons.

Firstly, there is no common definition of radicalisation. Scholars clash in their views on how to solve this problem. On the one hand, Schmid as noted by Coolsaet (2016) argues that radicalisation is too broad and thus needs to be specified. On the other hand, Hegemann & Kahl (2016) argue that the concept of radicalisation is too narrow as it is mainly focusing on religion. These contradicting studies might confuse the EU on what measures to take. Despite this clash, the EU could definitely take action. Actually, it is said that the EU should follow both of the recommendations. In the first place, the EU should establish a Union-wide definition of radicalisation leading to convergence of national legislation concerning radicalisation. In the second place, the EU should broaden the concept of radicalisation by adding factors other than religion. However, radicalisation is quite complex since there are no common predictors that could be applied to every member state. Therefore, Wittendorp (2016) recommends the EU to withdraw from this area and let member states decide on their radicalisation policies (personal communication, November 24, 2016). Despite this argument, other scholars do recommend the EU’s involvement in member states’ policies to prevent radicalisation for the reason that the EU as a whole is a target of IS (Renard, 2015). Therefore, a unified policy to prevent radicalisation is perceived as being more effective to combat the current terrorist threat and is thus recommended here.

Secondly, the Plan supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism lacks to describe the exact actions of the EU. Therefore, scholars further elaborate on the completion of this plan by recommending the EU’s role. As mentioned previously, the EU is recommended to define the concept of radicalisation. The EU could bring this about by executing the first point of the plan, that is supporting inter alia research and evidence-building. The EU already possesses research and development programmes, and the research to radicalisation could be conducted by one of these research groups.

Thirdly, the focus points of the EU are argued by scholars. The EU’s focusses on the religious factor as main predictor of radicalisation. Despite the fact that after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator, Europol and Coolsaet recommend the additional focus on criminality, other scholars still perceive these factors as limited. Besides religion and criminality, there are more so-called ‘’early warning signals’’ (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015, p.8). In order to complement the factors contributing to the radicalisation process, the EU should additionally focus on economic and social inequalities and other less apparent factors, for the reason that these factors can be seen as predictors for radicalisation as seen in studies to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. The EU should thus conduct new researches to investigate more explicit factors leading to radicalisation through the research and development programmes whilst utilising the aforementioned studies as a general angle. To achieve this, the EU should use member states’ local educational and religious institutes (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015). By means of these researches, the EU could develop one strategy to prevent radicalisation. This strategy could be applied either immediately or with the necessary adjustments by all the member states. Thereby, the EU would follow Bossong’s community of practise noted by Hegemann & Kahl (2016). This way, the EU would play an important role in the prevention of radicalisation.

Another prevalent recommendation on the EU’s role in this area is to develop a facilitating function for the EU for best practises on how to prevent radicalisation. Several scholars agree on this role since the EU already possesses a network allowing for such exchange under the EU’s administration, that is the RAN. This network is quite informal and therefore, member states’ officials are more likely to share best practises here. The development of the EU’s facilitating role within the Radicalisation Awareness Network contributes to the added value of the EU as an actor in counterterrorism (Wittendorp, personal communication, November 24, 2016). Furthermore, according to Eijkman & Schuurman (2011), member states are aware of the importance and added value of this network. Therefore, it is recommended that the EU should further develop the RAN by increasing the exchange of best practises in order to prevent radicalisation on EU level.

Finally, the EU can confirm its added value as a counterterrorism actor on the international level. As mentioned previously, the EU’s actions in this field are not precisely described in the plan. Therefore, the recommendation in this field is to clearly describe actions the EU can take. Hence, the question is what the EU could do on the international level in order to contribute to the member states’ strategies to prevent radicalisation. By consulting specific non-EU countries for their best practises in preventing radicalisation, the EU could establish a manual including the most common radicalisation scenarios combined with the best counter practises to apply to these scenarios. Subsequently, member states could apply this manual to their strategies to prevent radicalisation.

Although one might assume that member states are able to do this individually, this activity on EU level certainly has its advantages. It would save member states work since the EU would collect and process this information. Furthermore, the EU already has official, international relationships with useful countries, in this case Morocco and the Middle-Eastern countries. This is not the case for all the 28 member states. Not all member states do have bilateral relations with these countries to a degree that would allow for this exchange (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015).

On the whole, after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks the EU is recommended to detail the international dimension of the plan. By detailing its international role with the aforementioned activities, it can confirm its added value in preventing radicalisation. Subsequently, it will improve the EU’s overall efforts to prevent terrorism, which is the first part of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

*How would these recommendations improve the EU’s fight against terrorism?*

The recommendations in the area in prevention of radicalisation would slightly change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Although prevention is a major part of the strategy, there is no explicit strategy on how to prevent radicalisation. The recommendations regarding the prevention of radicalisation would thus only specify and complete the strategy. However, the recommendation to change the EU’s role would change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy since it does not discuss the facilitating role of the EU. Regarding the international dimension of the prevention of radicalisation, the recommendation to utilise international relationships in order to gather best practises from outside the EU would change the strategies’ objective of preventing radicalisation on the international level.

Although there will be no drastic changes to the strategy, the recommendations are meant to move things forward. The overall attention to the prevention of radicalisation will improve the EU’s strategy to combat terrorism as it focusses more on home-grown terrorism, which suits the current-day type of terrorist threat. Moreover, by developing the concept of radicalisation with a Union-wide definition and the subsequent convergence of national legislation, member states are meant to have more corresponding policies. This correspondence may unify the EU and with that, the ‘prevent’ part of EU Counter Terrorism Strategy will be more suitable and sufficient for all member states (Coolsaet, pp.19-20). Furthermore, the addition of more factors to the unified concept of radicalisation will increase the detection of radicalisation on EU level. Subsequently, the number of radicalised people, and with that, the number of potential terrorists will decline (Brandon & Vidino, 2012). These recommendations would thus improve the prevention of terrorism within the EU and reduce the threat of terrorism.

Besides that, the increased exchange of best practises to prevent radicalisation with EU member states as well as with non-EU countries will increase the knowledge on what strategies works best in practise. Additionally, with different scenario’s and strategies on EU level, member states are meant to develop more suitable strategies to prevent radicalisation since they will have more options to choose from (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015). By following this recommendation and the aforementioned recommendations, it is likely that the member states’ strategies to prevent radicalisation will improve and the number of radicalised people will decline. When radicalisation reduces throughout the EU, the terrorist threat is likely to reduce as well.

### 2.2 Foreign fighters

After the Paris and the Brussels terrorist attacks, foreign fighters has become the new target group of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. However, scholars disagree on foreign fighters as a replacement for the traditional target group. On the one hand, besides the earlier mentioned argument of Renard, scholars acknowledge the new focus on foreign fighters, especially since IS, the terrorist organisation behind the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, perceives foreign fighters as its most significant actors. On the other hand, scholars state that the EU’s focus on foreign fighters after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks is incorrect for the reason that instead of foreign fighters, the vast majority of terrorists in Europe are home-grown terrorists who do not go abroad to train and plan attacks (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015). Furthermore, studies show that the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks have primarily been executed by home-grown terrorists (Wittendorp, personal communication, November 24, 2016). Therefore, one could conclude that the EU should not, or at least not exclusively, focus on foreign fighters.

Moreover, it is recommended that the EU should include multiple target groups in order to contribute to the completeness of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. As mentioned previously, one should additionally maintain the initial target group of the strategy, that is home-grown terrorists. However, there are more target groups worthy of including. One significant example is the so-called target group ´lone wolves´ since it threatens the EU as well (Riga, 2016). This suggests that it would be wrong to only include foreign fighters and home-grown terrorists in the strategy.

