

Security Union: Progress Report on Countering Hybrid Threats



eu crim

European Law Forum: Prevention • Investigation • Prosecution

Thomas Wahl

News

On 29 May 2019, the European Commission and the European External Action Service tabled a [report on the EU's progress in tackling hybrid threats](#).

Hybrid threats are methods or activities that are multidimensional, combine coercive and subversive measures, use both conventional and unconventional tools and tactics, and are coordinated by state or non-state actors. Hybrid threats are characterised by the difficulty in detecting or attributing them to any individual or group. Their aim is to influence different forms of decision-making by a variety of means:

- Influencing information;
- Weakening logistics like energy supply pipelines;
- Economic and trade-related blackmailing;
- Undermining international institutions by rendering rules ineffective;
- Acts of terrorism or to increase (public) insecurity.

The present progress report assesses the implementation of the [2016 Joint Framework](#) on Countering Hybrid Threats – a European Union response and the [2018 Joint Communication](#) Increasing Resilience and Bolstering Capabilities to Address Hybrid Threats. The EU response to hybrid threats is mainly based on 22 countermeasures, ranging from improving information exchange and strengthening the protection of critical infrastructure and cybersecurity to building resilience in the society against radicalisation and extremism.

The report details the progress made in the different areas. It particularly highlights the following advancements:

- Strengthening strategic communications to tackle disinformation;
- Boosting cybersecurity and cyber defence (see also below under “cybercrime”);
- Curbing CBRN related risks;
- Protecting critical infrastructure.

Among the key achievements are a large number of legislative measures at the EU level, e.g., the Regulation on the screening of foreign direct investments in the EU and the establishment of autonomous sanctioning regimes against the use of chemical weapons and cyberattacks.

In conclusion, the report highlights enhanced cooperation and coordination as one of the main achievements compared to previous progress reports. This includes not only improved cooperation within and between EU entities – institutions, services and agencies – but also with international partners like the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation and third countries within the framework of multilateral formats, notably the G7. Closer cooperation was also stepped up with partner countries neighbouring the EU.

AUTHOR

Thomas Wahl

Senior Researcher
Max Planck Institute for the
Study of Crime, Security and
Law

ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://eu crim.eu>



The report concludes that a “whole-of-society approach” involving government, civil society, and the private sector and including, *inter alia*, media and online platforms is essential for the EU’s counter-hybrid policy.

About eucrim

eucrim is the leading journal which regularly informs about current developments in European criminal and “criministrative” law.

All news items are freely accessible at: <https://eucrim.eu/news/>

Stay informed by emailing to eucrim-subscribe@csl.mpg.de to receive alerts for new releases of issues.

The project is co-financed by the Union Anti-Fraud Programme (UAFP), managed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).



**Co-funded by
the European Union**