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COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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**COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION  
TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL**

**concerning**

**Terrorist recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation**

## 1. Introduction

“Violent radicalisation” is the phenomenon of people embracing opinions, views and ideas which could lead to acts of terrorism as defined in Article 1 of the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism<sup>1</sup>. The recent terrorist attacks in London of July 2005, and Madrid in March 2004, have reinforced the priority treatment of addressing violent radicalisation as part of a comprehensive approach to the preventive side of fighting terrorism.

Fighting terrorism, in all its forms and irrespective of the aims or ‘ideals’ it purports to advance, is also an ideological struggle because terrorism has the potential to subvert the very founding principles of the European Union. Although Europe has experienced different types of terrorism in its history, the main threat currently comes from terrorism that is underlined by an abusive interpretation of Islam. Nevertheless, many of the motivational factors for violent radicalisation and the remedies dealt with by this Communication are equally valid for all violent radicalisation, whether of a nationalistic, anarchic, separatist, extreme left or extreme right kind.

The European Union rejects violence and hatred and will never tolerate racism or xenophobia in whatever form or against whatever religion or ethnic group<sup>2</sup>. As noted in the Charter on Fundamental Rights<sup>3</sup>, the Union is founded on the indivisible, universal values of human dignity, freedom, equality and solidarity and is based on the principles of democracy and the rule of law. It is important to maintain the crucial balance between different fundamental rights in this area, particularly the right to life on the one hand, and the right to freedom of expression and privacy on the other. Europe must continue to promote human rights and the rule of law and reject any form of relativism insofar as fundamental rights are concerned. Terrorism constitutes one of the most serious violations of fundamental freedoms and any arguments that attempt to justify certain violent practices as an expression of diversity must also be unconditionally rejected.

Interest in this subject has increased in recent years. It is admittedly a very complex question with no simple answers and which requires a cautious, modest and well-thought approach. In this Communication, the Commission reports on its ongoing work in this area and proposes possible ways in which work in various fields within its competence could be channelled more effectively into addressing the issue. The Annex to the Communication merely provides a preliminary analysis of the possible factors contributing to violent radicalisation and terrorist recruitment. Certainly, more in-depth research and analysis into the phenomenon is required.

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<sup>1</sup> Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA of 13 June 2002 on Combating Terrorism. Article 1 provides that each Member State shall take the necessary measures to ensure that the intentional acts referred to in expressly specified offences, as defined under national law, which given their nature and context, may seriously damage a country or an international organisation where committed with the aim of seriously intimidating a population, unduly compelling a Government or international organisation to perform or abstain from performing an act, or seriously destabilising or destroying the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or an international organisation, shall be deemed terrorist offences.

<sup>2</sup> Article 13 of the Treaty of the European Union, Council Directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial and ethnic origin - OJ L 180, 19.7.2000, p. 22 - and Council Directive 2000/78/EC of 27 November 2000 establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation - OJ L 303, 2.12.2000, p. 303.

<sup>3</sup> Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, 2000 - OJ C 364, 7.12.2000.

As specifically requested by the Hague Programme<sup>4</sup>, this document is the Commission's initial contribution to the development of an EU long term strategy (whose presentation by the Council is foreseen for the end of 2005) to address the factors which contribute to radicalisation and recruitment to terrorist activities. The actions and recommendations presented in this document are a combination of soft (e.g inter-cultural exchanges among youth) and hard (e.g prohibition of satellite broadcasts inciting terrorism) measures and are to be viewed as complementary to, and in support of, current national efforts. The Commission however believes that the EU, with its span of policies in various areas that could be used to address violent radicalisation, is well placed to gather and spread at European level the relevant expertise that is being acquired by the Member States in addressing this problem.

This document does not aim to deal with criminal law initiatives based on Title VI of the Treaty of the European Union that already exist, as for instance, the already adopted Framework Decision on Terrorism, or the Proposal under discussion for a Framework Decision on Racism and Xenophobia. That proposal, which the Commission urges the Council to adopt, aims to ensure that intentional conduct relating to racism or xenophobic acts, including incitement to violence or hatred, public insults, condoning racism and xenophobia and participating in racist or xenophobic groups, is punishable as a criminal offence in Member States<sup>5</sup>.

