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**Security Cooperation between
EU and MENA Countries to
Counter-Terrorism:
Developments and Challenges**

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Abstract

The security of Europe is increasingly linked with that of MENA. Thus, EU signed a number of agreements with the MENA region over the past two decades to promote stronger political stability in the Mediterranean region.

The study is focusing on the policies of the EU towards counterterrorism especially that the European societies now faced with a carefully planned and well-organized strategy by Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) of mobilization of Western citizens. Additionally, it examines counter-terrorism efforts by European governments with MENA Countries to tackle the factors and root causes which can lead to radicalization and recruitment in Europe.

Key words: Security Cooperation, Terrorism, Counter terrorism, MENA Countries

المخلص

ليست حماية الحدود كافية لمواجهة التحديات والتهديدات التي يتعرض إليها أمن الاتحاد الأوروبي اليوم، فالمجتمعات الأوروبية واجهت مؤخراً استراتيجيات مخططة ومنظمة بشكل جيد من قبل المنظمات الإرهابية لتجنيد المواطنين الغربيين. لذا تحتاج جميع الدول الأعضاء في الاتحاد الأوروبي إلى الوقوف معاً للتصدي للنزاعات والأزمات التي تحدث خارج حدودها من أجل مكافحة الإرهاب، خاصةً أن أمن أوروبا يرتبط بشكل متزايد بأمن منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا. كما ستركز الدراسة أيضاً على جهود وسياسيات الاتحاد الأوروبي تجاه مكافحة الإرهاب مع دول الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا لمعالجة العوامل والأسباب الجذرية التي يمكن أن تؤدي إلى التطرف والتجنيد في أوروبا خاصة بعد التغييرات والاضطرابات السياسية التي حدثت في منطقة الشرق الأوسط وشمال أفريقيا، بالإضافة إلى تقديم لمحة عامة عن فعالية تدابير وسياسات الاتحاد الأوروبي بشأن مكافحة الإرهاب من خلال اعتماد أسلوب أونوف البنائية

Purpose

This study identifies counter-terrorism threats and policies in the EU especially after the political changes that have occurred in the international community. In particular the events of September 11th and political disorders in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Region, in addition to present an overview of the effectiveness of EU measures and policies on counter-terrorism. This paper proposes the adoption of the Onuf style constructivism to best capture the reality of the process that is developing inside the EU towards MENA Countries for counter-terrorism in the region.

Design/methodology/approach

The study applies the Historical methodologies and Descriptive Method to indicate the development of counter-terrorism policies since the establishment of the EU and also the evolution of the EU's counter-terrorism strategies with its southern periphery. The study used also the case study of France, Germany, the UK, and Spain to address the shortcomings that faced EU's institutions.

Findings

The paper concluded that the concept of Security was developed by the EU in the last period, especially after the increasing risks and challenges. The EU's counter-terrorism Policies and strategies were heavily influenced by the grade of risks, attacks, and bombings that it had been exposed.

Originality/value

This study aims to examine EU member states' responses to the threats of terrorism emanating from MENA countries as well as analyzing the new determinants that govern cooperation after Arab uprisings. The goal of the study is to be both descriptive and analytical, as well as to follow and assess the evolution of the relations between the EU and MENA countries.

Introduction

Border Protection is not enough for facing challenges and threats in the European Union's Security today. So, all EU Member States need to stand together to promote resilience and to address conflicts and crises in order to fight terrorism. Thus, the EU began to deepen security co-operation within its southern periphery and put rules beyond EU borders.

In the wake of the Arab Spring uprisings, the challenges of the Union have increased, particularly, after the emergence of dominant terrorist groups like Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and armed conflicts in the region. Terrorist attacks in Europe have not been just an internal problem caused by national terrorist groups, but it also became the most critical international problem that requires more strong coordination and cooperation, at the regional and international levels, in order to combat terrorism effectively. The European societies are now faced with a carefully planned and well-organized Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) strategy of mobilization of Western citizens. In addition, the increasing number of fatalities from terrorist attacks. These developments within the EU lend themselves to the Onuf style Constructivist analysis (Kubáková, 1998: 58). Constructivism appeared in international relations with the end of the Cold War by Nicholas Onuf in his book "World of Our Making (1989)". Constructivism is a structural theory of the international system that makes the following core claims such as states are the principal units of analysis for international political theory and the key structures in the system of states are intersubjective rather than material. Constructivism goes beyond the material reality by examining the meanings that societies or states attributed to international treaties or other arrangements (O'Neil, 2015: 39).

