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Perceptions of the Terrorist Threat among EU Member States

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Introduction

The European Union's (EU) efforts in the fight against terrorism have already been analysed in a number of scholarly articles and edited volumes.[2] While differing substantially in their scope, depth and focus, most analyses have identified important gaps and shortcomings of the nascent EU Counterterrorism policy, which effectively came into being after the September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks in the United States (US). Some of the available literature offers important insights and suggestions for closing of the existing gaps but virtually nobody has yet addressed the arguably key shortcoming of the current EU counterterrorism policy – the lack of a shared perception of the contemporary terrorist threat among EU members.

From a security studies perspective, shared understanding of the nature and gravity of the security threat is a key prerequisite for the design and execution of any security policy. The EU members, however, still differ in their analyses of both the nature and salience of the threats posed by contemporary terrorism. This paper offers five explanations why this is the case. Firstly, history matters and when it comes to terrorism, EU members differ substantially both in their historical records and their current experiences. Secondly, while there is general consensus, within the literature, that Europe is, currently, not only terrorists' base and a potential target, but also a terrorist incubator, the exact nature and novelty of the terrorist threat, both external and "home-grown," are still debated. Thirdly, demography matters and given the current immigration

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[2] For a good literature review, see the special issue of *Journal of Common Marker Studies*, 46, no. 1 (January 2008).

and natality patterns among the EU's members, it is bound to matter even more in the years to come. Fourthly, Eurobarometer public opinion polls reveal that the public perceptions of the terrorist threat vary across the EU and it is possible to identify a few specific explanations why this has been the case. Fifthly, the EU lacks a genuine baseline terrorist threat assessment which makes the development of a common terrorist threat perception rather difficult, if not impossible. Finally, it is important to note that while most EU politicians and a majority of EU members' citizen perceive terrorist threats differently, they at least tend to agree on a negative definition of (counter-) terrorism.

Past and Contemporary Terrorist Threats in Europe: Statistical Data

While, for some EU members, terrorism is nothing new, for many others it represents a relatively novel security threat.[3] Naturally, past (in-) experience with terrorism shapes the current EU members' perceptions of the terrorist threat. Before 9/11, only six EU members had perceived terrorism as a threat to the extent that they actually defined it as a serious crime and/or national security threat.[4] But even among these six countries, there have been quite different terrorist threat perceptions and legislative responses to it. To some extent, this was due to the differences among the terrorist groups operating in Europe:

> In France we have always thought … that the Islamic threat was a dangerous one and that the Algerian problem was not a political, diplomatic or bi-lateral problem for France, but was the premise of a much more global threat. That was not perceived by all our partners.[5]

In Germany and Italy, however, there were good reasons to worry less about Islamist terrorist groups and more about ideologically motivated groups such as the Baader Meinhof gang/Rote Armee Faktion and the Red Brigades. Similarly, the primary security threats in Spain and Great Britain were not Islamist terrorists, but the Irish Republican Army (IRA) and the Euskadi Ta Askatasuna (ETA), which both committed acts of terrorism in the name of national self-determination. The remaining EC/EU members had much less

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[3] See for example Fernando Reinares (ed.) *European Democracies Against Terrorism: Governmental Policies and Intergovernmental Cooperation*. (Burlington, US: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2000), Paul Wilkinson, *Terrorism and the Liberal State* (London: Macmillan, 1986), Juliet Lodge, "Terrorism and the European Community: Towards 1992," *Terrorism & Political Violence* 1, no. 1 (January 1989): 28-47.

[4] United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal and Spain.

[5] Jean-Louis Bruguičre, Premier Vice-Président chargé de l'Instruction, Coordination de la section anti-terroriste, Palais de justice, Paris, cited in Edwards, Geoffrey, and Christoph O. Meyer. "Introduction: Charting a Contested Transformation." *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2008):7.

experience with terrorism of any kind, although some of them were occasionally used as convenient logistics areas, back-offices, and recruiting grounds. This was also confirmed by some interviewed EU officials, although some have also indicated that things are changing over time so for example the differences between the "old" and "new" members have become "less visible in the recent past and Sweden and Denmark, also distant three years ago, are now more concerned due to their own experiences."[6]