## **2. Strengthening Community Policies to Address Violent Radicalisation**

The Commission considers that the development and implementation of a European Strategy on violent radicalisation will necessarily be a sustained effort and that the measures being proposed, both in the short and long term, in this Communication are not meant to be exhaustive in nature. In the future other measures could be proposed, particularly in the light of better knowledge acquired on the subject.

The core areas of immediate focus are broadcast media, the internet, education, youth engagement, employment, social exclusion and integration issues, equal opportunities and non-discrimination and inter-cultural dialogue. Furthermore, in order to acquire greater knowledge in the field, the Commission will support more extensive analysis of violent radicalisation that will serve as a basis for better policy-making in the future. Finally, the external relations component to tackling the problem is a crucial aspect of a future EU strategy in this area.

### **2.1. Broadcast Media**

In line with the recently adopted Commission Financing Decision for its first pilot project on fighting terrorism<sup>6</sup> (the "Financing Decision"), the Commission plans to organise a conference in the near future on the media's role in relation to violent radicalisation and terrorism.

European law already prohibits incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or

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<sup>4</sup> "The Hague Programme – Strengthening freedom, security and justice in the EU", endorsed by the European Council in November 2004.

<sup>5</sup> Proposal for a Council framework decision on combating racism and xenophobia - COM(2001) 664; OJ C 75 E, 26.3.2002.

<sup>6</sup> Commission Financing Decision on the Pilot Project "Fight Against Terrorism", adopted on 15 September 2005, specifies the way in which the Commission intends allocating the € 7 million budget in its counter-terrorism policy.

nationality in broadcast<sup>7</sup>. This includes third country programmes (mostly satellite television) if they use either a frequency, satellite capacity or an uplink appertaining to a Member State<sup>8</sup>. Member States are responsible for the implementation of these rules and the recent cases of prohibition to retransmit channels like Al-Manar or Sahar-1 within Europe<sup>9</sup>, show that the effective application of these rules works quite well.

On the invitation of the Commission, the presidents of the national regulatory authorities in the field of broadcasting came together for the first time in March 2005 to give a pan-European drive to combat incitement to hatred in broadcasts. They agreed on concrete measures to strengthen their cooperation, which the Commission will support. They agreed on mutual and immediate information exchange especially through the establishment of a working group and a restricted internet forum.

## **2.2. The Internet**

The incitement to commit terrorism is a crime under the European Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism and the use of the internet to incite people into becoming violently radical or as a vehicle for terrorist recruitment is extremely worrying in view of the internet's global reach, real-time nature and effectiveness.

The objective to remove terrorist propaganda from the internet can be duly taken into account in the E-Commerce Directive<sup>10</sup>. Article 3(4) – (6) covers the possibility to take appropriate measures against violent radicalisation and terrorist recruitment occurring via the internet. This provision envisages case by case derogations to the Internal Market clause which Member States may use to take measures, such as sanctions or injunctions, to restrict the provision of a particular online service from another Member State where there is a need to protect certain identified public policy interests such as prevention, investigation, detection and prosecution of criminal offences, including the protection of minors and the fight against any incitement to hatred on grounds of race, sex, religion or nationality, and violations of human dignity concerning individual persons. Therefore, measures may be adopted against services provided illegally in the context of terrorism<sup>11</sup>. Article 15(2) of the Directive allows Member States to establish obligations for information society service providers to immediately inform competent public authorities of specific alleged illegal activities undertaken or information provided by recipients of their service.

Furthermore, every Member State has the obligation to ensure effective supervision of operators established on its territory and to adopt necessary measures, in accordance with EC law, to prevent criminal activities. The use of the internet in relation to violent radicalisation

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<sup>7</sup> Article 22a of Directive 97/36/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 June 1997 on the coordination of certain provisions laid down by law, regulation or administrative action in Member States concerning the pursuit of television broadcasting activities (Television without Frontiers Directive).

<sup>8</sup> Article 2(4) of the “Television without Frontiers” Directive.

<sup>9</sup> The re-transmission of Al Manar by all relevant EU Member States with satellite capacity, in this case France (Eutelsat), the Netherlands (NSS) and Spain (Hispasat), has been prohibited.

<sup>10</sup> Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and the Council of 8 June 2000 on certain legal aspects of information society services, in particular electronic commerce, in the Internal Market (Directive on electronic commerce) - OJ L 178, 17.7.2000, p. 1.