Constructivism isn't based on the material structure but rather on the meaning given to the material structure (the ideational structure). For example, internal security is less threatening to Europe than Islamic Terrorism and Humanitarian Crises. Constructivism accounts for this issue by arguing that the social world is of our making (Onuf, 1989: 30). To clarify better, states, actors and influential citizens reshape the very nature of international relations through their actions and interactions, according to the current events that they are going through. For example, profound political changes which occurred during the last few decades led to the emergence of new methods by states and actors. In this regard, the EU tries to change its instruments and policies with its southern neighbours to address today's challenges, counter the future challenges, and maintain the stability of its periphery. The security challenges drove the EU to cooperate with Middle East and north Africa (MENA) countries, such as "Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates and Yemen" and also to adopt new policies for facing counter-terrorism challenges in the region. See Map (1)



Map 1:

On the other hand, the research refers to the lack of an EU's legal capacity to act in external provisions due to the different priorities of the European Union member states, which represent a major obstacle for the

European Union in the path of implementing cooperation between the MENA and EU countries ; which has a total of 27 countries "Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Republic of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain and Sweden".See Map (2) The study also will explore whether the EU can be considered as a coherent actor in the field of counter-terrorism or whether these policies are being implemented according to different and uncoordinated policies.



Map2:

EU and Counter-Terrorism

In general, the design of policy architecture is based on problem analysis than the assessment of its needs to be able to design appropriate policies capable of achieving the desired goal, followed by monitoring and evaluation (Wensink *et al.*, 2017: 25). The purpose of this study is to assess the EU counter-terrorism policy effectiveness to improve its relevance and coherence. According to the ‘Evaluation Standards’ that had been offered by the European Commission, the evaluation must involve a judgment of interventions according to their results, impacts, and needs they aim to satisfy.

All the more, the evaluation must reflect effectiveness, cost-effectiveness, relevance, coherence, sustainability, or community added value and also the contribution to broader strategic objectives (European Commission, March 2016: 6-11).

From this standpoint, the study attempts to be evaluated the counter-terrorism policy effectiveness through identifying the security threats and anti-Terrorism measures that are launched by the EU for addressing these challenges, in addition to, monitoring aspects of cooperation between the European Union and MENA countries such as protocols, long-term strategies, and information exchange. Thus, we must understand the nature of a threat that faced the EU, to be able to build a better overview of the effectiveness of EU measures and policies on counter-terrorism.

Constructivism is based on opening the prospect for change over time depending on the ideas and beliefs that actors hold. Since 9/11, the EU changed the European perception of terrorism, instruments, and its own policy plans that it should put in place to fight security threats, terrorism in particular. Its performance depends on the control of European borders, the development of external action, and the production of counter-terrorism legislation. Since 9/11, the EU institutions adopted daring policies that include areas such as the exchange of information between police and intelligence agencies, critical infrastructure protection, external action, border protection, and the fight against terrorist financing and recruitment.

The Justice and Home Affairs Council met on 20 September 2001 to adopt a range of Justice Home Affairs (JHA) measures to fight terrorism (European Commission, March 2004: 2), followed by the European Commission that tabled a series of policy proposals within days of the attacks of the 11 September 2001. Those proposals resulted in the adoption of a plan of action by a special European Council which are held in Brussels on 21

September (European Commission, November 2001: 1). The EU Action Plan included several measures of different areas such as emergency preparedness, humanitarian aid, Police and judicial co-operation, and Air transport security. All of those areas helped to counter-terrorism and to put an end to violence. Furthermore, the EU has adopted 239 measures against terrorism, of which 26 are action plans and strategy documents, while another 15 measures are laws or directives (Strazzari and Stambøl, 2016: 2). Although the EU's reaction to the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 was swift to some extent and tried to take relevant actions with this challenge, the EU's action against terrorism suffered from some deficits, for instance, there was no common legal definition of terrorist acts, no harmonised system of penalties and no basis for accelerated extradition (Monar, 2007: 8).

The EU realized that it faces a complex challenge to its role as a comprehensive and active security actor. As a result, in the period following September 11th, the EU has worked intensively on joint initiatives designed to counter and defeat international terrorism and fight its root causes. For example, the EU supported military operations, which began on 7 October 2001 in Afghanistan and published also new regulation imposing certain restrictive measures directed against Usama bin Laden, Al Qaida, and the Taliban on 31 May 2002. The EU and member states had frozen €100 million of assets belonging to persons and entities sponsoring terrorist acts (individuals, groups, or entities) (European Commission, November 2001: 1).

As a part of the EU-long-term steps in the domain of law enforcement and justice post 9/11, the EU launched the European Arrest Warrant (EAW) on 13 June 2002 for simplifying the transfer of suspects or sentenced criminals, which in turns speeds up the fight against terrorism (Coninx, 2009: 2-6). The EU member states are parties to several conventions in the field of extradition, including the European Convention on extradition on 13

December 1957 and the European Convention on the suppression of terrorism on 27 January 1977 (Official Journal of the European Communities, 8 July 2002: 1). We can conclude from the above that the EU's counter-terrorism policies and strategies were heavily influenced by risks to which it had been exposed.

The level of EU's awareness of the terrorism phenomenon has increased after having terror attacks in Europe, such as Madrid 3/11 in 2004, and London 7/7 in 2005 (Neumann, R.P. and Rogers, B., 2007: 92). The Madrid and London bombings of 2004 and 2005 prompted the EU to remove some deficits of its legislative acts and to develop initiatives to better understand the root causes of terrorism and understand why people become involved in terrorism.