When it comes to contemporary experiences with terrorism in Europe, the latest available and comparable[7] statistical data provided by EU members to Europol for 2007 referred to a total of 583 attacks (up by 24 percent from 2006), 1044 arrested suspects (up by 48 percent from 2006) and 331 convictions for terrorism charges in the EU. As in the past, the vast majority of attacks (517, e.g. 88 percent) were claimed or attributed to Basque and Corsican separatist terrorist groups in Spain and France, respectively.[8] The vast majority of these attacks were arson attacks aimed at causing material damage. The prototypical terrorist suspect in 2007 was a male EU citizen between 23-43 years of age.[9] Given the following discussion, it is important to highlight that, with regard to Islamist terrorism, only two failed and two attempted attacks were reported for 2007. As in 2006, these attacks took place in the UK (two cases), Denmark and Germany (one case each) and they all "mainly aimed at causing indiscriminate mass casualties."[10] It is also interesting to note that in 2007, court proceedings in relation to Islamist terrorism had the highest acquittal rate: 31 percent of the defendants in EU members were found not guilty.[11]

In 2008, EU members reported a total of 515 failed, foiled or successfully perpetrated attacks, which represents a 24 percent decrease from 2007. 397 terrorist attacks were claimed or attributed to separatist terrorist organisations and 98 percent of these attacks took place in France and Spain. Overall, 1009 individuals were arrested in the EU for terrorism-related offences in 2008,[12] with an average age, as in 2007, at 35 years. The majority of the suspects were arrested for membership in a terrorist organisation. During 2008, 359 individuals were

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6 Interview with an anonymous EU Official, October 2008.

7 The available data is comparable only since the publication of TE-SAT 2007 due to the introduction of a new methodology for its compilation.

8 Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2008*, 10-16.

9 Out of 418 individuals tried on terrorist charges in 2007, only 34 were women. 69% of those arrested for terrorist offences were EU citizens. Their average age was 35 years, with two thirds being 23-43 years of age.

10 Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2008*, 10-16.

11 Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2008*, 13. Left-wing and separatist terrorism both had an acquittal rate of approximately 20 percent.

12 The number of arrests reported by the UK for 2008 included for the first time the arrests related to terrorism in Northern Ireland, which were not included in previous years. For this reason, no comparison can be made. For the rest of the member states, however, the total number of arrests decreased by 11 percent from 2007 to 2008. If the UK arrests are included, the total number of arrests in 2008 is still 4 percent lower than in 2007.

tried on terrorism charges in the EU in a total of 187 proceedings. Twenty-nine percent of the verdicts were acquittals. With regard to Islamist terrorism, only one attack was reported by the UK and it was carried out by a single offender (a so-called "lone wolf") inspired by local extremists. However, the relatively high number of arrests relating to Islamist terrorism (187 out of 1009)[13] indicates a substantial amount of law enforcement activities, which also reflects the fact that "although the majority of EU members have not been targeted by Islamist terrorists, some report that the perceived threat remains high or even estimate that the risk of an attack has increased."[14] According to the authors of Europol's 2009 *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report* (TESAT), this is primarily because: a) the number of persons associated with "home-grown" Islamist terrorist groups is rising in the EU (a majority of the arrested individuals belonged to small autonomous cells rather than to known terrorist organisations); b) the continued military presence in Iraq and/or Afghanistan; and c) the continued accusations of anti-Muslim attitudes.[15] The report also stated that:

1. The threat emanating from Islamist terrorism inside the EU is linked, to a certain extent, to the developments in conflict zones and politically instable countries, such as North Africa, the Sahel region, Iraq, Somalia, Yemen, Afghanistan, Pakistan, but also India;
2. Afghanistan and Pakistan seem to have replaced Iraq as preferred destinations for volunteers wishing to engage in armed conflict;
3. Eastern European Member States, which reported a generally low threat from Islamist terrorism, nevertheless highlighted the risk that they may be used as a logistical base for terrorists operating outside of the EU. The majority of these countries also reported on the potential risk that their countries may be used as transit countries by terrorists trying to enter other EU countries;

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[13] The number of member states which reported arrests related to Islamist terrorism decreased from 14 in 2007 to ten in 2008. These were Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, the Republic of Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Sweden. The majority of the arrests took place again in France and Spain, with 78 and 61 arrests, respectively. As in 2006 and 2007, the majority of the arrested suspects came from North African countries, most notably Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, although the share of Moroccan and Tunisian citizens in the numbers of arrests halved as compared to 2007.

[14] Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2009*. 2009 <http://www.europol.europa.eu/publications/EU_Terrorism_Situation_and_Trend_Report_TE-SAT/TESAT2009.pdf>, 17. Accessed 25.6.2009. These fears were especially apparent in the UK – in November 2007, the British Security Service was looking at no fewer than 2 000 individuals posing a direct threat to national security. "Intelligence counter terrorism and trust", speech by the Director General of the British Security Service, p. 5., cited in Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2008*, p. 21.