Despite the recommendations to focus on more target groups, foreign fighters do form a substantial risk. Therefore, member states themselves as well as the EU as a whole are recommended to conduct researches to this somewhat obscure phenomenon with the aim to compose more effective strategies to combat foreign fighters and to prevent future terrorist attacks. As mentioned previously, Europol already studied foreign fighters and developed strategies on how to combat them. However, a number of member states lack to follow Europol´s example (Bonfanti, 2016). As a result, it is recommended that the EU adopts a new objective within its counterterrorism strategy encouraging and stimulating its member states to study foreign fighters.

Besides this, there is one more recommendation left for the EU in the area of foreign fighters. Although after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks the proposal for an amended framework with the focus on foreign fighters is currently in progress, there is no EU-wide definition of foreign fighters. The proposal does describe foreign fighters’ actions desired to be criminalised, yet a specific definition of foreign fighters is absent. This definition is necessary since it contributes to the unity of national counterterrorism policies and thereby to a greater role for the EU in the area of counterterrorism (Ginkel, van & Entenmann, 2016). Especially since the EU replaces the initial target group of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy with foreign fighters, a unified definition is of great significance. Comparable to radicalisation, the term foreign fighters should be incorporated in a framework decision in order to converge the member states’ definitions and legislation concerning foreign fighters.

*How would these recommendations improve the EU’s fight against terrorism?*

Besides a more balanced focus, the strategy itself does not actually change by adding new target groups or defining foreign fighters. Rather, it would complement the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. On the contrary, the recommendation concerning the encouragement of member states to study foreign fighters would change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. The member states’ task to conduct such types of researches is not documented in the current strategy. This recommendation would thus set objectives for member states rather than for the EU as a whole. This could be seen as a change to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

Despite the little modification, the recommendation to include multiple target groups into the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy will improve the prevention of terrorism (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015). The more target groups the EU focusses on, the more potential terrorists can be detected and halted. It is thus meant to improve the EU’s fight against terrorism. The recommendation to research the relatively new target group foreign fighters on both national and EU level is meant to increase the knowledge about foreign fighters. More knowledge may result in effective strategies to combat foreign fighters and, with that, to combat terrorism (Bonfanti, 2016). Therefore, one could state that these recommendations contribute to an increased level of prevention and thereby to a lower level of terrorist threat in the EU.

### 2.3 Information and intelligence sharing

After prevention of radicalisation, most recommendations have been made in the area of information and intelligence sharing. The EU’s measures after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks have primarily been made in this area as well. This resulted in various discussions concerning intelligence and information sharing. It is clear now that before, during and after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks member states failed to exchange information with each other. Therefore, it seems appropriate to investigate discussions and recommendations concerning information exchange.

Firstly, the term interoperability is mentioned frequently. The problem mentioned by Bureš (2016) is that there is no effective evaluation system to measure and improve the interoperability of information and intelligence systems (p.60). Therefore, it is recommended that the EU should develop an effective evaluation method. Comparable to radicalisation, the way the EU can bring this about is by composing a research & innovation team, which is described as research & development programmes in the strategy, concerned with the interoperability of the EU’s information and intelligence systems.

In addition to this, there actually are different opinions regarding information and intelligence sharing. Wittendorp (personal communication, November 24, 2016) claims that the EU should not change its strategy in the area of information sharing. Instead, it should intensify its convincing efforts documented in the strategy in order to achieve more information and intelligence sharing on EU level. Some scholars agree with this view and mention the SIS II as a significant example here (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015). However, other scholars clash with this idea for the reason that the effectiveness of the SIS II is unclear (Delivet, 2015). Therefore, one could recommend an evaluation system comparable to the evaluation system for interoperability mentioned above. It would thus require a research & innovation team to establish a sufficient evaluation system to proof the effectiveness of SIS. Thereafter, the EU could decide whether or not to attempt to increase information sharing through this system.

Secondly, the decision of the EU to change its strategy in this area is supported. For example, the establishment the European Counter Terrorism Centre is perceived as the type of measure the EU needs to take in the current situation. The reason for this is that it is a specific, accurate measure suitable for the objective, that is increased information sharing. Subsequently, it will lead to another objective, that is increased cooperation (Renard, 2015). It is thus a valuable measure as it leads to multiple goals of the strategy.

Thirdly, there are scholars who make recommendations exceeding the EU’s actions up to now. For example, one recommendation is to change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy by continuing to work towards a Security Union and establishing a European Federal Bureau of Investigation or Central Intelligence Agency. However, others question the likeliness of a Security Union and a European FBI or CIA for the reason that national agencies are generally not likely to adopt new legislation and this type of supranationalism as it diminishes their sovereignty. Moreover, the information is too valuable and the terrorist threat is not big enough (Wittendorp, personal communication, November 24, 2016). Furthermore, even the director of Europol argues that this is not likely to happen and instead recommends the EU to support non-EU platforms for its own good (Bureš, 2016). This suggests that the EU itself is not favouring actions like establishing a FBI or CIA.

Besides, the fact that more agencies automatically means more actors further supports this argument. As mentioned previously in the theoretical framework, counterterrorism already is a challenging policy field due to its complexity. Consequently, more actors in the field would only contribute to the further complexity of the EU counterterrorism policy. Therefore, the establishment of such a supranational agency is not recommended. Besides, Bureš (2016) claims that there is: ‘’a lack of a clear policy on information channels, resulting in disagreement on the choice of channel and on how to handle sensitive and confidential information’’ (p.60). This further contributes to the reluctance of member states to increase information sharing on EU level and thereby to the unlikeliness of a supranational information exchange agency.

Hence, the remaining question is what the EU should do in order to increase and improve information and intelligence sharing on EU level. First of all, the EU could take on a supporting role and attempt to convince member states to share information on EU level through, for example, proving its value and effectiveness as mentioned by Bonfanti (2016). However, it is argued that despite such efforts, cooperation will most likely remain on bilateral level, considering the fact that there has not been a substantial change after the Paris and Brussels attacks. Admittedly, one can recognise an increase in information sharing after the Paris terrorist attacks. Nevertheless, the reason for this can probably be found in the event-driven approach of the EU. The increase would thus have been a short-term startle response. Once again, not all member states do perceive the threat of terrorism as big enough to result in a substantial change.

Despite the sceptical view on the probability of increased and improved information and intelligence sharing, one recommendation is argued to be sufficient after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. In order to achieve increased information and intelligence sharing, the EU should increase the number of Joint Investigation Teams and their transnational researches (Riga, 2016). JIT members are coming from various member states. During transnational researches, these members automatically share more information with each other than during information exchanges within official EU systems. However, considering the fact that the JIT’s are directed by Europol and Eurojust, the information will eventually reach the official EU information systems (Riga, 2016). Accordingly, it is rewarding to invest in more JIT’s.

*How would these recommendations improve the EU’s fight against terrorism?*

In the area of information and intelligence sharing, the recommendation to develop effective evaluation methods by composing a research & innovation team would not change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Although the recommendation itself and the term evaluation are not mentioned in this context, the research & innovation teams are mentioned in the strategy. The particular team for the study evaluation methods would thus be a specification and expansion of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

The recommendation to increase the number of JIT’s and their transnational investigations would not change the strategy as well for the reason that JIT’s and their objective to increase the exchange of information are already mentioned in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Despite the lack of changes, the recommendations concerning the establishment of evaluation systems are likely to improve the fight against terrorism. Once the interoperability of EU information sharing systems as well as the effectiveness of the information sharing systems themselves are evaluated, the EU is able to establish measures to improve this. This means that the EU can take measures to improve both the interoperability and effectiveness which could lead to increased willingness from member states to use the EU’s information sharing systems. It would thus lead to closer cooperation and increased information sharing within the EU.

