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Counter-terrorism cooperation

Christian Kaunert and Ori Wertman

Terrorism poses a direct threat to the security of the citizens of NATO and EU countries, and to international stability and prosperity.¹ In order to strengthen their cooperation in various areas, including in the field of counter-terrorism, NATO and the EU signed a joint declaration in Warsaw on 8 July 2016, with a view to giving new impetus and substance to the NATO-EU strategic partnership.² In July 2018, the EU and NATO signed a new joint declaration, which sets out a shared vision of how the two organisations will act together against common security threats. Counter-terrorism is one of the key dimensions of NATO-EU cooperation.³

Thus, since both institutions place a stronger emphasis on counter-terrorism, the importance of NATO-EU cooperation, based on shared values and interests, becomes ever more pertinent.⁴ This chapter explores the collaboration between the two organisations in the counter-terrorism field and analyses what was achieved following the July 2016 joint declaration. The chapter goes on to analyse the challenges that hamper counter-terrorism cooperation between the EU and NATO and examine the way forward for collaboration between the two institutions.

1 NATO, "Countering Terrorism," https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natolive/topics_77646.htm?selectedLocale=en.

2 Maria Elena Argano, "NATO's Impact on the European International Security and Counterterrorism Policy", *EULOGOS Athena*, January 24, 2018; NATO Multimedia Library, "Intelligence/Information Sharing in Combating Terrorism," <http://www.natolibguides.info/intelligence>.

3 NATO, "Joint Declaration on EU-NATO Cooperation," July 10, 2018, https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_156626.htm.

4 Niklas Helwig, "New Tasks for EU-NATO Cooperation: An Inclusive EU Defence Policy Requires Close Collaboration with NATO," SWP, Berlin, January 2018, https://www.swp-berlin.org/fileadmin/contents/products/comments/2018C04_hlw.pdf.

The counter-terrorism policies of NATO and the EU

Given that NATO and the EU do not share the same approach to fighting terror, each has different incentives for cooperation. On the one hand, NATO is a significant player in military counter-terrorism, as it conducts its efforts across a wide spectrum of effective counter-terrorism operations and policies. Among these, NATO is involved in the Global Coalition against Daesh or the so-called Islamic State in Iraq and Syria. It also runs Operation *Sea Guardian* in the Mediterranean to guarantee freedom of navigation and the protection of critical infrastructures.⁵ In short, NATO's Counter-Terrorism Policy Guidelines focus on three main areas: awareness, capabilities and engagement. With regard to the *awareness* aspect, in supporting national authorities, NATO ensures shared awareness of the terrorist threat through consultations, enhanced intelligence-sharing and continuous strategic analysis and assessment. On the *capabilities* level, NATO aims to ensure that it has adequate capabilities to deal with terrorist threats. In the *engagement* domain, as the global counter-terrorism effort requires a holistic approach, NATO's goal is to strengthen cooperation with partner countries and international actors.⁶

On the other hand, European cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism is a relatively recent development. Operational cooperation on internal security issues, such as terrorism, started in the 1970s under the auspices of the TREVI Group,⁷ an informal intergovernmental body for internal security cooperation among EU member states set up in 1975. However it was not until 1993, when the Treaty of Maastricht entered into force, that counter-terrorism cooperation was included in the EU's legal framework. Even so, EU achievements in this area remained rather low-key and modest for a time.⁸ Thus, prior to 11 September 2001, terrorism was hardly a priority on the common EU agenda, as counter-terrorism was overwhelmingly considered as a national responsibility and thus cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism did not officially feature as a part of the

5 Attila Mesterhazy, "NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw," Report, NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Defence and Security Committee, 2017, p.11, <https://www.nato-pa.int/document/2017-eu-and-nato-cooperationmesterhazy-report-163-dsctc-17-e-rev1-fin>.

6 NATO, "Countering Terrorism".

7 Christian Kaunert, Sarah Leonard, and Alex MacKenzie, "The Social Construction of an EU Interest in Counterterrorism: US Influence and Internal Struggles in the Cases of PNR and SWIFT," *European Security*, Vol.21, No.4 (2012), pp.474-96.