<sup>11</sup> Communication to the Council, the European Parliament and the European Central Bank on the application to financial services of Articles 3(4) to (6) of the Electronic Commerce Directive - COM(2003) 259.

will also be discussed in the framework of the E-commerce Expert Group meeting planned in November 2005.

What is more, Member States are allowed to require an access and (mere) transmission provider<sup>12</sup>, as well as caching<sup>13</sup> and hosting service provider<sup>14</sup> to terminate or prevent an infringement<sup>15</sup>. In particular, national courts and administrative authorities may issue injunctions requiring the removal of illegal information or the disabling of access to it. Furthermore, black lists, based on clear criteria laid down by law to define which content is illegal, have been drawn up by certain bodies or police forces in some Member States to assist ISPs in identifying sites hosting illegal content (such as child pornography or racist content) and are being used by ISPs on a voluntary basis. This type of self-regulatory practice is an example that could be transposed to the prevention of violent radicalisation and which Member States could share with others.

The Commission encourages Member States to make use of the enabling provisions in the Directive in the most effective way to address violent radicalisation in Europe. In view of the importance of maintaining the delicate balance with the internal market principles of this Directive, the exchange of good practices and expertise in this area is crucial. The Commission is willing to gather such Member State practices and to examine the need of adopting a guidance document.

### **2.3. Education, youth engagement and active European citizenship**

Programmes targeted at youngsters in their most formative years and at an age in which they are most vulnerable to fall prey to violently radical ideas, can have very fruitful outcomes. The promotion of cultural diversity and tolerance can help to stem the development of violently radical mind-sets.

An objective of the “Youth” Programme is “to develop understanding of the cultural diversity of Europe and its fundamental common values, thus helping to promote respect for human rights and to combat racism, anti-Semitism and xenophobia.” The European Commission ensures that such themes are regularly applied to calls for innovative projects. The “Youth” programme therefore contributes towards preventing violent behaviour from taking root in young people.

The “Culture” Programme also finances activities linked to the promotion of intercultural dialogue as well as activities to enhance the cultural diversity of Europe by promoting understanding among people from different countries. Promoting intercultural dialogue will be one of the axes of the proposed new programme “Culture 2007”<sup>16</sup>.

At the same time, the Commission is carrying out many projects under the “Socrates” Programme which deal with developing concepts of European citizenship and inter-cultural understanding that enable people coming from different backgrounds to share a common European identity that nonetheless respects and promotes cultural diversity. These activities are treated in more detail in the school and adult education actions of the programme

<sup>12</sup> Intermediaries defined in Article 12(1) of the E-Commerce Directive (mere conduit).

<sup>13</sup> Intermediaries defined in Article 13(1) of the E-Commerce Directive.

<sup>14</sup> Intermediaries defined in Article 14(1) of the E-Commerce Directive.

<sup>15</sup> Articles 12(3), 13(2) and 14(3) of the E-Commerce Directive.

<sup>16</sup> Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and the Council establishing the Culture 2007 programme (2007-2013) - COM(2004) 469, 14.7.2004.

(“Comenius” and “Grundtvig”). One of the objectives of these programmes, that of promoting “intercultural awareness”, contributes in some ways to addressing the problem of violent radicalisation of marginalised and ‘hard to reach’ groups in society.

The Commission has recently launched a proposal to adopt a new programme “Citizens for Europe” to promote active European Citizenship<sup>17</sup> and one of its objectives is to enhance mutual understanding between European citizens respecting and celebrating cultural diversity, while contributing to intercultural dialogue. If adopted, the Union would provide financial assistance to organize events, create networks and promote exchange of good practices, notably to celebrate Europe’s fundamental values and major achievements thereby contributing in an indirect way to the array of soft measures against violent radicalisation. Furthermore, the Commission has launched a civil society dialogue between the EU and the candidate countries to enhance mutual understanding and to bring citizens and different cultures closer together.

## **2.4. Encouraging Integration, Inter-cultural Dialogue and Dialogue with Religions**

### *2.4.1. Integration*

In the majority of cases, third-country nationals have integrated well within the Member States of the EU. However, if integration fails it can provide fertile ground for violent radicalisation to develop. As discussed in the Annex, alienation from both the country of origin and the host country can make it more likely for a person to look for a sense of identity and belonging elsewhere such as in a powerful extremist ideology.