[15] Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2009*, 17-19.

4. EU-based suspects continue providing logistical support to Islamist terrorist groups and networks based outside the EU;
5. Islamist recruitment activities have largely been driven underground and radicalization activities have moved from mosques and other public places into private spaces;
6. Prisons and the Internet continue to be locations of concern regarding this phenomenon;
7. Islamist groups generate more money than non-Islamist groups.[16]

As highlighted in figure 1, Europol analysts were correct to observe that "due to large fluctuations, a clear trend in the numbers of failed, foiled and successful terrorist attacks cannot be established" for the entire EU for the most recent time period where comparable statistics are available for all EU members.[17] Nevertheless, at least two trends do stand out rather clearly from the aforementioned statistics: 1) the numbers of arrested suspects are relatively independent of the occurrence of terrorist activities, which indicates the existence of a continuous terrorist threat in Europe; 2) the threat of terrorism is likely to remain diverse, with different EU members being confronted with different international organised groups, locally inspired groups, as well as "lone wolves."[18]

Europol's statistics largely correspond to recent findings presented by Eurojust, which registered 39 new operational terrorism cases in 2008. Spain, France and the UK were the most requested countries for terrorist cases, while five out of the six coordination meetings on counterterrorism issues were organised by Italy. Interestingly, however, the 2008 Eurojust Annual Report also revealed that fundamentalist terrorist groups continue to be prevalent in the investigations referred to Eurojust, followed by separatist groups. This trend was confirmed by the information on terrorism verdicts sent to Eurojust by the national authorities of EU members due to their information sharing obligations regarding terrorist offences. Half of the submitted verdicts in 2008 related to fundamentalist terrorist groups (190 out of a total of 384 verdicts), while only 148 verdicts refer predominantly to separatist groups. Only 10 EU members reported verdicts from court proceedings for terrorism: Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, and the UK. The results of court proceedings in 2008 show that EU members reported an average sentencing, on convictions, of slightly less than ten years. Noteworthy are the high conviction rates in Germany, France and Italy. The

[16] Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2009*, 17-24.
[17] Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2009*, 39.
[18] Europol, *Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2009*, 39-40.

average acquittal rate has slightly decreased since 2007 (from 27 percent to 23 percent).[19]

Contemporary Terrorist Threat in Europe: The Scholarly Debates

The available scholarly literature confirms several of the aforementioned Europol and Eurojust's findings. To begin with, there is a large consensus that, since the end of the cold war, the scales of the international terrorist threat to Europe have tilted from "a staging ground to a potential Disneyland of soft targets."[20] The terrorist attacks in Madrid and London indicate that especially the "old" EU members have moved up the terrorist value chain to become a core target. Due to their support of the UN-sanctioned invasion of Afghanistan and the US-led invasion of Iraq, the "new" EU members have also moved up on the list of potential terrorist targets, although probably still not as high the UK or Spain. According to senior counterintelligence officials, classified intelligence briefings, and wiretaps:

> [J]ihadists extended their European operations after the roundups that followed September 11 and then again, with fresh energy, after the invasion of Iraq. Osama bin Laden now provides encouragement and strategic orientation to scores of relatively autonomous European jihadist networks that assemble for specific missions, draw operatives from a pool of professionals and apprentices, strike, and then dissolve, only to regroup later.[21]

Experts have also pointed out that these new European jihadist networks should not be compared with the older, ideologically motivated European terrorist groups, such as the Baader-Meinhof Gang in Germany, Action Directe in France, or the Red Brigades in Italy, because they enjoy what Marxist terrorists long sought but always lacked: a social base.[22]

Moreover, this base is growing rapidly, in part thanks to the war in Iraq and, even more importantly, due to the failure of several EU members to sufficiently integrate their growing Muslim populations (see table 3). As one American observer put it:

> Europe's track record of engagement with Islam over the last 1,350 years is not encouraging. Although exploring some new initiatives, Europeans

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19 Eurojust, *Eurojust Annual Report 2008*. 1.10.2009 <http://www.eurojust.europa.eu/press_releases/annual_reports/2008/Annual_Report_2008_EN.pdf>, 22-23.

20 Doron Zimmermann, "The European Union and Post-9/11 Counterterrorism: A Reappraisal," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 29, no. 2 (2006): 139.