Next to this, the expansion of JIT’s transnational operations additionally increases information sharing on EU level. The increased information sharing is meant to detect and halt terrorists more quickly both before and after a terrorist attack occurs. Subsequently, the EU’s internal security would be better protected (Delivet, 2015). These recommendations would thus lead to the improved prevention of and response to terrorism on EU level and eventually, to greater security against terrorism for the European society.

### 2.4 Border control

One remarkable point is the fact that in this area scholars form the least recommendations. Another important thing to note is the close connection between information and intelligence sharing and border control. Accordingly, one could assume that the measures taken after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks in one area affect the other area as well. Scholars consider the decision for the EU to take new measures or to complete its initial measures after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks differently. However, the prevalent opinion is not to change the area of border security within the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Despite this view, some recommendations can be made for the EU within this area.

Firstly, the EU should improve the working conditions of the European Border and Coast Guard’s employees. The EBCG, which is the main agency to execute border control and border management, suffers from security challenges. The agency faces serious dangers as shown in situations in the recent past where its employees have been treated aggressively. Therefore, the EU should focus on the safety of the EBCG’s employees in order to enable them to execute their tasks properly (Parkes, 2016). Increased personnel security would lead to increased efficiency. Consequently, the improved efficiency of border management and border security may lead to the improved security of the EU as a whole.

Secondly, when establishing new measures as a reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU should attempt to equilibrate the balance between freedom and security. For instance, the adopted PNR system and the proposal for a Security Union are two measures reflecting the gradual shift to the dominance of security over freedom. Therefore, it is recommended that the EU considers potential violation of human rights within new proposals and adoptions.

Finally, it is of great significance that the EU does not take disproportionate measures in reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Partly for the reason that disproportionate measures do not work as desired and partly for the reason that disproportionate measures increase the chance of violation of human rights (Chauzal, Colijn, Ginkel, van, Paulussen & Zavagli, 2015). The EU should additionally ensure that these measures do not interpret human rights and civil liberties as a limitation to combat terrorism effectively (Bureš, 2016). Otherwise, the EU would not realise its own aim: ‘’To combat terrorism globally while respecting human rights, and make Europe safer, allowing its citizens to live in an area of freedom, security and justice’’ (Council of the European Union, 2005, p.2). In other words, the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy would lose its purpose.

*How would these recommendations improve the EU’s fight against terrorism?*

Within the area of border security, the recommendation to increase the safety from the EBCG’s employees after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks changes the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy since the safety of EU personnel is not mentioned within the strategy. The strategy would thus be further augmented. As mentioned previously, the recommendation to increase the safety of the EBCG’s personnel would lead to increased efficiency of border controls since the personnel would be able to carry out their work. This may result in more captures, especially of foreign fighters and terrorists using the migratory flow. Eventually, this would mean that the EU’s prevention of terrorism would be improved, thus leading to greater security of the European society. Obviously, the recommendation to comply with human rights and the equilibration of freedom and security would not change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Rather, this recommendation would reassure the aim of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

## 3. Conclusion

By means of this analysis, the question how the EU should change its counterterrorism strategy is further answered. Through the analysis of the research results, one could conclude that scholars do not fully agree with the measures the EU took after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. However, they do agree on the ‘soft’ power approach the EU continues to follow in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Therefore, the recommendations established in this analysis have been approached this way. Due to the lack of knowledge of effective counterterrorism measures, this research is quite complicated. However, during this analysis several recommendations have been established in the areas of prevention of radicalisation, foreign fighters, information and intelligence sharing and border security.

In general, the provided recommendations for the EU in the aftermath of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks do not actually change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. Instead, the recommendations would only complement and specify the objectives documented in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. However, some recommendations do change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. For instance, it changes the objective of international cooperation, the role of the EU, the tasks for member states and the concentration of attention on EU personnel operating in the field of counterterrorism. The specify-based and complete-based recommendations as well as the change-based recommendations would contribute to the improved performance of the EU as a counterterrorism actor after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

By following the discussed recommendations, the EU would be able to improve its fight against terrorism, especially in the area of prevention. Eventually, this would lead to greater internal security for the EU and its society. The last recommendation consists of two significant points the EU has to keep in mind whilst establishing new or revised measures to combat terrorism. The consideration of human rights and the equilibration of freedom and security are essential in order to reassure the aim of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks.

# Conclusion & Recommendations

This research has examined what changes the European Union could and should make to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks in order to improve the counterterrorism policies and activities of the EU and its member states. As an unexpected result, could argue that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy should not be changed drastically after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. However, there definitely are actions the EU could and should take in order to rectify failures seen before, during and after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Yet, in general these actions would only specify and complete the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

This research has shown that, equally to the Madrid terrorist attacks in 2004, the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks resulted in discussions within the EU on how to improve its counterterrorism role. Subsequently, the EU’s counterterrorism policy, including the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, became the subject of debate. The EU and its member states have been criticised regarding the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. According to studies conducted by scholars as well as the EU itself, main failures have been made in the following areas: prevention, information sharing, intelligence sharing and external border control. Although these areas are mentioned in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks have shown that the EU member states do not follow the strategy to the fullest extent, and thereby, one could state that there is no EU-wide common counterterrorism strategy. This means that the objective to have an EU-wide common strategy to combat terrorism is not reached.

As a reaction to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, the EU proposed and adopted several measures with the objective to improve its counterterrorism activities, to enrich national counterterrorism policies and, eventually, to have an EU-wide common strategy to combat terrorism. The most significant measures are: the establishment of the European Counter Terrorism Centre; the adoption of the Passenger Name Record System; an extended mandate for Europol; the Plan supporting prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism; and the establishment of the European Border and Coast Guard. By adopting these measures, the EU seeks to prevent terrorism and better react to terrorist attacks by preventing radicalisation, increasing information sharing within the EU and improving border controls. The EU’s reaction to the Paris and Brussels attacks was expected since the EU follows an event-driven approach. Although the measures may be new, these measures do not change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. However, several measures exceed the objectives documented in the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. One could thus argue that the EU recognises the failures concerning the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks and with that, the partial irrelevancy and insufficiency of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy.

The reaction of the EU to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks has been the subject of research for several scholars. Furthermore, scholars established recommendations for the EU on how to improve its counterterrorism policy and strategy. In accordance with the EU’s reaction, recommendations have mainly been made in the areas of prevention, information sharing, intelligence sharing and external border control. Once again, research to these studies has resulted in the claim that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy should be specified and completed, rather than it actually needs to change. Scholars’ studies, theories and opinions are incompatible on certain points. On the one hand, some argue that the EU is exaggerating with the aforementioned event-driven measures, for example with the quite intensive focus on foreign fighters. On the other hand, others actually recommend more far-reaching measures, for instance the establishment of a European Federal Bureau of Investigation. Therefore, this research, which includes an analysis of these studies, is of great significance for both researchers and practitioners in the area of counterterrorism.