Integration policies - which are stand-alone policies having their own specific goals – could have positive ancillary effects on preventing violent radicalisation. The Commission is committed under the framework of the Hague Programme to take action to promote more vigorous integration policies within the Member States for third country nationals, based on the implementation of the Common Basic Principles on Integration adopted by the JHA Council in November 2004. The Commission has set out its proposals in a Communication adopted in September 2005<sup>18</sup>. Under the financial perspectives 2007-2013, the Commission has also proposed a European Fund for the Integration of third-country nationals aimed to cover targeted actions in this area.

A holistic approach to integration is necessary that includes not only access to the labour market for all groups but also measures which deal with social, cultural, religious, linguistic and national differences. The right to non-discrimination, as further developed by the EU anti-discrimination Directives<sup>19</sup>, is also a key aspect of integration. While 20% of the European Social Fund budget is already being allocated to improving equal opportunities in employment for disadvantaged groups, other policies that may prove helpful relate to increased regeneration of, and accessibility to, deprived areas and neighbourhoods, improved housing conditions, encouraged access to education and protection from social exclusion. Furthermore, a fulfilling quality of life and ensuring individuals are engaged with society, on a personal level, are key to

<sup>17</sup> Proposal for a decision of the European Parliament and the Council establishing for the period 2007-2013 the programme “Citizens for Europe” to promote active European citizenship - COM(2005) 116, 6.4.2005.

<sup>18</sup> Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: A Common Agenda for Integration – Framework for the Integration of third-country nationals in the European Union - COM(2005) 389, 1.9.2005.

<sup>19</sup> Council Directive 2000/43/EC and Council Directive 2000/78/EC, see footnote 2.

preventing recruitment to radical groups (see Annex).

#### *2.4.2. Dialogue between the State and Religions*

Dialogue is not often spontaneous, especially when dealing with important values and principles. It is therefore necessary to learn how best to exchange views and opinions and to create a method of communication to eliminate barriers and develop understanding of cultural diversities based on religious ideas (particularly when dealing with radical, extremist and fundamentalist concepts). This is both of general interest and a necessary condition for starting inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue from a solid basis.

The EU respects and does not prejudice the status under national law of churches and religious associations or communities in the Member States (Declaration No 11 to the Amsterdam Treaty). The relationship between the State and Churches and religious associations is not an EU competence. At the same time, there is a tradition of dialogue between the Commission and religions, churches communities of conviction. The Commission has for some years established a wide network of different contacts with a large number of confessional and non-confessional partners. On a regular basis the Commission organises conferences, seminars and other sorts of meetings to strengthen the mutual understanding and to promote European values. In 2003, a Conference of EU Home Affairs Ministers was held on “The inter-faith dialogue – a social cohesion factor in Europe and an instrument of peace in the Mediterranean area”<sup>20</sup> whose aim was to discuss establishing a “European Forum for inter-faith and faith-governments dialogue”. The Commission, for instance, organised a conference on anti-Semitism in February 2004 where the pledge to fight and monitor anti-Semitism was reinforced by the European Union.

The Commission will build on some of these initiatives in order to discuss further those that can potentially be linked to the prevention of violent radicalisation.

#### *2.4.3. European Year of Intercultural Dialogue*

The Commission will launch a proposal to establish 2008 as the European Year of Intercultural Dialogue. The Year aims at making Europeans sensitive to the questions related to the Intercultural Dialogue as well as to use better EU programmes in promoting the positive values resulting from such a Dialogue. Topics raised in this Communication could be the object of particular attention at the events to be supported by the Union during the Year.

### **2.5. Law enforcement authorities and security services**

Schemes should be considered which involve the police and law enforcement authorities engaging more at the local level with youth. Those Member States that promote the recruitment of people from different backgrounds should also encourage other Member States to do so by sharing their best practices, even in those Member States that do not officially identify ethnic minorities. This could be a way of improving mutual understanding and respect between people across all Member States.