8 Christian Kaunert, *European Internal Security: Towards Supranational Governance in the Area of Freedom, Security and Justice?* (Manchester, Manchester University Press, 2010); Christian Kaunert, Sarah Leonard, and Alex MacKenzie, "The Social Construction of an EU Interest in Counter-terrorism: US Influence and Internal Struggles in the Cases of PNR and SWIFT."

institutional structure of the European Community.⁹ However, the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 gave a significant impetus to the development of EU counter-terrorism activities.¹⁰ Shortly after 9/11, the European Council (EC) declared that the combat against terrorism was a priority objective for the EU and adopted an Action Plan on Combating Terrorism, which recognised the need for the EU to play a greater role in the efforts of the international community to prevent and stabilise regional conflicts.¹¹

In addition, 9/11 had clear implications for Europe's relationship with the US,¹² as on 26 September 2001 the European Council highlighted the importance of improving counter-terrorism cooperation with the US as one of the two key dimensions of its "Anti-terrorism Roadmap", the other being the adoption of measures within the EU.¹³ Yet, despite the EU's gradually converging perception regarding the threat of terrorism, the EU adopted a more coherent counter-terrorism policy only after the terror attacks in Madrid in March 2004 and London in July 2005.¹⁴ In this respect, some measures were taken including the improvement of border control, judicial cooperation, and information exchange, together with the appointment of an EU counter-terrorism coordinator in 2004.¹⁵ Until 2013, the EU counter-terrorism agenda would not change substantially. However, the Syrian civil war, the emergence of Daesh, and the Paris attacks in 2015, prompted the EU to reconsider its counter-terrorism policies.¹⁶ The civil war in Syria attracted five thousand foreign fighters from the EU, the majority of whom joined extremist groups, primarily Daesh. 30 percent of them have since returned to Europe.¹⁷ The gravity of the danger posed by Islamist terrorism was eventually made manifest by the two attacks carried out in

9 W. Wensink *et al.*, "The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism: Relevance, Coherence and Effectiveness", European Parliament-Policy Department for Citizens' Rights and Constitutional Affairs, 2017, p.16; Stefano Torelli, "European Union and the External Dimension of Security: Supporting Tunisia as a Model in Counter-Terrorism Cooperation", European Institute of the Mediterranean (IEMed), 2017, p.13.

10 See notably Christian Kaunert, "The Area of Freedom, Security and Justice: The Construction of a 'European Public Order'", *European Security*, Vol.14, No.4 (2005), pp.459-83; and Christian Kaunert, "Without the Power of Purse or Sword: the European Arrest Warrant and the Role of the Commission," *Journal of European integration*, Vol.29, No.4 (2007), pp.387-404.

11 Wensink *et al.*, "The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism," p.32; Stefano Torelli, "European Union and the External Dimension of Security," p.13.

12 Christian Kaunert, *European Internal Security*.

13 European Council, "Conclusions and Plan of Action of the Extraordinary European Council Meeting on 21 September 2001", *SN 140/01*, September 21, 2001, pp.11-13, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/20972/140en.pdf>.

14 Wensink *et al.*, "The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism," p.32.

15 *Ibid.*, p.33; Torelli, "European Union and the External Dimension of Security," p.14.

16 Wensink *et al.*, "The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism," p.34.

17 Torelli, "European Union and the External Dimension of Security", pp.15-16. 18 *Ibid.*

France in January and November 2015 – representing further watersheds in the perception of the terrorist threat across the EU. Also, as Daesh proved itself even more determined to directly target Europe, the EU changed its counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation policies in December 2015.¹⁸ This new approach, together with a strengthening of EU framework decisions, introduced new criminal offences designed to help counter the threat posed by foreign terrorist fighters, including receiving training for terrorism, travelling or attempting to travel abroad for terrorist purposes, and funding or facilitating such journeys.¹⁸ After the attacks in Brussels in March 2016, the EU took further steps in proposing and adopting measures and policies related to the prevention of radicalisation, the detection of travel for suspicious purposes, the criminal justice sector, and cooperation with third countries. The attacks in Nice in July 2016, and in Berlin in December 2016, led to a heightened threat perception among the European public due to the rise of the lone wolf phenomenon.¹⁹ The three terrorist attacks that took place in 2017, in Manchester, London, and Barcelona, also intensified the sense of an escalating terrorism threat within the EU. Nowadays, any significant terrorist attack in Europe tends to lead to questions about possible failures on the part of EU police and intelligence agencies and calls for strengthened counter-terrorism cooperation among member states.