Thus, the Council adopted the EU counter-terrorism strategy in 2005 (Argomaniz *et al.*, 2015: 194-195) which focuses on 4 priorities (pillars): 'Prevent', 'Protect', 'Pursue' and 'Respond'. The 'prevention' pillar aims to tackle the root causes of terrorism, i.e., to combat radicalization and recruitment of terrorists by identifying the methods, propaganda, and instruments used by terrorists. The 'Protect' pillar aims to shield citizens and infrastructure from terrorist attacks by minimizing the risks and securing external borders. Whereas the third pillar aims to pursue terrorists across borders by improving cooperation and information exchange between police and judicial authorities. Finally, the 'Pursue' pillar aims to track down terrorists wherever they might be to ensure that justice prevails. This is done by improving capabilities to deal with the aftermath, the coordination of the response, and victims' needs (Council of the European Union, November 2005: 6-16).

Parallel to this, the EU member states adopted a declaration on combating terrorism to provide an EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator to

advance the EU efforts to tackle terrorism. The responsibilities of EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator were as follows: Coordinating the work of the Council in combating terrorism through preparing regular reports to the Council; Presenting policy recommendations and proposing priority areas for action to the Council; Monitoring the implementation of the EU counter-terrorism strategy; Maintaining an overview of all EU instruments, reporting to the Council, and following up the Council decisions; Coordinating with the relevant preparatory bodies of the Council, the Commission, and the EEAS; Ensuring that the EU plays an active role in the fight against terrorism; and Improving communication between the EU and third countries (Council of the European Council, 29 March 2004: 14). Although the Madrid and London attacks - unprecedented in scale and ruthlessness - reopened old debates about how to respond to terrorism across the European Union, this attention and impetus began to gradually fade shortly after the attack.

In recent years, there was a continuous increase in the number of terrorist attacks. In 2012, a total of 152 terrorist attacks occurred in five EU member states. The majority took place in France (63), Spain (33), and the UK (35) (Europol, May 2014: 7-11). In 2013, 7 people in the European Union were killed in acts of terrorism. Along with the lethal attacks, European citizens were regularly kidnapped by groups or individuals linked to religiously inspired terrorism. In light of the European Union's objective to promote peace and security, the EU carried out mass arrests to stop terrorist activities and to prevent would-be fighters from traveling overseas to conflict areas in Syria and Iraq or receive training, especially with the significant increase in the numbers of EU citizens traveling to Syria in 2013. The arrests of Islamist terrorists have risen from 19 in 2012 to 49 in 2013 (Europol, 2014: 11). The aforementioned risks illustrate the fact that the EU decided to update its external dimension of anti-terrorism policy whenever crises worsen.

In the wake of the Paris and Brussels terrorist attacks in 2015 -2016, the EU activity has increased significantly and its efforts to specify EU foreign and security policy aims became more serious particularly in terms of intelligence sharing, formal and informal diplomacy, and the internal-external nexus of security (Mai'a, 2017: 209-211). As a result, the European Union has tried to boost its role as a global actor in counter-terrorism, calls therefore for appropriate measures to control the movement of weapons and terrorist suspects. To this end, in December 2015 the Commission submitted the proposal for a Directive on combating terrorism and replacing the Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA on combating terrorism (Council of European Union, March 2016: 1). The aim of this Proposal is that the most serious crimes of concern to the international community as a whole must not go unpunished by strengthening provisions that criminalize recruitment, providing training for terrorist purposes, and the spread of terrorist propaganda, including on the internet (Hohlmeier, 2019: 1). On 11 March 2016, the EU addressed the European Commission's proposal for an amendment to the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism of 2002, notably the provisions which would require the EU member states to criminalize public provocation to commit a terrorist offence, attacks against information systems, investigative tools, and victims' specific needs (Muñoz, 2016: 1).

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) made a reservation to this Framework Decision, and it declared that the text of the Framework Decision may lead to a disproportionate interference with freedom of expression, if this Framework Decision has no further safeguard. Whereas the definition of terrorism in the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism was cast in very broad terms. The ICJ declared that the proposed amendment to the Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism doesn't represent the

most efficient way forward, particularly with the Article 5 of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism having a similar obligation. From the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) point of view, the EU should focus on encouraging effective and human rights compliant implementation of the Council of Europe Convention to maintain the same safeguards adopted by the Council of Europe Convention (International Commission of Jurists, 2007: 1).

The absence of a *per se* body or institution (European Parliament, European Commission and the Council) responsible for issuing legislative, decisions, and action plans concerning terrorism has led to the lack of accountability and responsibility. Many institutions are involved in the design and implementation of counter-terrorism policies. Until recently the Commissioner for the Security Union was appointed since September 2016 who is in charge of the implementation of the European Agenda on Security, the delimitation of his competencies vis-à-vis the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator who is in charge of coordinating with the relevant preparatory bodies of the Council, the Commission and the EEAS complicates the questions concerning coordination (Wensink *et al.*, 2017: 43).

We can conclude that the structure of the European Union's counter-terrorism policy suffered from poor coordination and coherence. There is no obvious coherence of the EU's internal and external security strategies and sub-strategies. In order for the European Union to overcome this dilemma, the EU brought together all internal and external dimensions of security to close a critical security gap.