More preventive work in the area of counter-terrorism should be encouraged across Member States, along with further cooperation between operational, intelligence and policy levels. The Commission urges Member States that have already attained good results to share their

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<sup>20</sup> Held in Rome, 30-31 October 2003.



experiences and best practices with others via EU structures. Member States have obligations to cooperate with bodies like Europol while cooperation with the Joint Situation Centre (SitCen) is also strongly encouraged. As regards policy initiatives, the Commission will gather and assess the Member States' best practices and consolidate them into periodic guidelines for all the Member States.

## **2.6. Experts Networks**

In line with the recently adopted Commission Financing Decision, the Commission will allocate funds to establish a network of experts for the sharing of research and policy ideas which will submit a preliminary contribution on the state of knowledge on violent radicalisation in the beginning of 2006.

The Commission will also launch a public tender for studies in this area that will include 'motivational and desisting factors for violent radicalisation' and 'socio-economic factors contributing to violent radicalisation'. It is possible that the Pilot Project will be continued in 2006. Both the networks and the studies will *inter alia* take stock of research completed or ongoing in the EC Framework Research Programme and other research programmes. Such stock-taking of relevant knowledge should also be pursued in the 'Security and Safeguarding Liberties' Programme for the future financial perspectives and new research in this domain should be pursued in the 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Research Programme.

## **2.7. Monitoring and collection of data**

The Commission has consulted the Network of Independent Experts on Fundamental Rights and has received feedback in the form of a study<sup>21</sup> about the link between violent radicalisation and fundamental rights within the legal framework of Member States.

The Commission will utilise the expertise of the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC) in areas such as migrants' experiences<sup>22</sup>, racist violence<sup>23</sup> and Islamophobia<sup>24</sup>. The Commission will also ask the EUMC for studies on different manifestations of hatred towards fundamental constitutional values of the EU such as religious freedom and equality between men and women. Furthermore, the transformation of the EUMC into a Fundamental Rights Agency will widen the possibilities for reaching wider areas (for instance, police interaction with different communities).

## **2.8. External relations**

Dialogue with and, where appropriate, technical assistance to third countries and regional partners has to be an integral part of our approach to addressing violent radicalisation and terrorist recruitment. As part of its external policy, the EU already has an active role albeit in an indirect way. The Community and Member States together are the largest donors of development aid in the world which, in addition to its primary development role, also helps to address some of the root causes of the emergence of terrorism. Development assistance can help erode the support base for terrorist networks and movements through a focus on reducing

<sup>21</sup> 'The requirements of fundamental human rights in the framework of the measures of prevention of violent radicalisation and recruitment of potential terrorists' – Opinion no. 3-2005, 23.8.2005; [http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/justice\\_home/cfr\\_cdf/index\\_fr.htm](http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/justice_home/cfr_cdf/index_fr.htm).

<sup>22</sup> The EUMC is currently preparing a report on "Migrants' Experiences of Racism and Discrimination".

<sup>23</sup> The EUMC presented in April 2005 a report on Racist Violence in the 15 Member States.

<sup>24</sup> The EUMC is currently preparing two reports on this issue.

inequalities, support for democratisation and respect of human rights in addition to actions on good governance, the fight against corruption and security system reform.

Furthermore, steps must be taken to prevent state fragility at an early stage, before a possible 'breeding ground' for terrorism might emerge. The Community will step up its assistance to support partner countries' and regional organisations' efforts to strengthen early warning systems, governance/institutional capacity building and promotion of human rights protection to enable them to engage effectively in a preventive approach. It will also improve its ability to recognize early signs of state fragility through improved joint analysis, joint monitoring and assessments of difficult, fragile and failing states with other donors<sup>25</sup>. This is an integral part of a comprehensive external action approach to security and development.

In the framework of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), the EU action plans with the Mediterranean countries include a number of anti-radicalisation measures. Possible factors contributing to the radicalisation of populations have been addressed on numerous occasions, during bilateral and regional exchanges. This dialogue can be deepened in the framework of the institutions created by the Association Agreements with Mediterranean countries.

More widely, there is a need to better promote cross-cultural and inter-religious understanding between Europe and third countries, particularly those in which Islam is the predominant religion. Since terrorists often target also moderate Islam, it is important to reach out to moderate Islamic regimes and organisations in cooperating on anti-terrorism policies. In addition, supporting moderate Islamic groups and moderate Islamic thinking both at home and abroad can contribute to limiting support for extremism and therefore reduce the scope of terrorist recruitment.