21 Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 July/August 2005, 20.5.2006 <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050701faessay84409/robert-s-leiken/europe-s-angry-muslims.html>.

22 Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims."

> today seem inclined to pursue a status quo approach at home and abroad, preferring caution, predictability, control, and established structures over the boldness, adaptability, engagement, and redefined relationships that the new situation requires. A similar mind-set is evident among Europe's Muslim population.[23]

While it may be misleading to speak of a single European Muslim community given the ethnic diversity and cleavages within Muslim communities arising from sectarian, socio-political and generational splits, and the non-hierarchical nature of Islam itself, it does appear that especially younger Muslims in the EU increasingly identify first with Islam rather than with either their family's country of origin or the European country in which they now reside:

> Younger Muslims are adopting attributes of the European societies in which they were born and raised, such as language; socialization through schooling; and, in many cases, some of the secular perspectives of the country in which they reside. Yet, generally they do not feel part of the larger society nor that they have a stake in it. … [They] are willing to integrate and respect national norms and institutions as long as they can, at the same time, maintain their distinct Islamic identity and practices. They fear that assimilation, that is, total immersion into European society, will strip them of this identity. Yet, this is the price many Muslims increasingly see European governments and publics demanding: to have Europe become a melting pot without accommodation by or modifications of the existing culture.[24]

It is therefore not surprising that despite the growing number of Muslims holding an EU members' citizenship (see table 2), available studies and public opinion surveys find that second- and particularly third-generation Muslims are less integrated into European societies than their parents or grandparents were. A survey conducted in France, for example, revealed that Muslim identification with Islam was stronger in 2001 than it was in 1994 or 1989, with the number of those declaring themselves "believing and practicing" Muslims increasing by 25 percent between 1994 and 2001.[25] In another public opinion poll, three-fourths of French Muslim respondents considered the values of Islam to be compatible with those of the French Republic, but only one-fourth of those under 25 shared that view.[26] Conversely, a poll conducted around the same time indicated that 62 percent of the general French population believed that

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[23] Timothy M. Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," *The Washington Quarterly* 27, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 26.

[24] Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 30.

[25] Open Society Institute, "Monitoring Minority Protection in EU Member States," 2002, 22.05.2008 <http://www.eumap.org/reports/2002/eu>, 76.

[26] *Le Figaro* survey cited in Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 43.

the values of Islam were not compatible with those of the French Republic.[27] In a 2002 survey conducted in Germany, 19 percent of respondents said that Muslims should not be allowed to practice their religion in Germany, 43 percent voiced doubts about Islam's capacity to be tolerant, and 67 percent said that, when practicing their religion, Muslims should be more respectful of the views of the German public.[28]

While we lack similar opinion polls data from other EU members, a number of observers have concluded that many Muslims tend to seek a physical presence in Europe but no accommodation with European society. Leiken, for example, even suggested that:

> As a consequence of demography, history, ideology, and policy, Western Europe now plays host to often disconsolate Muslim offspring, who are its citizens in name but not culturally or socially. In a fit of absentmindedness, during which its academics discoursed on the obsolescence of the nation-state, Western Europe acquired not a colonial empire but something of an internal colony, whose numbers are roughly equivalent to the population of Syria.[29]

Although this is a somewhat hyperbolic statement, it is apparent that increasing numbers of Europeans see Muslims as a direct challenge to the traditional values and public policies of their societies. This is well demonstrated by the heated controversies over the headscarf, the construction of mosques, and the teaching of Islam in schools, which are by no means limited to France and Germany. These debates reveal that the Muslim presence in Europe is perceived as a challenge to domestic social unity and national cohesion, or what the Danish sociologist Ole Waever calls "societal security."[30] The influential British weekly *The Economist* has already warned that this "could be a huge long-term threat to Europe"[31] and others have coined a name for it: "Islamophobia."[32] While the core issue behind this phenomenon is clearly identity (e.g. the perceived cultural threat Islam poses to the European way of life, and vice versa from the perspective of European Muslims), the threat is also framed in terms of economics (e.g. jobs and social welfare benefits) and, most importantly here, security (e.g. terrorism).

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27 Jerome Cordelier, "IPSOS-LCI-Le Point Poll: Islam Is a Worry for the French," *Le Point*, 16.05. 2003.

28 Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff, "Was Halten die Deutschen von Islam?" Konrad Adenauer Foundation working paper, May 2003. Cited in Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 43.

29 Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims."

