

THE BIG PICTURE

The 11 September 11 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States and attacks in Europe in following years forced both sides of the Atlantic to pay more attention to homeland security and to combat the terrorism. But the US and Europe took different approaches to these issues. In the US, a centralised system has evolved, with a single department and various jurisdictions at both federal and state levels. Re-branded (in a similar way to the Israeli national security concept) and mainstreamed, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) has become the security superpower within the US security architecture as it supervises the activities of numerous national agencies. The crucial factor is that the US has a cross-jurisdictional ability to assess risk, use network dynamics and communicate in a co-ordinated manner with the public and politicians.

European countries have largely preferred to work within their existing institutional architectures. Appropriate ministries and agencies were appointed to co-ordinate various activities aimed at combating terrorism and responding to disasters and other security challenges. Very often, the European Union (EU) simply failed to go beyond policy formulation, leaving the fulfilment to individual countries whose actions in turn were determined by their own interests. Unlike the US, no common understanding of what is meant by homeland security has yet developed in Europe. There is a great demand to develop an adequate internal security concept in Europe, however, which can simultaneously consider the problems of integrating EU member states' internal security policies into a greater European context. The question facing Europe now is whether or not it needs to develop something similar to the US. And should Europe consider the

creation of a European homeland security agency?

There are three security areas which have proved permanent headaches for the EU: serious and organised crime; terrorism; and crises or disasters caused by natural or unintended events. One of the greatest accomplishments of the united Europe – the absence of internal borders – became a central reason why most of the crimes taking place in Europe have their roots in trans-national criminal organisations. VAT fraud and the sale of illicit drugs each amount to an estimated 100 billion euros every year. With more than 1,600 designated entry points into the EU, border control is one of the toughest security tasks.

Immigration and failed integration policy have enormously increased the threat of home-grown Islamist terrorist groups and copycat individuals within EU. It must also not be forgotten that Europe has also experienced its old "conventional" terrorism (IRA, ETA, Red Brigade, etc), though the threat of internal terrorism perpetrated by al-Qaeda and/or extremists inspired by it has become the main terrorist threat of the EU. According to Europol, there were 294 terrorist attacks in the EU during 2009. At the same time, quite significant steps have been taken in the area of combating terrorism since the London attacks of 2005, such as the introduction of common European arrest warrants, the creation of joint investigation teams, the creation of Eurojust, the reinforcement of Europol, the creation of FRONTEX, and improvements in the security of travel documents and measures.

Free movement of people and goods among member states has increased the degree of vulnerability of the EU economy tremendously, however. The EU has a very high population density, a road and rail network and an extended network of oil and gas



pipelines, as well as developed ports and airports systems. A breakdown in parts of these infrastructures systems would affect the whole EU very rapidly and gravely. Therefore, natural and/or man-made disasters might cause significant disruption. It is obvious that, since 2006, there has been a clear convergence of efforts by the member states towards improving co-operation and streamlining policies in the field of critical infrastructure protection (CIP).

At the same time, we can see that some member states have different security concerns and different threat perceptions. Each member state still operates in its own security structures. Split competences also exist at the EU level, as the EU historically did not have the same competences in all three of its pillars. Simultaneously, many of

the responsibilities for homeland security fall under the authority of the member states, although homeland security should be a fundamentally inter-pillar issue. The implementation of the solidarity clause in the Lisbon Treaty will only emphasise the need both for preparedness and for rapid response in the form of resources and assistance. The risk is that in the future we might see an incident-driven policy forced through quickly in order to respond to events; such policies are not always properly thought through. Obviously it is time for member states to realise that national solutions alone are not enough anymore, and that the criminals and terrorists have long since moved past national borders.

Meanwhile, the political will to create a unified European approach to

security exists to a different extent in different member states. Progress has been made on co-operation between the member states, but is now jeopardised in terms of functional needs. With the adoption in February 2010 of a new internal security strategy, the EU has begun taking steps towards unifying European security. The new EU homeland security strategy outlines the challenges and guidelines for response. It also provides the principles and values that should guide this work: solidarity, respect for fundamental rights, protection of personal data and the right to privacy.

Although the strategy is a promising step, the EU still needs to further develop its internal security policies, however. EU member states and security stakeholders must reach a

common threats perception and agree on a shared systematic approach to threat assessment. The EU needs a homeland security strategy to maximise the impact of its actions. A common strategy enables to identify the best ways of dealing with problems, making full use of all the tools on the local, regional, national and European levels.