The Commission is giving greater prominence to the need to fight racism and xenophobia in its cooperation with third countries in the field of human rights. This is reflected in the funding priorities established under the EU's European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights<sup>26</sup>, a thematic instrument complementary to the political dialogue and country strategies agreed with partner countries' governments. The EU could adopt the same approach in promoting the values on which it is based to other states without, however, imposing any of its own models on them.

### **3. Conclusion**

The Commission is hereby providing its initial contribution to an EU strategy being developed in the area. It has explained how various EU policies could be channelled or made better use of, to help address the possible factors contributing to violent radicalisation. While aware of the long-term nature of this effort, and of the need for refining the approach as more knowledge on the subject is gained, the Commission is determined to complement and sustain the actions of the Member States, their regions and localities in trying to create an environment that is hostile towards violent radicalisation.

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<sup>25</sup> See also COM(2005) 311 "Proposal for a Joint Declaration by the Council, the European Parliament and the Commission on the European Union Development Policy "The European Consensus".

<sup>26</sup> European Initiative for Democracy and Human Rights Programming Document 2002-2004. Adopted by the Commission on 20 December 2001. [http://europa.eu.int/comm/external\\_relations/human\\_rights/doc/eidhr02\\_04.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/external_relations/human_rights/doc/eidhr02_04.htm)

## ANNEX

### **Introduction**

Violent Radicalisation is defined under section 1, above. In order to understand its historical and psychological roots one needs to look at a wide range of movements, organisations and struggles, with political, religious, national and ethnic motivations, or combinations of these. Radicalisation has become a particular area of focus due to its link with combating terrorism. Europe has a long experience of fighting terrorism. Examples such as the ETA, the IRA and the Brigade Rosse come to mind. Terrorists under many guises and invoking different ideologies and motives have claimed victims in many Member States. The ideologies and propaganda have varied and included extremism of different types – whether from the extreme left or right, anarchist and religious or in many cases nationalist. All these groups have tried to terrorise democratic societies to concede political transformations by non-democratic means. While they sometimes invoked aspirations shared by wider parts of the population, the use of terrorism has always been rejected both by societies as a whole and by the very groups whose interests the groups purportedly sought to promote.

Terrorism is never legitimate. It therefore always attempts to justify itself by abusively referring to views, aspirations or beliefs which may, themselves, be legitimate and which it most often insidiously deforms. The Commission believes that there is no such thing as “Islamic terrorism”, nor “catholic” nor “red” terrorism. None of the religions or democratic political choices of European citizens tolerates, let alone justifies, terrorism. The fact that some individuals unscrupulously attempt to justify their crimes in the name of a religion or an ideology cannot be allowed in any way and to any extent whatsoever to cast a shadow upon such a religion or ideology. Stating this fact clearly is, in the Commission’s view, the first requirement for the Union in the fight against violent radicalisation.

In the recent past, terrorist groups, abusively claiming their legitimacy in the name of Islam, have been known to operate both within and outside Europe and often reasons for their acts are claimed to be related to political situations. Both military and civilians have been victims within Europe of terrorist attacks. Terrorist organisations are known to have had cells within Europe, long before the Madrid train attacks on 11 March 2004 or the London attacks of 7 July 2005. There are also alleged links between those who orchestrated the World Trade Centre and Pentagon attacks, and the Madrid attacks. To date, it appears that organisations are trans-national, logistically well organised and well-funded. Moreover, the range of nationalities involved in various stages of the sophisticated organisation of the attacks indicate how global such terrorist organisations have become and also indicates how those involved may be European citizens, whose motivations defy simplistic categorisation; not being socially-excluded, socio-economically disadvantaged, unemployed or living in deprived suburbs of large cities or inner-city housing estates, or from immigrant families.

It is important to remember that certain regional terrorist activities, such as attacks related to the Israel-Palestine conflict, are *not* necessarily linked to global networks and should not be automatically discussed together, or be seen to be carrying out “joined-up” terrorist acts together for one cause. The common “religious” denominator, and the actual religion itself, are often not the basis upon which attacks have been carried out. Small-scale organisations and groups across Member States advocate radical beliefs or encourage young people to take

social or political action against Islamophobia or perceived anti-Islamic politics. The same goes for radical beliefs (often voiced in verbally violent terms) against, for instance, immigration or globalisation. Not all the groups that express such beliefs carry out terrorist attacks. Those who do, however, often exist at local levels within Member States, as opposed to globally with sophisticated financing, sponsorship and planning. Terrorist organisations and networks rely on volunteers, logistical networks and funds from others who have raised money as they have similar views. They also have been known to deal in other areas of organised crime, in order to finance terrorism<sup>27</sup>.