On the basis of the research results and analysis, the following recommendations have been established:

- The EU should develop the concept of radicalisation by defining the term radicalisation incorporated in a framework decision in order to converge the member states’ definitions and legislation concerning radicalisation.

- The EU should develop the concept of radicalisation with the addition of factors besides religion leading to radicalisation. Due to its complexity, further research to potential factors leading to radicalisation should be carried out by EU research & development programmes in the near future.

- The EU should take on the facilitating role by increasing the exchange of best practises within the Radicalisation Awareness Network. Additionally, the EU could improve this facilitating role by gathering best practises from non-EU countries and establishing a manual for its member states with the best strategies to prevent radicalisation.

- The EU should focus on foreign fighters as one of the several target groups rather than primarily focus on foreign fighters, considering that it would be disproportionate according to the current threat.

- Despite the recommendation to balance the focus on foreign fighters with other target groups, the target group foreign fighters requires more study as it is a quite unknown phenomenon. In order to increase the knowledge of foreign fighters, both the EU and its member states should conduct studies to foreign fighters and subsequently establish efficient strategies to combat foreign fighters.

- The EU should define the concept of foreign fighters incorporated in a framework decision in order to converge the member states’ definitions and legislation concerning foreign fighters.

- The EU should develop an effective evaluation method for both the effectiveness of EU information sharing systems and the interoperability between these systems. Therefore, further research needs to be conducted by EU research & development programmes in the near future. If the evaluations result in the necessity to change its information sharing systems and the interoperability, the EU is recommended to act accordingly.

- The EU should stimulate increased information sharing within the EU by increasing its Joint Investigation Teams and its transnational investigations.

- The EU should increase the security of the European Border and Coast Guard’s employees in order to improve both the quality and quantity of border controls.

- The EU should only propose and adopt measures that comply with human rights and the equilibration of freedom and security in order to confirm the purpose of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy .

To put it briefly, the EU should definitely take action after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Besides the measures the EU has taken already, it should follow the aforementioned recommendations. These recommendations will contribute to the prevention of radicalisation, to increased and improved information and intelligence sharing and to improved border controls. The EU should not change its EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. However, as a result from the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks, it became clear that the EU should specify, augment and complete the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy in order to make it sufficient and more efficient. Only then the EU will be able to enrich national counterterrorism policies, unify the counterterrorism policies throughout the EU and, eventually, improve its fight against terrorism. Thereby, the EU will be able to better protect the European society from terrorism.

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# Appendices: Appendix 1: Transcript interview

**Heleen** = the interviewer  
Stef Wittendorp = the interviewee

Interview taken at StationsHuiskamer, Koningin Julianaplein 19, The Hague, on November 24, 2016.

**Heleen:** First of all I would like to as an introduction question: Could you introduce yourself and tell me about your occupation?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** My name is Stef Wittendorp and I work as a researcher at the university of Leiden. Currently I am employed in an research for which we do an inventory in policies and measures in the field of jihadism. Besides that, I am also involved in a research project for the European Parliament where we are writing a report precisely on the issue of European Union counterterrorism and whether the policies are in place or the policy architecture, that is the overarching overview, whether that is sufficient. Besides that, I am a PhD student at the university of Groningen and my research there is focused on EU counterterrorism as well.

**Heleen:** And what is your focus there in terms of time? Are you focused on the EU counterterrorism policy after the most recent attacks like my research, or does it go way back in history?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** My PhD research is more historical, that goes back to the mid-1970’s when the issues of EU security in relation to terrorism began and I trace how that evolved onwards until approximately 2015.

**Heleen:** Ok, now I would like to turn to the first section of the interview, that is the approach towards counter terrorism. What is the main approach of the EU towards counter terrorism?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** The EU approach is mainly a legal approach I would say, where they adopt measures that need to be transposed into law by the member states. One of the key aspects is the decision on the combating of terrorism which requires member states to criminalise terrorist offences into their national criminal approach. So that is one of the key aspects, but besides this legal approach you also have a more informal approach I would say, where the police and intelligence authorities are collaborating. Sometimes the intelligence authorities are collaborating informally through what is known as the Counterterrorism Group. It contains EU member states plus Norway and Switzerland. It is not an official EU structure, but it contains most of the member states. Off course there are also the Council Working Groups that are focused on collaboration in internal security affairs, where the police officials are part of. So they try to see how they can best collaborate in order to improve their overall approach to counterterrorism.

**Heleen:** Do all member states comply with this EU approach? Or do member states keep their own approach towards counter terrorism?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** I think member states do have their own approaches which is logical, because national security is the soul competence of the member states. No doubt the member states do have their own approaches. They are very different sometimes, for instance France for a long time did not have counter radicalization policies and these counter radicalization policies are seen these days as an essential part of counterterrorism policies, but France did not have that for a long time. Also in terms of counter radicalization not all countries do it in the same way or to the same degree. So you see a lot of differences there. If you talk in the EU as a whole, counterterrorism in relation to jihadism is mainly an issues of the Western European member states. The new member states from Central Europe and in particular Eastern Europe have other concerns. They are implementing the EU policies, but mainly because that is the appropriate thing to do. It is now the norm, so they are implementing the policies, but in terms of jihadism for Eastern European member states it is not an huge issue. For instance, someone that I spoke to from Slovakia said that sure they have foreign fighters and it is a big issue there. We have ten people that are fighting in Syria but we have hundreds that are fighting in Ukraine. And that also goes for some other member states. They share borders with Ukraine, so that is also what results in the differences in counterterrorism approaches. They simply deal with different issues. Even among the Western European member states there are differences in how they do it.

**Heleen:** It is said that there are differences in the approach of the EU and US towards counterterrorism, although they are also working together in the field of counterterrorism. What is the main difference between the two approaches?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** It is always difficult when it comes to comparison between the US and the EU, because the US is a state and the EU is not. If we focus strictly on, no I think even on the general level, when you look at the national level between European countries and the US, the US is much more aggressive in the sense that they use so-called sting operations. The FBI infiltrates in a terrorist group or meets up with someone who they suspect of radicalizing and they more or less talk to this person in the sense of: ‘’Hey, I have got some weapons, do you want some weapons?’’, or: ‘’Didn’t you want to do something like a violent attack?’’. So through talking, they try to set people up. Well basically it is not setting people up, but provoke people to prove that they are illegal or want to do something illegal and then the police arrests them. Then they have the recording and say: ‘’Hey, you said this. It is illegal, so we are going to punish you.’’ So that is done in the US a lot and that is a massive difference in general to what is done in Europe. That is the main difference I would say. Much more of a repressive law enforcement approach. But France for example for a long time did also have a repressive law enforcement approach. So, there are definitely differences, also in the aspect of counter radicalization. For a long time that was not, or not of high concern on the agenda of the US authorities. That is beginning to emerge now, also because the US authorities for a long time thought that their Muslim community was different, as in more resilient to terrorism and radicalization. That perception is now beginning to change, because of the Islamic State. However, it is also remarkable how things are similar, for example in the sense that they also try to tackle or adopt measures such as asset freezing for instance, the freezing of funds of suspected terrorists. That is most actively done in the US as well as in the EU. So yeah, there are differences, but it is very important not to ignore the similarities between the two, because there are significant similarities. The US is in a lot of ways not different from the EU.

**Heleen**: So, if I am correct there are some main similarities between the EU and US in counterterrorism?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** Yeah, I would say that.

**Heleen:** More than differences actually?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** In general, you could probably say that there are more similarities than differences.