External action is not an option but a necessity for achieving the internal action to ensure a high level of security within the AFSJ and to further reinforce links between Justice and Home Affairs and Common Security and the Defence Policy. Thus, most of the EU programs provide an external action

to help achieve the AFSJ internal objectives. Stockholm program (for the period from 2010 to 2014) dedicated an entire section to the “external dimension” of the AFSJ (Official Journal of the European Union, 25 November 2009: 32-34). Other than internal measures, the relatively newly established European External Action Service (EEAS) emerged to be an institution with great potential to foster EU external action in counter-terrorism (Council of the European Union, December 2014: 6).

The interrelatedness of external and internal security was increasingly recognized at the European level. The Council stressed that external and internal security were a part of a single whole rather than separate dimensions. Thus, it called for an effective counter-terrorism policy integrating the internal and external aspects in June 2014 i.e., the need for the EU participation with non-EU countries on security issues and counter-terrorism (Delegation of the European Union to Turkey, 2019). Also, the Council stressed the need for strengthening the role of JHA agencies in its conclusions on the EU External Action on Counter-Terrorism From 19 June 2017 (General Secretariat of the Council, June 2017: 2-6).

During the COVID-19 pandemic, terrorist activity differed as a result of changes in the operational capacities of public authorities during the pandemic. COVID-19 restrictions on travel affected the return of foreign terrorist fighters to Europe and led to also increased online consumption of terrorist and extremist content and networking. In 2019 and 2020, a new threat on European soil was materialized through the return of fighters to their home countries given the potential to carry out attacks or radicalize others. The Islamic State terrorist group and the al-Qaeda network continued to incite lone-actor attacks in Western countries (such as firearms, stabbing, vehicle ramming, and arson). In 2020, they committed 10 completed jihadi terrorist attacks inside the EU. Four of the ten completed jihadi attacks were carried

out by EU citizens. The COVID-19 crisis has reshaped the EU notion of safety and security threats and corresponding policies, especially that the extremists exploited the pandemic to spread propaganda. As cited by Europol (2021), according to the 2021 Europol report on the terrorism situation in the EU, “there were 57 terrorist attempts in the EU in 2020 (that includes successful, failed and foiled attempts), compared to 55 in 2019”. Furthermore, a total of 21 people were killed in terrorist attacks in the EU in 2020 (Europol, 2021: 6-8).

The pandemic alongside extremism have highlighted the need to cooperate with every sector, government at all levels and every member state to make a difference. The security of one member state is the security of all.

The EU seeks to reduce inherent risks outside the EU and to offer a security dividend to protect everyone in the EU. Thus, the EU countries focused on the importance of using the internet by Islamic Groups from a much broader perspective than in the past, especially after the terrorist attacks that occurred in autumn 2020 in France, Germany, and Austria. Thus, the Council adopted two regulations establishing a framework for interoperability between the EU information systems on 16 March 2021 that help to stop terrorists from using the internet to radicalize, recruit and incite to violence and to address the dissemination of terrorist content online. After Parliament adopted regulations in plenary on 28 April, the regulation entered into force on 6 June and announced its applying as of 7 June 2022 to ease and improve information sharing and to remove illegal content while respecting fundamental rights including freedom of expression and opinion (European Council, 14 May 2019). The EU sees that sharing information, the use of European databases and information systems will considerably improve security and will prevent and combat illegal migration. This, along with, the European Commission offered recommendations on the revision of Europol’s

mandate position and its role in research and support of criminal investigations, on 9 December 2020. The initiative "Police cooperation – a stronger mandate for Europol" will enable Europol to deal with the evolving nature of internet-based and financial crime and bring Europol's data protection rules into line with existing EU rules (EDRI, June 2021: 5-8).

On the other hand, The EU discussed a new Security Union Strategy for the period 2020-2025 on the recommendation of the European Commission on 24 July 2020. It aimed to provide an integrated approach for ensuring security and to increase interconnection between internal and external security (European Commission, July 2020: 2). Furthermore, the Commission adopted a new "Counter-Terrorism Agenda for the EU" on 9 December 2020 for tackling radicalization at all levels and for looking to better anticipation, prevention, protection and response to terrorist threats (European Commission, December 2020: 1-2).

In general, legal instruments before 11 September achieved slow progress in the fight against international terrorism. The Union had to play at least a significant complementary role in counter-terrorism with other actors. On the other hand, admittedly, the EU's contribution in this area differed after the worsening of ISIS crisis. The EU has developed its policies and used all available instruments and structures with extraordinary speed to face the threat of terrorism inside and outside the EU and protect its citizens.

Differentiated Member State Priorities

Identities and interests are important central issues to constructivism. States' identities and interests in international politics are also subject to change. Constructivists argue that the identities of small states are different from those implied by the identities of large states. The large state is arguably not focused only on its survival, but also more focused on global affairs and international issues. Although the nature of the threat of terrorism has a cross-

border character, member states of the EU give priority to their national legislative and competencies, especially since the current terrorism threat level differs from one country to another.