There is also a potential distinction between trans-national groups having funds and logistics, on the one hand, and local or independent groups able to conduct small-scale operations, on the other. This distinction is the ideological and operational influence exerted by organised groups on locally-based groups. The success recorded by the organised ones and their diffusion through the global information society is an incitement to actions for smaller groups.

## **1. Factors contributing to radicalisation**

The reasons for becoming involved in groups which use terrorism against others as a way of expressing their ideas often stem from a combination of perceived or real injustice or exclusion. Focusing on fighting under a common political, religious, national or ethnic banner enables people to find affiliations with groups, and with these groups, carrying out acts of violence can become part of partaking in a cause. Other reasons can be found in the misinterpretation of writings or ideologies, or gaps between what one reads or has been told and the reality of one's contemporary social context.

On a more individual psychological level, not feeling accepted in society, feeling discriminated against and the resulting unwillingness even to try to identify with the values of the society in which one is living, can also lead to feelings of alienation or low self-esteem – a gap which might also be filled by making contact with the powerful ideals and purpose-driven motivations of certain groups or movements. Often the desire to engage with a particular locus of identity that represents one's opinions can be a powerful motivating force. The phenomenon is very much similar irrespective of the powerful ideal; be it neo-nazism, nationalist or separatist causes, social revolution or extreme interpretations of religions. It is clear that not all those who come into contact with radical groups will in turn become radical themselves. The number of people who actually try to commit terrorist acts of whatever nature or gravity is small. It is important to keep in mind that it is always possible for an individual to renounce violent radicalisation, and many do. A successful policy to combat violent radicalisation needs therefore to understand such processes, but never justify violence.

One needs to investigate the ease by which people come into contact with violent radical groups. Some come into contact with them when they go to university. Away from the familiar environment and support structures of friends and family they start to become aware of politics and pressure groups. Those looking for recruits often take advantage of this situation. Others find them and are influenced when they are surfing the internet, via entering chat rooms or reading inflammatory articles on websites, which encourage and motivate people into wanting to change situations of perceived injustice or inequality. Places of worship or political

<sup>27</sup> Communication to the Council and the European Parliament on the Prevention of and the Fight against Terrorist Financing - COM(2004) 700.

party/organisation cells can also be breeding grounds for terrorist recruitment, as in a similar way, they can become places where people become exposed to new ideas through sermons or lectures. Of those individuals who do become involved in groups or organisations, not all will then actually become ready to act on certain beliefs or opinions, or be influenced by what they hear and subsequently become involved in terrorist activities. It is the very small proportion of people who actually go from being radical to wanting to carry out terrorist acts that should be kept in mind during discussions on violent radicalisation. However, an awareness of the causes of the problem is important.

Those people who attempt to influence others into joining terrorist groups should also be investigated and fought with determination. The Commission is already working to find ways of preventing the financing of terrorism through charities and non-profit organisations.

The role of media is significant in this area in a number of ways. Firstly, some media – notably radio, satellite television and the internet - disseminate propaganda which contributes to violent radicalisation. Typically this conveys a reductionist and conspiratorial worldview where inequity and oppression are dominant and entire countries, religions or societies are depicted in a way which denies them human dignity and presents them as collectively guilty. Some form of self-regulation principle or possible code of conduct within the media might be beneficial.

Secondly, the media can play a role in facilitating recruitment into terrorist groups, by giving expression to terrorist views and organisations and facilitating the contact between radicalised individuals, e.g. via the internet.

Thirdly, the media have an influence in the way they inform the general public about terrorist acts. Terrorism exploits open societies and the media are the main vehicle through which it attempts to affect citizens and leaders alike. Journalists face the difficult responsibility of reconciling their duty to inform the public with the need not to facilitate the aims of terrorists. These concerns, which are not new, remain an issue of reflection within the profession. Moreover, if certain groups feel they are being targeted via the media, this might reinforce their desire to become hostile in return.