**Heleen**: Now I would like to talk about the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy before the Paris and Brussels attacks. Out of the four areas, responding seems to be the least developed part by the EU. Why is that the case? Did you find an explanation for it?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** It is PPPR, so prevent, protect, pursue and respond. I think one of the main reasons is that obviously any authority of the EU and the member states have different means. So for them when they have to prioritise their means, they will focus more on preventing and pursuing, because that is the more urgent thing. I think that is probably the main reason why they have more or less neglected or paid less attention to respond as the strategy might suggest. I think another reason probably is that it is very difficult to do. It mostly concerns, I think, also improving the resilience of the society and that is very general. The ideas are very general and even if you develop policies for that it is very difficult to actually….First of all to develop policies to improve resilience besides what the government already does, for example in the sense of declining discrimination and providing jobs et cetera in order to reduce radicalization. And it is a very vague goal and very open ended, so I think that is also an important reasons that not a lot of attention is going to respond.

**Heleen**: Do you think that the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks could have been prevented if the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy would have been different, like more explicit? Or if member states would have implemented the strategy deeper into their national counterterrorism policies?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** That is always a tricky question…Could it have been prevented? There is never 100 per cent security, so even if you have the best and most possible information, you could still miscalculate something or misread a signal that the security service shave. So, even if you have the best policies in place, you still can miss an attack, because in the end it is about human interaction. Do they work? And are the interpretations of what they perceive correct? There can always be a failure in that sense. So, I think, off course the issues that the security services have not been operating enough has been said, but that is said after every attack. That they should have done or do more to exchange data and that that is the best way to prevent terrorist attacks, but yeah, it is difficult, because some of the attackers were known by the authorities, but some were not, and so if you have a lot of people that you want to follow, for instance in the case of returning foreign fighters, there are a lot of people that they want to follow. They have limited means, so that is extremely difficult, so in that sense I am not sure if better information exchange could have prevented something like the Paris and Brussels attacks. I think definitely when you look at the legal frame, there are plenty of laws and those laws are sufficient, so there is no need for extra laws. Also, the people we have interviewed for the European Parliament report have also said that, that sometimes it is very frustrating that Europe is formulating new laws, because before they have implemented one law, the next law already comes into agreement and need to be implemented as well, so that also prevent policy makers from paying attention to other projects. So, I am very sceptical that the EU could have done something specifically that would have prevented these attacks besides what they have already done.

**Heleen:** You mentioned it in the answer of the previous question, that there is a kind of an event-driven approach towards the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, that they say that they need to change it right after such attacks happen. In connection to that, do you think that the approach towards the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy has changed because of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** I do not think that the approach has really changed. What it did is that has become more entrenched, so they have been pushed more into the direction that the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy was already going towards, which is basically about more data collection. There are two themes here. One has been on the agenda for quite a decade and is the better use of EU databases, so that is the Schengen Information System and the Visa Information System. They want to connect the systems as well, so they want to make them interoperable. I think the Paris attacks gave a new stimulus to that, for example with a roadmap on how to improve the information exchange. Additionally, there is now a high-level group of experts or important policy makers that are also stimulating this approach. So, data exchange is one thing. Another thing related to this is the PNR directive, the Passenger Name Record directive, is also about storing data from commercial airliners, that security and law enforcement authorities can then access either for the prevention of terrorism or for the investigation into terrorism cases. The PNR directive have been a very controversial issue for a long time and in 2011 some members of the European Parliament did not even want to vote on it, because they thought it was too controversial and too intrusive for fundamental rights. But because of the Paris attacks, the whole situation kind of changes and all of a sudden the PNR directive became a very attractive solution, which is very doubtful. When you look at the Paris attackers, some of them indeed went to Syria to fight, but the question is did they travel there by plane? I am not sure if they did so, and even besides that, most of the Paris and Brussels attackers did not went to Syria. So, we can question the relevance of this instrument, but yeah, there definitely have been some changes. Also, the directive on combating terrorism is now being changed and they are going to add more offences that allow terrorist to be punished, for example if you facilitate terrorist travel or financing, or attending training camps as well. They are also amending the firearms directive, to regulate the trade and firearms. They want to make certain types of firearms illegal and that discussion is now ongoing, for example on what types of firearms should become prohibited. That has also come to the top of the agenda following the Paris and Brussels attacks, so you definitely see a strong reason to continue the approach that they decided on over the last couple of years.

**Heleen**: So the Paris and Brussels attacks are actually a direct cause to the urge to work on the initiatives that were already there?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** Yes, I think that the initiatives that were controversial, such as PNR, are now being seen in a different light and that makes them much more acceptable. So, the controversy that those directives had in the past is now something of the past.

**Heleen**: What, in your opinion, are the good things about the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, and what does not work well?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** I think what is the good point, at least in theory, of having a strategy is that you have a long-term perspective on how to deal with the problem. In that sense it is good to have a strategy, but I think that what you see now in regard to EU counterterrorism is what you already mentioned, is that you see that the EU is starting to introduce new measures in response to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. It is event-driven and crisis-driven. In fact, if you argue that they have a strategy and so they have an approach there is no or less need to introduce much more measures following an attack. A strategy ideally should prevent those kind of things. So, I think this is one of the better things of the EU, that they have a strategy, but apparently the member states, also because of public pressures, do not feel comfortable enough that the instruments that they already have are enough and sufficient. Certain aspects of EU counter terrorism are valuable, such as the fact the police authorities from different member states are able to meet and can exchange information in that sense. The problem is always that you need to ensure the privacy and that no fundamental rights are violated, but that they can talk to each other and when someone does cross the border that they know who to contact is a good thing, especially with the mobility within the EU. What I think is definitely a disadvantage is that the EU is rolling out all these measures regarding counterterrorism to different member states while for not all of these member states counterterrorism is an urgent issue. Member states have these measures and they probably will be used, but not so much and they are not relevant for the member states. Another disadvantage is like I said that by meeting in the context of the Council of the EU and the European Council to amend decisions and legislation. It could be that in the national context something is not that urgent, but then on the EU level it is decided that something needs to be done, also because it is a European problem and therefore, Europe must act and that can be an disadvantage. Another disadvantage is, I guess, that the EU has adopted certain measures, such as asset freezing and fund freezing of suspects of terrorism. So, the EU, by adopting this measures, have stimulated an approach whereby authorities can act on a really narrow basis of suspicion. The idea is that they want to act before an at emerges, but it is extremely difficult to do so, because the further you move away from an actual attack and you want to punish someone that might radicalize is a very broad category. What kind of indicators do you give them and aren’t those indicators too broad? So, the EU has made it possible to act in a case where it is not sure if a person is really dangerous. So then people are punished while they have not really executed an offence. That is very problematic from a legal perspective, because you can only be punished for something if you have actually broken the law, and in these cases, for example with asset freezing, people have not actually broken the law, but they are being punished. By adopting these measures the EU has contributed to these approaches that are now seen as quite important for national member states. In terms of value-added, the EU can add value probably by what they are doing in the context of the Radicalization Awareness Network. It is a network created by the European Commission where so-called frontline workers from member states are meeting each year to discuss their best practises. The EU facilitates this informal setting and that might be very valuable.