30 Ole Waever, "Societal Security: The Concept," in *Security: A New Framework for Analysis*, ed. Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver and Jaap de Wilde (Boulder, CO: Lynne Riennier Publishers, Inc., 1998).

31 "Forget Asylum-Seekers: It's the People Inside Who Count," *The Economist*, 08.05. 2003.

32 Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 44.

At present, there are roughly 15 to 20 million Muslims in the EU and there is some strong evidence that al-Qaeda operatives in Europe are increasingly local citizens, rather than non-EU nationals, such as those who carried out the London bombings in 2005.[33] A Nixon Center study of 373 radical Muslim terrorists arrested or killed in Europe and the US from 1993 through 2004, for example, found out that an astonishing 41 percent were Western nationals, who were either naturalised or second generation Europeans, or were converts to Islam. More specifically, the study found twice as many terrorists who were French as Saudis and more Britons than Sudanese, Yemenites, Emiratis, Lebanese, or Libyans.[34] Another US study estimated that of the approximately 660 original detainees from 42 countries held by the US in Guantanamo, more than 20 were citizens of at least six different West European states, and perhaps a similar number were permanent residents, while only two detainees were US citizens.[35] On a similar note, Michael Radu of the Foreign Policy Research Institute reported that since 9/11, European countries have arrested 20 times more terrorism suspects than the US,[36] and yet another recent study estimated that between ten and fifteen thousand British Muslims are supporters of Al Qaeda or related groups and found that eight out of ten British Muslims believe that the war on terrorism is a war on Islam.[37] As usual, caution is necessary when interpreting all this data but there is a growing amount of evidence suggesting that there may be something about the European environment that contributes to certain Muslims embracing terrorism.

For their part, taking into account the aforementioned figures, several US experts on terrorism have already stated that "the greatest threat to the United States from Al Qaeda, its affiliated groups, or those animated by Al Qaeda's ideology, emanates today from Europe."[38] While many Europeans may not

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[33] Daniel Keohane, "The Absent Friend: EU Foreign Policy and Counter-Terrorism," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2008): 136.

[34] Steven Brook and Robert S. Leiken, "The Quantitative Analysis of Terrorism and Immigration: An Initial Exploration," Terrorism & Political Violence 18, no. 4 (December 2006): 503-21.

[35] Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 33.

[36] Cited in Frederick S. Kempe, "Europe's Middle East Side Story," *The Wall Street Journal*, 29.07. 2003.

[37] Cited in Peter Bergen, "Al Qaeda in Europe and the US" *The NYU Review of Law & Security*, Special Issue Summer 2005: 25-27, <http://www.lawandsecurity.org/publications/specialissueeurope_000.pdf>. (Accessed 1.4.2008).

[38] Peter Bergen, "Al Qaeda in Europe and the US,." *The NYU Review of Law & Security*, no. Special Issue Summer 2005: 25-27, 1.4.2008 <http://www.lawandsecurity.org/publications/specialissueeurope_000.pdf>.Specifically, Bergen suggested the following four explanations to back up this claim: "The first is that there is little or no evidence of American "sleeper cells" found in the US since the 9/11 attacks. Second, the most significant Islamist terrorist plots in the United States in the past decade have generally not involved "sleeper cells," but rather terrorists who have come into the US from abroad, often from Europe. Third, in 2004, we saw with the Madrid attacks and the disruption of serious terrorist plots in London that there are European sleeper cells that have the ability and motivation to carry out major

see European Muslims as the greatest security threat to the US or their own home countries, security officials and terrorism experts in European countries do acknowledge that the recruitment of extremists, as well as their organisation and planning and decision-making in Europe is increasingly done within each country's borders. A chief terrorism investigator in Milan, for example, stated that "almost all European countries have been touched by recruiting [of Islamist extremists]," including, improbably, Norway, Switzerland, Poland, Bulgaria, and the Czech Republic.[39] It is, therefore, increasingly difficult to disagree with those who claim that Europe has indeed given birth to its own, home-grown terrorist threat.[40] But even among the terrorism experts, there are still debates about the exact nature and novelty of this new threat.