Constructivism has been regarded by some theorists that identities and interests are lack fixity and stability and are determined by states' actions and practices. Major European countries have acted unilaterally outside the Legal framework for a European Union to confront the threat of terrorism because they suffered more deaths caused by terror attacks than any other EU country in the last period. Most of the attacks that are now perpetrated by radicalized terrorists happen in those countries. They have their own national security policies and strategies. This, along with, the EU member states sought to increasingly build strong bilateral relations and alliances with individuals, groups, and other countries, in particular after the discovery of logistical bases for Al-Qaeda cells in some EU countries such as the UK, Italy, Germany, Spain, and Belgium (BBC News, 20 June 2003). In this context, UK Parliament has passed legislation granting the Home Office and law enforcement entities additional authorities for facing challenges ahead. Additionally, the Counterterrorism and Border Security Act of 2019 went into effect on April 12. It allowed the Home Office to make it a criminal offense for UK citizens to travel to or remain in any geographic area (US Department of State, 2020).

With the threat to France remains high, French authorities try to constantly adapt to recent developments. It focuses on finding solutions to the major problems that the EU and its institutions suffer from such as the lack of transparency and a coherent and effective EU framework. To this end, France presented a proposal at the JHA Council in March 2017 in cooperation with Germany for a more structured and institutionalized exchange. As a result, the Commission adopted the decision about the establishment of the

High-level Commission Expert Group on Radicalization (HLCEG-R) in July 2017 to step up efforts to prevent and counter radicalization and to improve coordination and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders (Scherrer, 2018: 18- 19). Additionally, Spain launched a new counter-terrorism strategy on 21 January 2019 by the Counter-Terrorism and Organized Crime Intelligence Center (CITCO) to fight Jihadists and the rise of extremism, focusing specifically on detecting and preventing the rise, development, and spread of terrorism and violent extremism, identifying and investigating terrorists and violent extremists to prevent the planning and execution of their actions, and also guaranteeing maximum support for the victims. It will be initially in effect for four years and will be open to annual reviews (La Moncloa, 2019).

The rising of terrorist attacks has revealed the weakness of the EU and its institutions to solve these risks alone, which required the intervention of individual countries to protect their citizens. Thus, we can say that these contributions from member states can reduce the burden on the European Union and address the shortcomings that it faces inside its institutions.

The Dimensions of Cooperation between the EU and MENA Countries in the Field of Terrorism

Constructivists argue that agency and structure are mutually constituted, which implies that structures influence agency and that agency influences structures. Agency can be understood as the ability of someone to act, whereas structure refers to the international system that consists of material and ideational elements (Theys, 2018: 1-4). This means that the social relation of friendship between the EU and MENA represents the intersubjective structure (that is, the shared ideas and beliefs among both states), whereas the EU and MENA are the actors who have the capacity (that is, agency). Thus, Cooperation with third countries was considered a

necessary step, in particular the cooperation on addressing radicalization, recruitment to terrorism, foreign fighters, and the returnees' phenomena. The EU counter-terrorism agenda has been presented in many ways with third countries. It included high-level political dialogues, as well as the adoption of clauses and agreements and capacity building projects with strategic countries.

This part will briefly analyze the development, contents, and principles of the European policies with MENA Countries for counter-terrorism and assess the performance of these policies.

- ***The 2011 Review:***

Although the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) is the main arena for relations with the EU's neighbors to the south (Gänzle, January 2008: 2-4), especially that the results of the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership (EMP) that was introduced in 1995 were disappointing (Stivachtis, November 2018: 1), the ENP will not fully develop its potential as a policy for stabilizing the MENA countries, especially after the increasing conflicts, rising extremism and terrorism, human rights violations, and other challenges in MENA countries.

In examining the development of the external relation of the EU using the constructivist perspectives, it is important to note that various Middle East and North African countries have requested that the EU focus on the issue of counter-terrorism. A shared interest in tackling this issue will lead to strong incentives for adaptation. The previous approach of EU policy had failed to achieve stability inside MENA countries because of focusing on achieving the economic interests without the pursuit to achieve real democracy with its neighbourhood. The EU realized that no real stability without real democracy. As a result, EU adopted the revised European Neighborhood Policy in 2011.

With the revised ENP, the EU unveiled its "more for more" principle, under which the Union will offer a more package of incentives and attractive financial aids to those who embark on a reform path through the development of stronger partnerships. Additionally, the revised European Neighborhood Policy supported the stabilization and security of an evolving neighborhood through seeking to deploy the available instruments and resources in a more coherent way, following a new approach based on differentiation, joint ownership, and flexibility (European Commission, November 2015: 3).