**Heleen**: Ok. I would like to come back to your previous comment that not all member states have counterterrorism as a main priority. Does this contribute to the fact that member states are reluctant to cooperate and share information, and to create an unified EU counterterrorism approach?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** I think that is definitely one of the reasons. Member states have different priorities and do not face the same insecurities or not to the same degree. If we talk specifically about why they do not share information, another concern is also that, especially if you talk about intelligence and security services, they are very protective of their sources. Sometimes for good reasons, because if they exchange very sensitive information with a member state and that member state is then acting on that information, it might compromise the source that shared the information. That can be very problematic and it is very hard to escape these kind of situations. So, member states do have good reasons for not sharing information and that might result in measures not being implemented the way the EU wants to. In the past, policies have been adopted and databases have been created and the member states were not always convinced that these measures were actually valuable to counterterrorism. So, if member states do not see the value, they are not going implement a measures like databases. That might be another reason why implementation is uneven between member states.

**Heleen**: Ok, yeah, and do you think that member states increased the implementation of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and policy after the Paris and Brussel terrorist attacks?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** What I have been told and what can also be seen in progress documents is that member states are no sharing much more information also with Europol. Certainly it has been approved, but there is still a long way to go.

**Heleen**: Yes, so member states do share more information with each other through inter alia Europol, but it also said that they remain to share information on bilateral level. Why do states still prefer the bilateral level over the EU level in the area of information sharing?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** I think one of the issues is one of the issues with sharing information through Europol is that you automatically share it with all the 28 member states of the EU. Sometimes member states do not want to do that, because it might be very sensitive like I mentioned before. But also if you talk about security and intelligence agencies, they are not going to give information away for free, but they want something back. With Europol and the Schengen Information System not always give back anything, so there is no added value and therefore no stimulus to use those systems. In that sense it might be more valuable to exchange on a bilateral level, because they get much more in return. That is one of the disadvantages of the EU system, because you share it with everyone. The information is very valuable, so then sharing bilaterally or with a smaller group, because that is also what they do, it might get you much more in return.

**Heleen**: So member states remain to prefer bilateral cooperation although on the EU level it progress could be towards a more unified counterterrorism policy?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** If we talk in terms of information exchange I am not convinced, because even if you…It could, if everyone start using it to the full extent then it could probably be the most optimal system , but at the same time it immediately creates a downside and that is that the more information you share with others, the more information needs to be processed and it is harder to divide the valuable information from the non-valuable information. The authorities have limited means to do so and that is another reason why member states do not want to use Europol to the full extent, because it means you have to process a more information and most of it not useful whilst the important information might get lost in the big stack.

**Heleen**: So, you do not think that EU cooperation will eventually replace bilateral cooperation as a result of such attacks like the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** With the current threat and concerns that we have concerning foreign fighters I think that is very unlikely, but yes, EU cooperation could become as desired, but then the threat has to be much bigger. The threat of foreign fighters is still higher for certain member states and it is not that the survival of Europe or the EU is at stake, but is it more a concern for France, Belgium and their capital cities. I think that is also why we see even sloppy implementation probably, because the threat might simply be not enough.

**Heleen**: After the Paris and Brussels attacks, the EU took several measures to improve their policy, but did the strategy itself really change? And what are the main changes then?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** I think the strategy did not change that much, it is still the same document from 2005. It is more in the measures that they have adopted or are amending. One change is that the strategy is now not focusing so much on Al Qaeda and home-grown terrorism which was the prime focus before. Now, it is much more on the Islamic State and foreign fighters returning from Islamic state territory or those that are inspired by the Islamic State. It is mainly that the people that they focus on have changed and not so much the substance of the strategy.

**Heleen**: So, it is the focus group that has changes after the recent attacks?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** Yes.

**Heleen**: Ok. You have mentioned it before and with my research I found that a lot of proposals have been made, but plenty of them are still in progress or not in favour to be adopted. Why have only a few concrete and tangible changes have been made after the Paris and Brussels attacks?

***Stef*** ***Wittendorp***: I think that the most important reason for that is that the measures they already have and that were already in place were sufficient. They already had the appropriate tools for the job. It was more an issue of organization. So, how do you organize cooperation, also internally, so within the member states, as well as between the member states. How can we improve that collaboration? Not so much that the tools and measures they already had were not sufficient. It was more about the interaction than about the tools for the job to say so.

**Heleen**: Ok. After the Brussels terrorist attacks the European Commission stated that they wanted to work towards a European Security Union. What does this Security Union imply and how does it differ from the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and policy and how will it change the policy?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** The idea was that, when it comes to information sharing for the intelligence and security services they mostly on a need-to-know basis, that was the argument. Because of source protection we only share with others what they need to know. What they now want to do is to work towards the need-to-share basis, so that instead of holding information back automatically sharing information. The main goal of the Security Union is that they create some sort of culture, like with the internal market as Economic Union, that we also in the security sense we are having a true union where member states do not hesitate to share information. The difficult thing about the Security Union is that they also created a commissioner for the Security Union and what you see now is that the policy domain relating to EU security is becoming much more crowded. There is an EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator and you also have the DG Home, so the Commissioner of Home Affairs, and now you also have a commissioner for the Security Union. So, it is another player in the field. The coordinator is assigned to the Council and the DG Home Commissioner to the Commission, so you already have some rivalry between the institutions. What I have heard from the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator’s office is that is it not clear what the mandate for the Security Union Commissioner will be and what he has to do, so what his task will be. So, I guess it is an understandable reaction to introduce an idea such as the Security Union if you look at the fact that the EU citizens want the EU to act. But I think taking into consideration the obstacles and the fact that there is already extensive collaboration, the Security Union might not contribute that much. In that sense it is more of an aspiration than it is a policy goal. And like I said, one of the assumption behind the Security Union is that member states have the same kind of security or insecurities and that the face the same threat. This is not the case, so it would probably not very realistic to assume that there will be a Security Union.

**Heleen**: Ok, that is clear. Now another point I would like to present is that EU institutions have stated that they should not link the migratory flow to the terrorist threat. However, measures in the area of external border control suggest the opposite. Furthermore, major attention has been paid to foreign fighter entering the EU via these external borders. Some people say that this focus is too narrow for counterterrorism and that attention should also be paid to home-grown terrorism. Does this narrow focus lead to an ineffective use of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and policy?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** The narrow focus on foreign fighters?

**Heleen**: Yes.

***Stef Wittendorp:*** It is difficult, because we know that some of the Paris attackers entered Europe using the migration flow, but then we should be very careful to not see all of the migrants as potential terrorists. So, that is one thing. Another thing is that member states should be more concerned about is how to deal with the migrants that are already here. Now they are locked up in detention and refugee centres with nothing to do. They might get frustrated not to say that they might turn to terrorism, but I think that is a much bigger concern compared to foreign fighters slipping through these migration flows into Europe. And then if they respond by that thinking that they can filter out these foreign fighters by improving the external border security, I think that is a mistake. If they really want to get into Europe, they can, because border security is never full proof. In that sense is does not make much sense to focus on these measures in the context of security measures. What I think that is one of the main reasons to improve border security and to link it to the terrorist threat is because the EU simply does not want the migrants. They are not going to say that, because the treaty says that there is a right to asylum, but is so evident from all the measures relating to border security in relation to migration that the EU does not want the migrants. They feel from the EU citizens and populist politicians that this is not acceptable. So, I think that the improvements in border security are really mainly focused not so much on terrorism, but on the migrants themselves. It might have benefits to countering terrorism, but I am a little bit sceptical. I would say that they should not focus exclusively on migration in terms of countering terrorism, because it might not be the best thing to do.

**Heleen**: So, should they focus on home-grown terrorism and other types of terrorism as well?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** Yes, I mean most of the Paris and Brussels attackers have not been to Syria, so sure they should pay attention to the circumstances that led people to the eventual violent path. So, focusing only migration and Syria is not the right thing to do.