Investigating the means by which terrorist cells or networks develop today and maintain themselves - facilitated by global communications such as the internet and mobile phones - and what factors enable new recruits or volunteers to become involved are also areas for analysis investigated since the emergence of political terrorism in the 70's and the development of modern technologies. Based on this previous work and on detailed studies made by security forces of the radicalisation process of every suspected terrorist placed in custody, research must now turn to the development of new tools – both operational and legal – for those involved in the fight against this process. Such new tools, eg. the standard questionnaires developed by the G8 Practitioners group, should be used by law enforcement and security services to carry out a detailed study of the radicalisation process of every suspected terrorist placed in custody and to provide useful and comparable information to understand more precisely the factors intervening in the radicalisation process and terrorist recruitment.

Security services and police forces within the Member States have been studying the phenomenon of violent radicalisation concentrating on recruitment hotspots like prisons, religious centres and schools. We should therefore draw upon such expertise but at the same

time not limit ourselves to it.

## 2. Root Causes of Radicalisation

Precisely identifying the root causes of violent radicalisation is a very hard task and experts are only starting to understand the phenomenon. Violent radicalisation can often be a combination of an individual's *negative* feelings of exclusion, existing alongside *positive* mobilising feelings about becoming part of a group and taking action for change.

Social factors such as exclusion - perceived or real - are often partial reasons given for becoming prone to radical opinion or joining radical movements. It can be one's own perceptions of injustice or discrimination about one's situation that is seen to affect certain groups and that mobilises people into action.

Factors relating to exclusion, which can relate to being part of minority or immigrant groups – either individually or shared by the group with which one identifies or belongs to as a whole – can result in feelings of being discriminated against within the European societies in which people live. Similar feelings can also occur to those that feel their identity is threatened by immigration, globalisation or, in the case of separatists, insertion within wider, often undesired political societies.

Feelings of “belonging” and of identity are often fragmented and personal allegiances can cause confusion. For example, young people born to immigrant parents and brought up in Europe often have different expectations of the country in which they live from those of their parents. Many do not feel allegiance to their parents or grandparents' countries of origin, religion or cultural background, and thus can only really be part of the country where they have grown up and live, but yet they may sometimes encounter discrimination within these societies, often due to their cultural, linguistic, religious, national and physical differences.

All young children of whatever background want to “fit in” with others. It is only later on, as older teenagers, that feelings of wanting to rebel become more likely. The resulting alienation from both parental roots and country of origin and the society in which they live, can lead to a desire to identify with a more motivating or powerful locus of identity. It is this crisis of identity that can be seen as being a strong motivating force for many to become involved in organisations with strong beliefs who wish to avenge certain people or society in general, through terrorist acts.

Political beliefs, national, linguistic, religious identity and self expression, or combinations of the above, are often the motivating factors behind wanting to try to change the status quo. The sense of finding an identity and belonging can be stronger and more significant as a locus of difference, than simply inheriting an ethnic identity, or acquiring or being born into a citizenship especially for children who have had no personal or first-hand experience of their parents' country of origin. For some young people from Muslim immigrant families, Islam becomes something different from the Islam of their parents, and as they find out more about it, it becomes a positive and more accessible means of expression for an individual. Many of society's perceptions of immigrant Islam in Europe are cultural norms which have been taken from the countries of origin of immigrants, as opposed to the religion per se. For some

Muslims, the quest for a “pure” Islam is important and they do so by engaging with organisations and groups from which they feel they might learn new things.

It might be that a small percentage of these organisations take advantage of this and become fora for influencing young people. It is this false attribution of certain values and practices to Islam that creates negative stereotypes in the media and society about the religion, particularly since the attacks of 11 September 2001 in the U.S. This can contribute to negative stereotypes, thus fuelling grounds for attacks on Muslims on the one hand and exacerbating feelings of discrimination within Muslim communities on the other.

The quest for a pure, simple ideology might also be felt by those that feel left out of social and economic change. Individuals, particularly young people from poorer, or excluded backgrounds, may feel a strong attraction for the “certainties” of extreme (or anti-globalisation) ideologies, although of course it is not only individuals in these categories who are found to have turned to violent radicalisation.