Although the 2011 Review gives priority to strategic objectives such as the maintenance of security and stability in the MENA, it did not exercise effective political conditionality with southern Mediterranean countries. The effectiveness of conditionality depended on both the attractiveness and the credibility of the EU's offer. Incentives provided to the MENA countries remain constrained due to the unwillingness of the EU institutions or its member states to offer the MENA countries certain benefits. Thus, the 2011 Review was not useful at all, especially that there were no clear mechanisms for the EU's partners to hold the EU accountable for delivering its promises. On the other hand, the Review of the ENP failed to understand the different aspirations, values, and interests of the EU partners due to political fragmentation and instability of the neighborhood. Besides, following the self-interests-vs-values policy by the EU (Blockmans *et al.*, 2017: 8-11).

- ***The 2015 Review:***

Constructivists claim that social realities only exist by human agreement through intersubjective understanding, and are therefore susceptible to change (Cardwell, 2009: 75). There was a need for change in the ENP both in substance and methodology for addressing shortcomings in the European neighborhood policy. Thus, the European Commission

President, Jean-Claude Juncker, proposed in 2014 the Review of ENP to respond to the new challenges of an evolving neighborhood. In this context, the ENP was reviewed in 2015 for reinvigorating the relations between the European Union and its neighbors as well as for giving a greater focus to mutual interests, more flexibility in how the policies are implemented, and the use of the EU instruments, through the negotiation and adoption of new partnership priorities and the ongoing updating of the Association Agendas (European Commission, November 2015: 3).

The 2015 Review helped build more effective partnerships with the neighborhood and the development of relationships between the EU and most ENP partners through the effective application of “joint ownership”, “mutual accountability” and “mutual responsibility” principles. Additionally, it developed the EU objectives and priorities in cooperation with other regional actors (the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the League of Arab States, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the African Union), as well as civil society organizations and other stakeholders (European Commission, March 2015: 9-11).

Counter-terrorism, safe and legal mobility, and tackling irregular migration, human trafficking, and smuggling have occupied a prominent place in the ENP. For instance, the European Commission has decided to adopt special measures in 2017 and 2018 for Libya, aiming to support the Libyan population in the achievement of a democratic transition, to support the Libyan institutions in building their capacities in the broader area of governance and with full respect for the rule of law, to promote stability and conflict prevention, as well as developing a thriving civil society including social partners. These measures had been financed under the European Neighborhood Instrument (European Commission, 2016: 1). Although the new approach has been crucial in creating the conditions for the stabilization

of the EU's neighborhood, the funds allocated by member states and the EU institutions to significant governance reform or preventing conflict in the Middle East are not much compared with the financial portfolio for addressing the refugee crisis, which amounted up to more than EUR 9.2 billion (Balfour *et al.*, 2016: 5).

- ***The European Union Strategy and projects for Countering Terrorism with MENA Countries***

The international system consists of the ways in which human beings think and interact with one another. Thus, the major thesis of constructivism is that the international system is "socially constructed" and also considers that the systemic structures are made of social relationships (Chernoff, 2008: 6-8). The social interactions and shared understandings are the basis on which the relationship between the European Union and MENA countries was built.

After political changes in the MENA region since 2011, the EU recognized the need to update its policies and instruments according to the new challenges. The European Union renewed its political ambitions toward the region especially that it shares the same security challenges with them. Both of President of the European Commission Jean-Claude Juncker and First Vice President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans Letter of Intent of 9 September 2015 confirmed the EU desire to build up the security capacity of partner countries and international organizations as well as help them for appropriate and effective action to prevent a crisis or stop it escalating themselves (European Commission, September 2015: 1-3). Thence, the author sees that unprecedented deterioration of the security situation in the MENA region and the rise of Islamism especially ISIS have represented a turning point for the EU's engagement with the MENA.

In light of existing cooperation on security and combating terrorism, the 2016 Commission Work Program presents a package on capacity building

in the security sector of third countries (Pont and Panagiotatou, 2016: 23). For instance, the EU adopted the project "Euromed Police IV" for increasing the security of citizens across the Euro-Mediterranean area. It covered the period from 2015 to 2019. It was funded by the European Union under the European Neighbourhood Instrument "ENI" and applied in 10 South Partner Countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia). It took 4 years with a budget of EUR 4.8 million. The project aimed to provide capacity building in priority areas notably fighting against terrorism, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings. Additionally, the EU adopted the project "Strengthening the legal regime against Foreign Terrorist Fighters in MENA and Balkans" with a budget of EUR 5 million for the period 2015 to 2019 under the ENI to prevent and counter terrorist recruitment, including foreign terrorist fighters (FTF), in the Middle East, North Africa (MENA), and Balkan countries in compliance with the UN General Assembly resolution 68/276 and the relevant Security Council resolutions, including the resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014) (Council of the European Union, November 2015: 20).

On the other hand, EU seeks to improve coordination with national actors as part of its regional focus in particular the Arab League, the African Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council to address political developments on the ground and to discuss regional conflicts and terrorism. Thus, in recent years relations between the European Union and the League of Arab States have seen a new impetus especially that the League has 22 members from third countries. In 2014 the parties agreed to pursue deepened institutional contacts and cooperation through an EU–League of Arab States (LAS) strategic dialogue to discuss regional conflicts and terrorism (Johansson-Nogués, June 2015: 295-298).