In that respect, there are several reasons behind the initiative agreed by both organisations to enhance their counter-terrorism cooperation. First, since the EU is not able to handle its member states' territorial defence, and does not aim to acquire the capabilities to do so, it needs NATO for collective security. Second, collaboration between the two organisations is required to stabilise Europe's tumultuous neighbourhoods, as the EU has several "soft power" instruments in its toolbox that enhance and support NATO's "hard power" skills and capabilities. Finally, as the EU and NATO are now active in this relatively new field, coordination is essential in order to avoid competition and overlap between their security echelons.²⁰

18 Wensink *et al.*, "The European Union's Policies on Counter-Terrorism," p.35.

19 *Ibid.*, p.36.

20 Kristi Raik and Pauli Järvenpää, "A New Era of EU-NATO Cooperation: How to Make the Best of a Marriage of Necessity," International Centre for Defence and Security, 2017, pp.1-3.

Counter-terrorism cooperation following the 2016 Joint Declaration

Following the 2016 Joint Declaration in Warsaw, NATO and the EU agreed to boost their cooperation in the fight against terrorism, including by stepping up the exchange of information, coordinating their counter-terrorism support for partner countries and working to improve national resilience against terror attacks.²¹

Since the 2016 Joint Declaration, NATO-EU counter-terrorism cooperation has mainly evolved across four domain areas: (1) defence and security capacity-building; (2) CBRN weapons proliferation; (3) maritime security; and (4) cybersecurity.²² Yet, despite their high-level declarations, policy coordination and cooperation between the two organisations remains highly problematic.²³ Moreover, although NATO and the EU are to some extent active in counter-terrorism activities, efforts to strengthen NATOEU counter-terrorism cooperation have often remained at the rhetorical level, and the impact of the two organisations' cooperation endeavours could be far greater.²⁴

First, the EU and NATO have most experience in terms of establishing joint operations in the defence and security capacity-building domain. Since the Warsaw Summit highlighted the need to counter terrorist threats through capacity-building activities in partner countries facing terrorist threats, the EU and NATO are currently running several capacity-building programmes and partnership initiatives that mainly focus on counter-terrorism, particularly in the MENA region.²⁵ In Afghanistan, closer Europol-NATO cooperation contributed to the improvement of information-sharing and human network analysis capabilities, including identifying, tracking and connecting data strands.

Both organisations also engage in counter-terrorism cooperation in Kosovo, as NATO and EU officials have developed informal frameworks for information exchange and cooperation at the tactical and operational levels.²⁶ In addition, in order to deepen their

21 NATO, "Countering Terrorism"; European External Action Service (EEAS), "EU and NATO Cooperation to Expand to New Areas, including Counter-terror; Military Mobility; Women, Peace and Security," December 6, 2017, https://eeas.europa.eu/headquarters/headquarters-homepage/36854/eu-and-nato-cooperation-expand-new-areas-including-counter-terror-military-mobility-women_en.

22 Mesterhazy, "NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw," p.13.

23 Andrea Aversano Stabile, Guillaume Lasconjarias and Paola Sartori, "NATO-EU Cooperation to Project Stability," Istituto Affari Internazionali (IAI), Rome, 2018, <https://www.iai.it/en/pubblicazioni/nato-eucooperation-project-stability>.

24 Mesterhazy, "NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw," pp.12-13.

25 *Ibid*, pp.14-15.