The European Council has also recognised the need for better information exchange and operational co-operation. Intelligence sharing is the foundation of any security architecture. The EU intelligence and security community is currently fractured, while the scale of the threat now requires a much more integrated response.

When information is centrally stored, it allows for a clear understanding of the threat and the ability to prioritise

► responses and co-ordinate successful operations. Much greater co-ordination capabilities are needed, that would operate through a single centre. For example, Europol is a common EU infrastructure to co-ordinate the collection of all information with regards to terrorism and organised crime. This is not yet an EU intelligence agency, but it is a far-reaching intelligence hub that is not exploited fully. Common situational awareness is more than just an operational centre; it is about not being overwhelmed by the volume of information and understanding needs beforehand, so as to know what the key triggers are, what the full range of responses is, and who to depend on.

There is a strong opposition to the creation of a European homeland security agency among some EU officials, however. Rob Wainwright, Director of Europol, believes co-operation is the key to European homeland security. He believes the Lisbon Treaty provides a unique opportunity to develop one single internal security strategy, and there is therefore no rush for the creation of any new bureaucratic establishment as a central agency on homeland security. The creation of new agencies, in his opinion, will not necessarily solve the problem and is likely to cause more problems due to the bureaucracy and institutions involved. He thinks that better co-ordination of already existing agencies, from Europol to the Monitoring and Information Centre, is vital. The framework has been created for co-operation on all levels, but functional co-operation does not occur between law enforcement agencies across the Europe.

Wainwright insists there is an underlying problem of multi-disciplinary co-operation at the national level, which is shifted onto the management boards of the different agencies. It is therefore essential to reinforce interdisciplinary co-ordination, starting at the national level and eventually reaching the level of co-operation between member states. As it stands now, the Council is too rigidly structured based on the national structures which underpin it. What is necessary, he argues, is an EU structure to follow; a single, sound structure will lead to more harmonious approach to



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Who should have the final say in CI security?

security, while also building stronger interdependencies and trust between the EU and the national governments. A common understanding among the member states, law enforcement agencies, the EU institutions and the population is therefore essential to developing a coherent and cohesive internal security strategy.

To sum up the general feelings among Eurocrats, however, it could be stated that, in the short or medium-term, Europe will not have a homeland security agency similar to DHS. Many experts believe that homeland security concerns in Europe have become unevenly weighted towards terrorist attacks while more practical concerns, for example about critical infrastructure protection (CIP), have been not taken into consideration. The real challenge here is about gathering the numerous infrastructure stakeholders together and creating frameworks and shared understanding which will help mitigate threats of all kinds.

As climate change continues to occur, the probability of increased severe weather events poses a greater risk to CI than terrorist attacks. A second risk is the privatisation of CI in some European countries. In a privatised system, regulatory bodies become single-mindedly focused on lowering the cost of goods and services to consumer. Furthermore, regulators rarely look outside their own sector and

take no account of national resilience concerns. Most of the CI in Europe is owned and operated by private means. This fact intensifies the need for a comprehensive approach to CIP. Infrastructure is becoming hugely interdependent and complex. In order to respect funding deficits, it is necessary to find security solutions that are cost-efficient and balanced. Security research and technology could benefit from the cost-saving opportunities which an integrated EU approach to CIP could provide. The European Commission has initiated a project which is run by its joint research centre in Ispra (Italy) with the goal to test security technology and develop a standardised rating system throughout the EU. New security technology often has to pass several national standards tests. Much work remains to be done on developing an integrated EU approach to CIP, though the agencies and mechanisms which can accomplish this already exist.

The events of 9/11 provoked the creation of the US Department of Homeland Security but, though terrorist attacks have sped up development of homeland security measures and mechanisms in Europe, this process is still far from complete. There is clear disparity between the different levels of European civil and political society when it comes to homeland security. It could be appropriate to remember here the statement of Franco Frattini that "security is no longer a monopoly that belongs to public administrations, but a common good, for which responsibility and implementation should be shared by public and private bodies". It is a time to realise the potential under the Lisbon Treaty and to adopt a common European security model. This means much more than strategy; it is about developing a common methodology of how to respond to threats, how to collect information and what to do with it. **I**

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