Furthermore, EU adopted "The EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat 2015" (Council of the European Union, October 2014:7) and "The EU Strategy on Syria 2017" as an attempt to address the dire situation in Syria, ending the war through a genuine political transition and enable the Syrian people to live in peace in their own country (European Commission, March 2017: 2).

The British Home Office / Research, Information and Communications Unit (RICU) implemented project "Strengthening Resilience in MENA" (2017-2021) aiming at strengthening the resilience of young people and communities against violent extremism and reducing the appeal of violent extremist groups in five countries in MENA (Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, Algeria, and Jordan). The project generally takes three years and will run until 2021. This program was funded by the European Union under the EU's Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace and delivered by the British Council with the UK and locally engaged partners who have expertise in strategic communications and building community capacity (EU Neighbours, 2017).

We can conclude that the EU could add value in combating radicalisation and Terrorism through adoption of Action Plans and projects for preventing violent extremism. EU realized primary responsibility for combating terrorism rests with it. Thus, EU used an extensive set of instruments for facing terrorism in an integrated manner. This schedule declares financial channels and the European Union Programmes for Countering Terrorism with MENA Countries.

Security Cooperation between EU and MENA Countries to Counter-Terrorism:
Developments and Challenges

Asmaa Mansour Abo El-Hassan

Project Name	Period	Aid Objectives	Instrument	Applied in Countries	Budget
Euromed Police I project	2004–2006	improve the cooperation on issues such as justice, security, terrorism, organised crime, and immigration	Neighbourhood South countries		EUR 2 million
Neighborhood Investment Facility (NIF)	officially launched in 2008	to finance with a mix of grants and loans key infrastructure projects in certain sectors such as transport, energy, environment, and social development	European Neighborhood Policy (ENP)	Southern Neighborhood	EUR 295.04 million in 2015
"Euromed Police II project"	2007–2010	fight against all major types of organised crime	Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Morocco, Occupied Palestinian Territory, Syria, Tunisia		EUR 5 million
European Resources for Mediation Support (ERMES)	January 2014 until May 2018	for quick responses to urgent or emerging crises and conflicts support to peace processes 48 hours after the emergence of a crisis	The Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace (ICSP)	MENA Countries	It had been funded € 5,682,400
Euromed Police IV	2015 to 2019	fighting against terrorism, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings.	The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)	(Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia	EUR 4.8 million
"Partnership for Democracy and Shared Prosperity"	March 2011	built on three key pillars: democratic transformation with a particular focus on human rights, constitutional and judicial reforms, the fight against corruption, partnership with people and civil society, and sustainable and inclusive growth	in the context of the ENP	with the Southern Mediterranean	
"Strengthening Partnership and Inclusive Growth" (SPRING)	September 2011- 2012	supported areas like deep and sustainable democracy, growth, job creation, microfinance, and higher education	southern Mediterranean region specially, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco and Tunisia. (SPRING) has increased its resources to €285 million in 2012 once partner countries progressed in building democracy.		€350 million

Security Cooperation between EU and MENA Countries to Counter-Terrorism:
Developments and Challenges

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Project Name	Period	Aid Objectives	Instrument	Applied in Countries	Budget
Civil Society Facility (CSF)	2011 -2013	support civil society organizations; develop their ability to drive reforms, implement, and evaluate the EU programs; and encourage their involvement in policy dialogue at national levels.		southern neighbors	€11 million
European Endowment for Democracy (EED)	November 2012	supporting deep and sustainable democracy and the values upon which the EU was founded. Since August the first, 2018, funded 641 initiatives. 234 initiatives were launched for the support of capacity building to strengthen government institutions	the European Neighborhood Instrument	Southern Neighborhood, particularly Tunisia, Egypt, and Syria	allocated € 6 million in 2014 to provide additional grants
International Conference on Peace and Security in Iraq" in Paris.	on 15 September 2014	to reduce the ability of Daesh to spread and remove it from the regions in which it has established itself in Iraq.		For support Iraq	
Strengthening the legal regime against Foreign Terrorist Fighters in MENA and Balkans	2015 to 2019	prevent and counter terrorist recruitment, including foreign terrorist fighters (FTF)	The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)	MENA, and Balkan countries	EUR 5 million
The EU Regional Strategy for Syria and Iraq as well as the Da'esh threat	March 2015	reduce the influx of foreign terrorist fighters, funds, and weapons to Da'esh; prevent regional spill-overs and improve border security		Syria and Iraq	
Security Sector Reform Program	2015 – 2020	modernization and reform of the Ministry of Interior's structure; creation of three joint operational centers based in strategic borders areas; reinforcement and	The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)	Tunisia	EUR 23 million

Security Cooperation between EU and MENA Countries to Counter-Terrorism:
Developments and Challenges