According to Philippe Errera from the French Foreign Ministry, for example, Europe faces three overlapping "circles" of threat from Islamist terrorism. The first circle consists of the core members of the Al Qaeda network and its trained associates. In the second circle are ethno-nationalist groups in places such as Kashmir, Chechnya and Lebanon, which share some of Al Qaeda's Islamist ideology, but have primarily local or national goals. The third circle is the least understood, yet potentially the biggest and most dangerous, group of so-called "freelance jihadists." These can be Islamist terrorist groups or individuals, based anywhere in the world, including various Western societies, who may or may not be inspired by Bin Laden, and may have no direct connection with the Al-Qaeda network. While no one knows for sure how many "freelance jihadists" are there in Europe (the numbers could amount to a few hundred or many thousands), Errera argues that they become radicalised in a relatively short span of time and then act without orders and explicit training.[41]

Robert S. Leiken, Director of the Immigration and National Security Program at the Nixon Center, has argued that, broadly speaking, there are just two types of jihadists who are primarily located in Western Europe – "outsiders" and "insiders." The former are:

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terrorist operations, and even, perhaps, to attack the United States itself. Fourth, the European threat from militant jihadists will likely increase over time as declining European populations are replaced by rising Muslim immigration into Europe, a combination of circumstances that is generating, and will continue to generate, rising Muslim alienation in many European countries, and a significant amount of backlash against Muslim immigrant in countries such as the Netherlands." For similar arguments, also see Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 July/August 2005, 20.5.2006 <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050701faessay84409/robert-s-leiken/europe-s-angry-muslims.html>.

39 Armando Spataro, cited in Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims."

40 Mark Huband, "Europe's "Home-Grown" Terrorism Threat." *The NYU Review of Law & Security*, Special Issue Summer 2005: 25-27, <http://www.lawandsecurity.org/publications/specialissueeurope_000.pdf>. (Accessed 1.4.2008); Robert S. Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims," *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 4 July/August 2005, 20.5.2006 <http://www.foreignaffairs.org/20050701faessay84409/robert-s-leiken/europe-s-angry-muslims.html>; Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 25-50.

41 Philippe Errera, "Three Circles of Threat," *Survival* 47, no. 12 (2005): 71-88.

> [A]liens, typically asylum seekers or students, who gained refuge in liberal Europe from crackdowns against Islamists in the Middle East. Among them are radical imams, often on stipends from Saudi Arabia, who open their mosques to terrorist recruiters and serve as messengers for or spiritual fathers to jihadist networks. Once these aliens secure entry into one EU country, they have the run of them all. They may be assisted by legal or illegal residents, such as the storekeepers, merchants, and petty criminals who carried out the Madrid bombings.[42]

In contrast, the "insiders" are a group of alienated citizens, second- or third-generation children of immigrants, like van Gogh's killer Bouyeri and his associates, "who were born and bred under European liberalism." Leiken points out that "no Chinese wall separates first-generation outsiders from second-generation insiders; indeed, the former typically find their recruits among the latter." He does, nevertheless, also argue that "many of these first-generation outsiders have migrated to Europe expressly to carry out jihad" and suggests that "[i]n Islamist mythology, migration is archetypically linked to conquest."[43] Since Muslims already constitute the majority of immigrants in most Western European countries, including Belgium, France, Germany, and the UK, it is not surprising that talk about the connection between immigration, asylum abuse and terrorism is rising in several EU members:

> The Dutch reaction to van Gogh's assassination, the British reaction to jihadist abuse of political asylum, and the French reaction to the wearing of the headscarf suggest that Europe's multiculturalism has begun to collide with its liberalism, privacy rights with national security. Multiculturalism was once a hallmark of Europe's cultural liberalism, which the British columnist John O'Sullivan defined as 'free[dom] from irksome traditional moral customs and cultural restraints.' But when multiculturalism is perceived to coddle terrorism, liberalism parts company.[44]

Since 2001, issues of immigration have indeed started to play an increasingly important role and they are nowadays actually changing the very party systems of several EU members. As Savage pointed out, not only have the growth and visibility of Europe's Muslim population given new life to radical

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42 Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims."

43 Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims." The last claim is based on the following argumentation: "Facing persecution in idolatrous Mecca, in AD 622 the Prophet Muhammad pronounced an anathema on the city's leaders and took his followers to Medina. From there, he built an army that conquered Mecca in AD 630, establishing Muslim rule. Today, in the minds of mujahedeen in Europe, it is the Middle East at large that figures as an idolatrous Mecca because several governments in the region suppressed Islamist takeovers in the 1990s. Europe could even be viewed as a kind of Medina, where troops are recruited for the reconquest of the holy land, starting with Iraq."