**Heleen**: Now we are coming to the last section of the interview and this covers recommendations for the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy and policy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. Various scholars provided several suggestions or recommendations to improve the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy, and I would like to discuss some of these recommendations with you. Firstly, the EU does not need to provide more data bases of more information, but should instead focus on the quality of data, since that differs from member states to member state, as well as on the interoperability of all databases. How could the EU bring this about?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** In order for the member states to supply data of high quality, the EU would probably be wise to take a step back and pose some fundamental questions first. If member states supply data of insufficient quality, what is then going on? Perhaps they doubt the added value of EU databases or don't see the purpose of the databases. If the EU wants to improve this, it should start with an assessment of the added value of the databases and perhaps tailor the databases more to the needs of the member states. I don't think interoperability is a smart solution considering that even for individual databases some member states are not even connected or supply data in an sufficient manner.

**Heleen:** Ok, that is interesting considering the fact that EU itself urges to improve the interoperability. In the area of radicalisation, the EU intensified its efforts to prevent radicalisation after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks. The EU Counter Terrorism coordinator called to prevent radicalisation on the local level. Some scholars argue that this prevention of radicalisation is ineffective, because there are no common predictors and there is no evidence that it is effective. However, the EU laid down the importance of it in its EU Counter Terrorism Strategy. How could the EU provide an effective strategy to prevent radicalisation?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** Probably the best way for the EU to provide for an effective strategy is to recognise that the political, economic and cultural contexts in the member states is very different and leave it up to the member states to design the policies that they think work best for their own context. The role the EU should take is to provide support, expertise and/or allow for the exchange of best practices. The exchange of best practices is currently done in the context of the Radicalization Awareness Network and the providing of expertise through RAN's Centre of Excellence. What the EU could improve is the recognition of differences between the member states. For instance, what West-European member states see as key for preventing radicalisation is community policing - police officers patrolling in neighbourhoods and learning what is going on there so that they can forward worrying signals to other authorities - might not work well for other member states. For example, in Bulgaria, community policing might not be suitable due to the high levels of distrust among the people about the police. So, the recognition of member states differences should be improved.

**Heleen:** It is argued that the EU could learn from its past successes. What exactly are those past successes and what learning points can be used to change the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** I think that the main the EU can learn is, if you look at the approach they continuously broadened the field of counter terrorism. In the 70’s, countering terrorism was done by the police security services and the judiciary, so the legal authorities for prosecution. Now, in addition to these players you also have social workers, so frontline workers, school teachers, the community police and neighbourhood officers that need to spot radicalization. The EU is also encouraging the private sector, so companies, to becoming involved in developing detection technologies et cetera, so the players that have become involved in counterterrorism has increased substantially. There is an actual boundary and they keep broadening it. My concern is that instead of broadening it they should focus much more just on the core and not continuously broadening it with databases, saving more data and inviting more people into this field. And if you then do look at the laws that we have I would say that they need to stop continuously tinkering those laws and developing new approaches after a new attack or crisis, because I think it is not necessary. So, that would be two things that they can learn from.

**Heleen**: Ok, interesting. Some people would like to see a European CIA however, as you just stated, this is not very likely to happen. Instead a European FBI maybe could be something for the future. What is your view on that? Do you think that a European FBI is an realistic idea? And do you think that member states are willing to work towards a European FBI?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** I do not think it is a realistic idea. Member states are very reluctant to give up powers in this field and for very good reasons. If you set up a European FBI you should also set up a European prosecutor. It would mean that you need to have a lot of legislation and regulations to ensure that people’s rights are also guaranteed. That is one aspect. Another thing is that you need to have proper oversight. You can have a European FBI, but then you also need an overseeing capacity. And if member states give away powers to the FBI what can they do when they disagree with what the agency does. How can they protest? It is too revolutionary and it is also wishful thinking to argue that if you Europeanise law enforcement in terms that they can really investigate and prosecute crimes, that that substantially improve security. I am really doubtful about that.

**Heleen:** Ok, so no European FBI. How about the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator? For a long time, the role of EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator has been a point of discussion. According to Keohane, the powers of the coordinator are too limited to be influential. His response to the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks seems to be appropriate as he advised EU institutions and member states on what to do. Additionally, the coordinator himself contributes to the improvement of the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy by increasing the international operation with third countries. Do you think that the EU Counter Terrorism Coordinator should have certain powers and with that become a bigger actor in the EU counter terrorism policy? How should his role be changed?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** The Counter Terrorism Coordinator now has an advisory role and is more of a diplomacy rallying support for certain policies or ways of operating. Giving the Counter Terrorism Coordinator certain powers, for instance to oblige the MS to do certain things, would probably quickly be seen by the member states as an encroachment on Art. 4(2) of the Treaty which stipulates that member states are solely responsible for national security. Besides, even if the Counter Terrorism Coordinator would be given powers, it is doubtful whether the Counter Terrorism Coordinator is best placed to advise on what the member states should do about a (possible) terrorist threat. National intelligence analysts and policy makers know their own context best. In such a situation, when the Counter Terrorism Coordinator would have the authority to tell the member states what to do might actually overcomplicate the response and create more insecurity instead of less. For the Counter Terrorism Coordinator to improve his role, it is probably best for him to listen to the member states’ concerns and needs and offer analysis of how, given the limitations of the EU level, the EU can add value to the member states.

**Heleen:** Ok, so the role itself should not change, but he should rather improve his current tasks in order to become more meaningful in counterterrorism?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** Yes, that is what I mean.

**Heleen:** Ok, then we are coming to the last question of this interview. Some scholars argue that member states and the EU rapidly changed its counterterrorism policy after the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks as a matter of emergency policies and suggest that it is doubtful that national governments will stick to durable investments, and for example continue to increase the information sharing with Europol the way it did just after the Paris terrorist attacks, but also financial investments, such as increased budgets for counter terrorism measures. Do you share this view? What could the EU do in order to achieve durable commitment from its member states to the EU Counter Terrorism Strategy?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** Yes, I share this assessment. The situation you sketch indeed occurs often. After attacks there is a sense of urgency and politicians make all kinds of commitments and promises, partly because they feel it is necessary, and partly because they feel the need to show they are in charge of the situation. I think there is little given the limits of the EU, with the earlier mentioned Art. 4(2), that the EU can do. Member states will always want to do their best to prevent (political) violence, because if they don't, they have the feeling their legitimacy will be called into question. That the member states fall short of exchanging information to the fullest extent or that they limit their spending on counter-terrorism measures might also be telling of the significance of the threat. Apparently, member states feel that the present arrangements are enough in order to tackle terrorism, or at least that the trade-offs, that is giving up sovereignty with regard to national security, are not worthwhile in light of the added value they might get from the EU.