26 *Ibid*, p.15.

cooperation, EU and NATO staffs established a dialogue on counter-terrorism related issues in May 2018 focusing on cooperation *vis-à-vis* terrorist threats, collaboration in the Global Coalition to Defeat Daesh/ISIS, capacity building of partner countries, and development of scenario-based discussions.²⁷ Another notable contribution to counter-terrorism efforts is the establishment of the NATO Strategic Direction South (NSDS) Hub in Naples in September 2017. The hub is designed to boost situational awareness and develop risk and threat assessment regarding the challenges along the EU's southern flank. At this point, the NSDS Hub's objective is information-centric collaboration, which should theoretically cover cooperation with the existing EU mechanisms such as the Shared Awareness and De-confliction in the Mediterranean (SHADE MED) forum and Frontex European Patrols Network (EPN).²⁸

Second, the Chemical Biological Radiological Nuclear (CBRN) weapons proliferation domain has been at the forefront of counter-terrorism policy, mainly due to the fact that Daesh has used chemical weapons in Syria and Iraq and declared its intention to use any form of lethal weapon against its enemies. NATO-EU cooperation aimed at addressing this threat is manifested through the NATO Joint CBRN Defence Centre of Excellence and the EU CBRN Centre of Excellence, which work closely together to integrate crisis response, training capabilities, and threat analyses.³⁰ Although cooperation between the two organisations in this field can be enhanced, collaboration between the two centres is a good starting point for the creation of more formal cooperative frameworks for protecting dual-use materials, monitoring terrorist activities, and developing joint threat assessments.²⁹ Staff interactions have also taken place as NATO staff visited the Europol Headquarters in January 2018 for discussions relating to CBRN risks and improvised explosive devices. This dialogue aims to implement the EU Action Plan and the March 2018 European Council Conclusions, and, in practice, NATO is now invited to participate in Europol meetings on explosive precursors.³⁰

Third, NATO-EU cooperation in the sphere of maritime security represents another dimension of cooperation on counter-terrorism efforts, as NATO and the EU have

27 European Council, "Third Progress Report on the Implementation of the Common Set of Proposals Endorsed by EU and NATO Councils on 6 December 2016 and 5 December 2017," June 8, 2018, <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/35578/third-report-ue-nato-layout-en.pdf>.

28 Can Kasapoglu, "A Guide for EU-NATO Security Cooperation on Foreign Terrorist Fighters in the EuroMediterranean Region," Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, 2018, p.12, <https://www.kas.de/single-title/-/content/foreign-terrorist-fighters-in-the-euro-mediterranean-area1>; NATO, "Countering Terrorism." 30 Mesterhazy, "NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw," p.13.

29 *Ibid.*, p.13.

30 European Council, "Third Progress Report."

developed a partnership on both the tactical and operational levels in the Mediterranean and Aegean Sea. This contributes to shared awareness of terrorist threats and the activities of criminal networks. For example, since October 2016, NATO's *Sea Guardian* operation is mandated to support the EU's Operation *Sophia* and to assist, when necessary, the EU's operation in countering people smuggling networks throughout the Mediterranean.³¹ In July 2017, NATO allies agreed to support EUNAVFOR *Sophia* in the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 2236 (2016) and 2357 (2017) related to the arms embargo on Libya.³² The two organisations can further enhance their activities in this field by integrating the component of NATO-EU counter-terrorism activities with sea-based operations, such as those in Libya.³³

Finally, cybersecurity is another domain ripe for NATO-EU counter-terrorism cooperation, especially since Daesh and other terrorist groups and individuals use encryption to conceal their communications from law enforcement and intelligence agencies. Moreover, terrorist groups continue to use the internet and social media extensively, mainly for the dissemination of propaganda material, but also for recruitment and fundraising.³⁴ In order to enhance the collaboration between the two organisations, EU cyber defence staff were welcomed as participants in NATO's Cyber Coalition exercise, and NATO has also approved the involvement of the European Union Agency for Network and Information Security (ENISA) as an observer. In that respect, interaction and information exchange between NATO and the EU on aspects of cybersecurity took place during the CMX17 and TIDE SPRINT exercises.³⁵ NATO also hosted annual high-level consultations between EU and NATO staffs in December 2017 featuring, *inter alia*, recent policy developments, such as NATO's Cyber Defence Pledge, and the EU's September 2017 Joint Communication on "Resilience, Deterrence and Defence: Building Strong Cybersecurity in Europe".³⁶ As in other counter-terrorism domains, this cooperation can be strengthened by developing mechanisms to coordinate monitoring activities and integrate data collection capabilities.³⁷

31 *Ibid*, p.15; NATO, "Countering Terrorism."