44 Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims."

right-wing parties, which have played on xenophobia and popular fears of Islam but, just as important, advances by parties of the far Right (e.g., Belgium's Flemish Bloc, the British National Party, Denmark's People's Party, Jean-Marie Le Pen's French National Front, and Italy's Northern League) have led to right-leaning adjustments in the political priorities of mainstream European parties.[45]

Alternatively, according to David C. Rappoport, EU members (as well as other countries around the world) are now facing a "fourth wave" of modern insurgent terrorism that can be distinguished from previous forms of transnational Muslim fundamentalism in terms of its goals and its territorial scope.[46] Unlike Hamas or the national state-formation terrorism with transnational character of the Palestinian Fatah, the shared ideology of "fourth wave" terrorists is global *jihad* against infidels, which has as its long-term goal the political unification of "the Muslim nation" by re-establishing the caliphate, "stretching from extreme west of the Mediterranean basin to south-east Asia."[47] More immediately, according to Gunaratna, the inspiration is the radicalisation and mobilisation of Muslims worldwide,[48] which provides the basis for what Olivier Roy calls "globalized Islam" – militant Islamic resentment at Western dominance, anti-imperialism exalted by revivalism.[49]

Finally, a number of experts has also pointed out that the emergence of radicals from within European countries is transforming the terrorist threat profile. For example, referring to Mr. van Gogh's death, Edwin Bakker, a terrorism expert at the Netherlands Institute for International Affairs, suggested the following: "Terrorism is understood to be events like September 11. But then we have somebody who kills a guy on a bike. So we weren't prepared for anything." He also stressed that the fragmentation of the network once connected to Al Qaeda made the need for cross-border co-operation even greater, as investigations focus on previously unknown individuals who are in the process of radicalisation, rather than people arriving from abroad.[50] This assessment appears to be shared by several European counterterrorism authorities, who also saw the killing as a new phase in the terrorist threat – one that raised the specter of Middle East-style political assassinations as part of the European jihadist arsenal and disclosed a new source of dan-

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45 Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 35.

46 David C. Rapoport, "The Four Waves of Modern Terrorism," in *Attacking Terrorism. Elements of a Grand Strategy*, ed. Audrey Kurth Cronin and James M. Ludes (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 2004).

47 Fernando Reinares, "Conceptualizing International Terrorism,." 01.09.2005, Real Instituto Elcano, 20.5.2006 <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/analisis/802.asp>.

48 Gunaratna, Rohan (2005) 'Responding to the Post 9/11 Structural and Operational Challenges of Global Jihad.' *Connections Pfp Consortium Journal*, Spring Issue. Cited in Edwards and Meyer, "Introduction: Charting a Contested Transformation," 5.

49 Cited in Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims."

50 Cited in Huband, "Europe's "Home-Grown" Terrorism Threat."

ger: unknown individuals among Europe's own Muslims.[51] Some have also warned that a key new factor is the number of recruits of European racial type, who have converted to Islam. To date, this group is numerically small, but it has nevertheless thrown-up a number of radical elements who have found their way into extremist circles.[52] Moreover, some have pointed out that while, to date, conversion to Islam has been a minor factor in the increased Muslim presence in Europe, making up less than one percent of all Muslims in Europe, conversions could develop as a new and potentially significant source not only of the growth of the Muslim presence in Europe but also of its voice and visibility if Islam gains official recognition, becomes more established and institutionalised in Europe.[53]

Demography Matters

The different terrorist threat perceptions among EU members can be better understood if Europe's political demography is taken into account. Although exact figures are hard to come by because EU members' censuses rarely ask respondents about their faith,[54] and some still do not recognise Islam as an official national religion (see table 2), it is clear from the available data that France has the numerically largest Muslim population in the EU (over 6 million), followed by Germany, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Italy, and Belgium (with several hundred thousands of Muslim in each – see table 3). In contrast, nine EU members – mostly, but not exclusively from Eastern Europe, have relatively small Muslim populations (ten thousand or less). Given the differences in the overall population size, it may be more appropriate to have a look at the percentage of the Muslim population out of the total for each country. Here a different picture emerges (see table 3), with the top two spots occupied by two new members – Cyprus and Bulgaria (18 and 12 percent), followed by France and the Netherlands (10 and 6 percent) in third and fourth place, respectively. This ranking may also be useful for understanding the radicalisation processes of different Muslim communities across the EU. While French, Dutch, British and Danish Muslims have frequently made the headlines since 9/11 when it comes to (the lack of) their integration into larger populations, the spread of extremisms and, in some cases, even the resort to violence and/or terrorism, little has been written about the Cypriot, Bulgarian, Slovenian or Austrian Muslim communities. While it is certainly important to understand the dynamics of smoky coffeehouses in Rotterdam and Copenhagen, makeshift

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51 Leiken, "Europe's Angry Muslims."