Asmaa Mansour Abo El-Hassan

Project Name	Period	Aid Objectives	Instrument	Applied in Countries	Budget
		modernization of the intelligence service			
Euromed Police IV	2015 - 2019	for increasing the security of citizens across the Euro-Mediterranean area. To provide capacity building in priority areas notably fighting against terrorism, drug trafficking and trafficking in human beings.	The European Neighbourhood Instrument (ENI)	applied in 10 South Partner Countries (Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Syria, Morocco, Palestine, and Tunisia).	EUR 4.8 million.
The second Macro-Financial Assistance (MFA) program	February 2016	implementing a set of reforms designed to fight corruption, increase the quality of public administration, and help Tunisia to cope with the influx of refugees fleeing war in Libya.		Tunisia	€150 million
Council's Working Party on Terrorism International Aspects (COTER)	April 2016	improvement of the security situation in Tunisia and exchanged views on the issues of security and counter-terrorism	During the Maltese Presidency of the Council of the European Union	For support Tunisia	
EU and Tunisia second high-level political dialogue meeting	January 2017	for addressing the challenges raised by terrorism and radicalization and for cutting-off all methods of support to terrorists including financial, political, logistical and military support	European Union (EU) and Tunisia	For support Tunisia	
The EU Strategy on Syria	3 April 2017	promoting a meaningful and inclusive transition in Syria; saving lives by addressing the humanitarian needs of the most vulnerable Syrians; promoting democracy, human rights, and freedom of speech; promoting accountability for war crimes; and supporting the resilience of the Syrian population and Syrian society.		Syria	

Security Cooperation between EU and MENA Countries to Counter-Terrorism:
Developments and Challenges

Asmaa Mansour Abo El-Hassan

Project Name	Period	Aid Objectives	Instrument	Applied in Countries	Budget
“Brussels Conference on Supporting the Future of Syria and the Region”	on 4-5 April 2017	support for a lasting political resolution to the Syrian conflict; and support for reconciliation and stabilization.		bring over 70 countries, international organizations and civil society for support Syria	
Strengthening Resilience in MENA	2017-2021	strengthening the resilience of young people and communities against violent extremism and reducing the appeal of violent extremist groups	The EU’s Instrument contributing to Stability and Peace	Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon, Algeria, and Jordan	
Border Management programme	2017-2020	to support of local governance, foster better inclusion and stability, in particular in the Libyan municipalities most affected by migratory flows and to bring a lasting solution to the crisis and restore peace and stability in the country.	The European Union Emergency Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF for Africa)	Libya	€50 million in 2017 €57.2 million in 2020
EU-Tunisia Association Council meeting	On 17 May 2019	the democratic transition and decentralization process in Tunisia, mobility and migration, socio-economic reforms, and the security challenges, in particular terrorism		For support tunisia	
The 5th Syria Conference on “Supporting the future of Syria and the region”	on 29 and 30 March 2021 in Brussels	to mobilize the international community in support of the Syrian people and also in support of a comprehensive and credible political solution to the Syrian conflict.		For support Syria	During the conference, has been mobilized €3.7 billion as support to ease the Syrian crisis for 2021 and beyond.

Project Name	Period	Aid Objectives	Instrument	Applied in Countries	Budget
Election Observation Mission (EOM)	10 October 2021	to help in further improving the electoral framework in Iraq and to support the strengthening of Iraqi democracy.	the EU responded to an invitation the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) in Iraq	For support Iraq	

Conclusion and Future Opportunities

The author would argue that adopting an Onuf style constructivism would provide the most effective analytical framework for understanding the reason for the development of strategies of the European Union towards MENA countries in the last period. The EU makes a significant contribution to countering terrorism in the MENA region through developmental aid packages for the improvement of multilateral intelligence and information sharing, establishment, and implementation of a legal framework for best practices to counter the flow of foreign fighters and fight against their radicalization and meet the needs of victims of terrorism and their families. In addition, the EU held a series of counter-terrorism dialogues with MENA countries to improve policies, exchange best practices, share the experiences, and learn from each other.

The current situation in the region requires an active approach from the EU, especially that the return of jihadi fighters and supporters to European countries causes a great concern to the people in Europe. For these purposes, the EU reviews the tools used in the neighborhood area to fit with the scale of the challenges in the MENA region. The researcher sees those possible solutions on the prevention and combating terrorism for the EU in the years ahead include the following:

- Focus specifically on meeting the goals agreed with partners to build a relationship of mutual trust between different parties, ensure the success of investigations and the prosecution for offences related to terrorist groups and terrorist activities, and bring foreign terrorist fighters to justice.
- The need to punish people trying to travel abroad for terrorist purposes and impose penalties for natural and legal persons having committed terrorist offences or activities, such as recruitment, training, and provision of material support for terrorists.
- Activate effective monitoring and evaluate systems to understand the reasons why these people left their home nations and increase the transparency of public information related to those citizens.
- Activate the role of civil society and strengthen engagement and contacts with local authorities and private sectors by creating associations and research institutes working on addressing the needs of victims of terrorism, providing access to long-term support services in their countries, and carrying out objective analyses and evaluations to achieve the aim of stability and predictability regarding various aspects of the anti-terrorist activity.
- Organize common events and public conferences for discussing the causes, factors, and forms of terrorism and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations.
- Adopt new mechanisms or protocols on the prevention and combating of terrorism to address this phenomenon and adopt a targeted and thoughtful strategy to address the security issues in the region.

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