32 The EU and NATO, "Second Progress Report on the Implementation of the Common Set of Proposals Endorsed by NATO and EU Councils on 6 December 2016," 29 November 29, 2017, https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/pdf_2017_11/171129-2nd-joint-progress-report-EU-NATO-eng.pdf.

33 Mesterhazy, "NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw," p.15.

34 *Ibid*, p.14.

35 The EU and NATO, "Second Progress Report."

36 European Commission, Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council, "Resilience, Deterrence and Defence: Building strong cybersecurity for the EU," *JOIN/2017/0450 final*, Brussels, September 13, 2017, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52017JC0450&from=EN>.

37 Mesterhazy, "NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw," p.14.

Challenges to full counterterrorism cooperation

Although the goal of both organisations is to enhance their counter-terrorism cooperation, there are several obstacles that hamper the partnership.

First, EU member states do not yet share a common understanding and perception of their role in European defence. Also, there is a substantial difference between each organisation's approach to terrorism. While France, the United Kingdom and the United States tend to see the terrorist threat primarily through the prism of military measures, many EU countries perceive it as an issue requiring judicial cooperation, crime prevention, and law enforcement.³⁸ In that respect, member states do not share the same threat perception, as demonstrated by the issue of the returning foreign fighters. This is heightening concerns that further attacks could be carried out on European soil,³⁹ reflected in the fact that, while President Donald Trump recently urged EU states to take back 800 Daesh fighters captured in Syria, not every EU member state will agree to comply with this requirement.⁴⁰ In that sense, Europe has yet to experience the kind of change that occurred in the United States after 9/11, when the administration in Washington radically rethought its counter-terrorism practices.⁴¹ Hence, a sustainable joint anti-terrorism strategy that would implement not only solely operational countermeasures, but also combat the causes of terrorism, is not in sight for now.⁴²

Second, although both organisations are clearly keen to cooperate in the fight against terrorism, NATO and the EU have not created new formal cooperation structures, but merely recommended their staff to develop common analyses, concepts and standards. Thus, their capacity-building endeavours lack sufficient coordination mechanisms, as both organisations conduct their counter-terrorism operations and initiatives without a common strategy and shared understanding of the potential limitations of their respective capabilities.⁴³ For example, although several missions were conducted by the P3+3 community (France, the UK and the US + Germany, Spain and Italy) in Libya, such as EUBAM and UNSMIL,⁴⁴ these

38 Kasapoglu, "A Guide for EU-NATO Security Cooperation on Foreign Terrorist Fighters," p.1; Argano, "NATO's Impact on the European International Security and Counterterrorism Policy."

39 Amanda Paul and Demir Murat Seyrek, "Two Years after the Brussels Attacks, the Terrorist Threat Remains Very Real," *EURACTIV.COM*, March 16, 2018, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/defence-and-security/opinion/two-years-after-the-brussels-attacks-the-terrorist-threat-remains-very-real/>

40 "Trump Tells Europe to Take Back ISIS Fighters, Warns They Could Be Released," *CNN*, February 22, 2019.

41 Lisa Monaco, "A Strategy for the War on Terrorism," *Foreign Affairs*, November/December 2017.

42 Helwig, "New Tasks for EU-NATO Cooperation".

43 Mesterhazy, "NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw," p.15.

44 European External Action Service (EEAS), "Planning for a Possible Non-Executive Civilian CSDP Mis-

missions were unable to collect all the necessary information and conduct a full analysis of the security environment due to insufficient intelligence assets. In this respect, the EU and NATO could do more to improve communications to identify shortfalls and devise complementary strategies for combating terrorist threats.⁴⁵ In essence, despite high-level declarations, policy coordination and collaboration between the two organisations remain complicated since the respective methods used and strategies adopted have rarely been compatible. As a result, the EU and NATO have tended to step on each other's toes and duplicate efforts and resources, not managing to move from mere coordination to effective cooperation and harmonisation of initiatives.⁴⁶