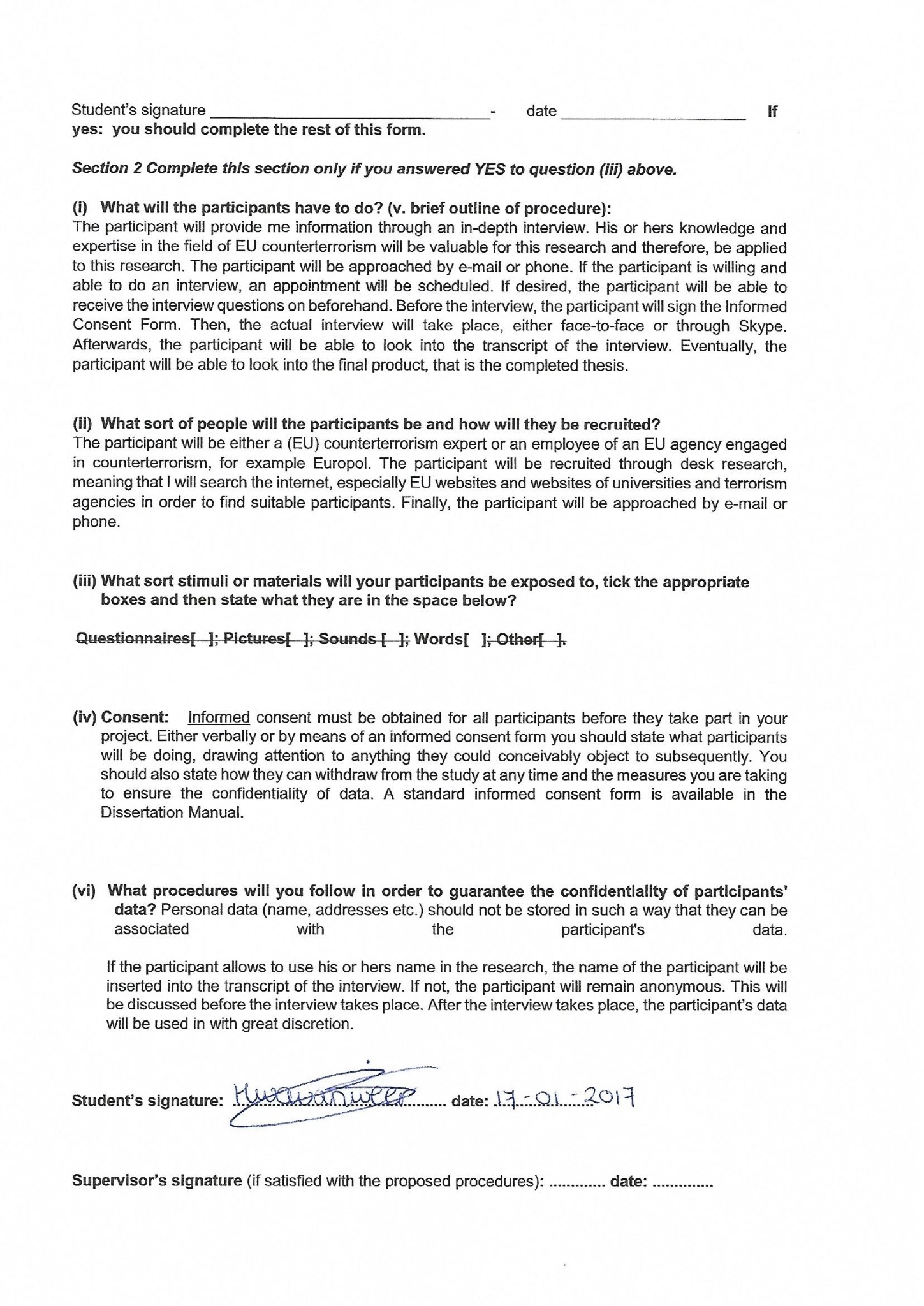
**Heleen:** Ok, so a durable commitment from member states is, at least for now, not likely to happen?

***Stef Wittendorp:*** No, indeed.

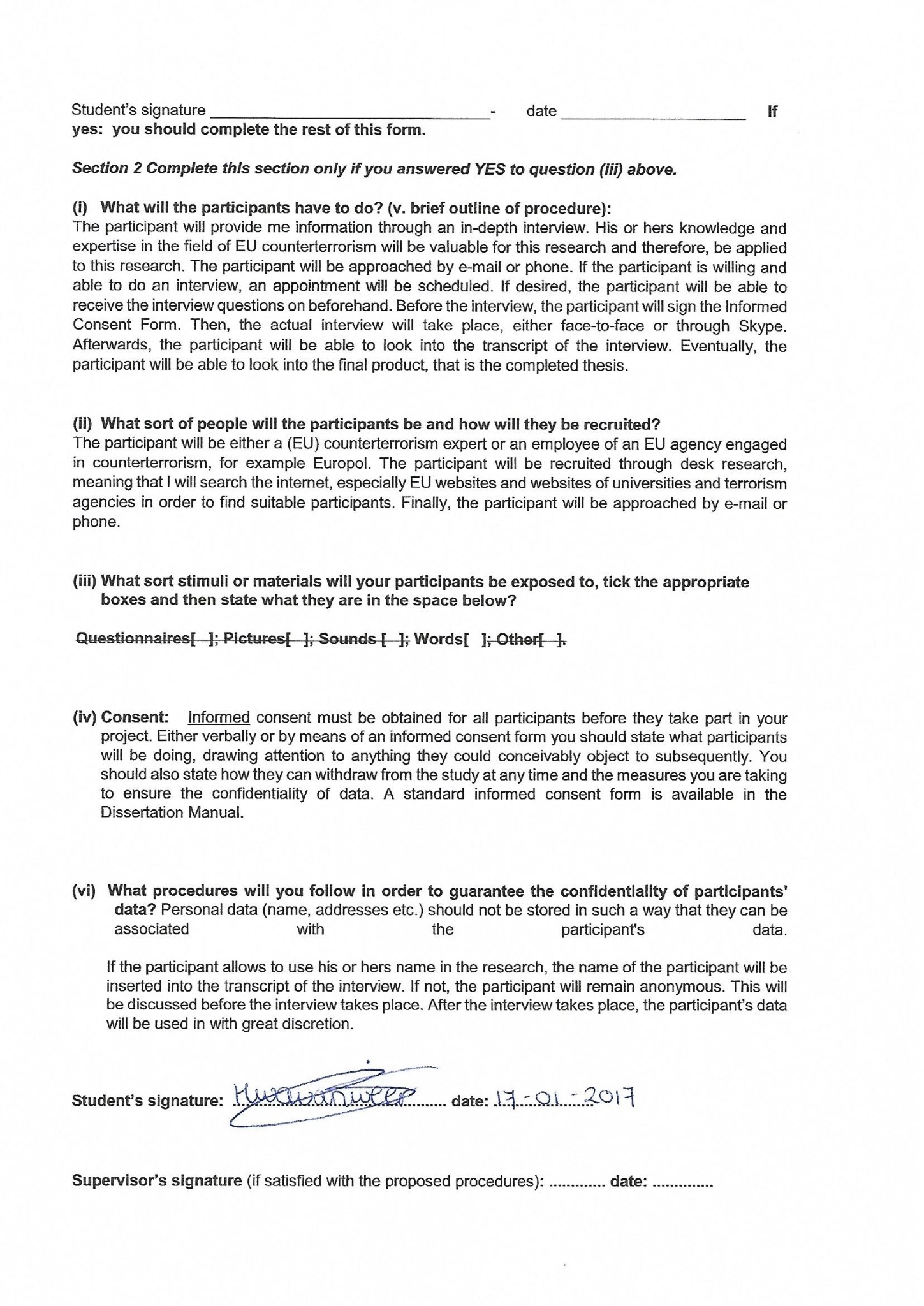
**Heleen:** Ok, this was the last question of this interview. I would really like to thank you for your time and for the fact that you wanted to share your knowledge.

***Stef Wittendorp:*** My pleasure.

## Appendix 2: Student Ethics Form



18-01-2017



18-01-2017



## Appendix 3: Informed Consent Form