Third, instead of moving towards closer convergence European member states of the EU and NATO “appear to be diverging into different clusters of states with potentially profound differences in threat perception along regional lines”.⁴⁷ There is a danger that this trend may deepen strategic divisions between the two organisations. It could also negatively “impact attempts to coordinate capability requirements”,⁴⁸ given that issues related to defence investment and threat perception are closely linked to national interests and national strategies of NATO and EU member states. The fact that individual states have different interests and priorities can hamper future collaboration between NATO and the EU. For instance, at the level of public opinion, future arrangements that require a state to pool sovereignty in defence matters in favour of an international force may be viewed in some countries as a way of undermining their national sovereignty. The same would apply at the economic level, as initiatives that require increased spending on defence and shared military capabilities would likely be resisted by some EU constituencies.⁴⁹ Therefore, in order to prevent dissensions between member states, as happened during the refugee crisis, in which the EU tried to force member states to accept quotas of refugees from the Middle East against their will⁵⁰ – a request that was perceived as undermining the independent sovereignty of the member states – NATO and the EU must find a balance between the organisations' ambition to implement a certain agenda and respect for the sovereignty of the member states.

sion in Libya”, Brussels, April 1, 2016.

45 Mesterhazy, “NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw,” p.1 ; Aversano Stabile *et al.*, “NATO-EU Cooperation to Project Stability,” p.5.

46 Aversano Stabile *et al.*, “NATO-EU Cooperation to Project Stability”.

47 Mesterhazy, “NATO-EU Cooperation after Warsaw,” p.16.

48 *Ibid.*

49 *Ibid.*, 16-17.

50 “EU to Sue Poland, Hungary and Czechs for Refusing Refugee Quotas,” *BBC News*, December 7, 2017.

The way forward

NATO-EU collaboration on counter-terrorism cannot be effective in the absence of a functioning transatlantic relationship. The EU's most important and developed counter-terrorism relationship is undoubtedly with the US, with which cooperation has reached a consistent level of intensity, ranging from dialogue to various agreements requiring the transfer of the personal data of EU air passengers to the US authorities. Prior to 9/11, however, there was almost no cooperation between the EU and US on security matters, to the frustration of Washington. Nearly two decades later, it can be argued that the attacks on New York and the Pentagon have enabled cooperation and measures that would not otherwise have been acceptable, due to sovereignty or civil liberty concerns.

More recently, the revelations brought to light by the "Snowden leaks", exposing significant US telecommunications "snooping" and surveillance practices around the world, including on German Chancellor Angela Merkel, were not well-received in Europe. There have also been conflicts specifically within the EU since 9/11. The member states disagree on some significant issues, such as the invasion of Iraq in 2003. Furthermore, not all EU member states have pulled in the same direction on data protection – a crucial issue in the EU-US relationship given the types of cooperation requested by the US and traditionally higher European standards on data protection. Despite strong elements of resistance at times, those advocating stronger security ties have usually won out and actors are now probably more aligned than they were in the past. Noticeably, the member states, the European Commission and European Parliament have internalised US norms by proposing or requesting EU measures similar to those in force in the US.

These developments will likely have an impact on NATO-EU cooperation at three levels: (i) convergence of terrorism threat perceptions between the two institutions; (ii) an increasing formalisation of institutional links between the EU and NATO; and (iii) increasing capabilities.

Conclusion

Since the 2016 Joint Declaration in Warsaw, cooperation between NATO and the EU in the domain of counterterrorism has significantly evolved. There have been some examples of practical cooperation, such as the established dialogue on counter-terrorism,⁵¹ the creation of the NATO Strategic Direction South (NSD-S) Hub in Naples to boost situational awareness and develop risk and threat assessment, and the collaboration between the NATO Joint CBRN Defence Centre of Excellence and the EU CBRN Centre of Excellence to tackle the CBRN terror threat. However, this chapter has also outlined the obstacles to more robust cooperation, including the lack of a shared perception on how to go about countering the terrorist threat, and the failure to establish new formal cooperation structures between the EU and NATO. Nevertheless, most of these obstacles can be overcome: the transatlantic relationship is essential to NATO-EU cooperation on counterterrorism. While, prior to 9/11, the EU's most important counterterrorism relationship was with the US, such cooperation was very limited. International terrorism and the US response to it have acted as a catalyst for the EU's development as an actor in this field. If the relationship between the US and the EU is positive, the parallel relationship between NATO and the EU will also be positive. Hence, much more is to be expected from a closer counterterrorism relationship between NATO and the EU in the future.

51 European Council, "Third Progress Report."

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