52 Huband, "Europe's "Home-Grown" Terrorism Threat."

53 Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 28.

54 Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Luxembourg, and Spain, actually bar questions on religion in censuses and other official questionnaires. Timothy M. Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 26.

prayer halls in Hamburg and Brussels, Islamic bookstalls in Birmingham and "Londonistan," and the prisons of Madrid, Milan, and Marseilles, it is at least as crucial to understand the situation of Muslim populations elsewhere in Europe, where there has been much less talk about the rise of militant Islamist groups. Overall, however, it is clear that regardless of what criteria one selects for comparison, the differences among EU members are quite substantial.

According to many analysts, however, more important than the current numbers is the trend that is emerging. They point out that the Muslim population in Europe more than doubled in the last three decades, and the rate of growth is accelerating. By 2015, according to Omer Taspinar, Europe's Muslim population is expected to double, whereas Europe's non-Muslim population is projected to fall by at least 3.5 percent.[55] Looking further ahead, conservative projections estimate that, compared to today's 5 percent, Muslims will comprise at least 20 percent of Europe's population by 2050.[56] Some even predict that one-fourth of France's population could be Muslim by 2025 and that, if trends continue, Muslims could outnumber non-Muslims in France and perhaps in all of Western Europe by mid-century.[57] Although these projections may seem incredible at first glance, they may not be totally off the mark given the following trends:

1. Although most European countries closed their doors to legal labor immigration already in the 1970s, some 500,000 legal immigrants (primarily family reunification cases) and 400,000 asylum seekers still arrive in the EU each year. According to the International Organization for Migration, Muslims make up a large and increasing proportion of both groups, coming primarily from Algeria, Morocco, Turkey, and the former Yugoslavia.[58]
2. Although no reliable data exists, Muslims probably also make up a significant proportion of illegal immigrants to the EU, estimated in the range between 120 000 and 500 000 annually.[59]

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55 Omer Taspinar, "Europe's Muslim Street," *Foreign Policy*, March/April 2003, 7.

56 Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 28.

57 John L. Esposito, "Introduction: Modernizing Islam and Re-Islamization in Global Perspective," in *Modernizing Islam: Religion in the Public Sphere in the Middle East and Europe*, ed. John L. Esposito and Francois Burgat (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 11; Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 28.

58 International Organization for Migration, *World Migration Report 2000* (Geneva: IOM, 2000), 195. Interestingly, in 2000 another UN study projected that, to counterbalance their increasingly greying populations, EU Member States would annually need 949,000 migrants to maintain their 1995 populations; 1,588,000 migrants to maintain their 1995 working-age populations; or 13,480,000 migrants to maintain their population support ratios (the ratio of people aged 15–64 to those aged 65 and older). Department of Economic and Social Affairs Population Division, United Nations Secretariat, "Replacement Migration: Is It a Solution to Declining and Aging Populations?" 21.03. 2000, 02.06.2008 <http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/migration/migration.htm>.

59 International Organization for Migration, "Facts and Figures on International Migration," *Migration Policy Issues* no. 2 (March 2003): 2, cited in Savage, "Europe and Islam:

3. The Muslim birth rate in Europe is currently more than three times that of non-Muslims.[60] Thus, already today, approximately 50 percent of Muslims in Western Europe were born there.[61]

As in the past, however, the projected increases of Muslim populations are unlikely to occur in all EU members to the same degree. As indicated in table 1, the recent increases in Europe's Muslim population have primarily occurred in a few Western European countries with liberal refugee and asylum seeker policies (Austria, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Norway, which is not a Member of the EU). In contrast, the indigenous Muslim populations in south-eastern Europe, have declined by some 15 percent during the past 20 years (due, among other things, to Turkish emigration from Bulgaria) and in Central and Eastern Europe, Muslim populations remain virtually nonexistent. This may change once the living standards in the "new" EU members catches up to the rest of the EU, but it is more likely that in the near future, much of the Muslim migration will be directed to countries like Spain, Italy, and perhaps Greece, e.g. other old EU members with more porous borders, the close proximity to countries of migration, and the highest number of illegal residents.[62]

Public Perceptions of the Terrorist Threat: The Eurobarometer Opinion Polls

Despite the fact that governments and publics of EU members tend to view and respond to all Muslims as an undifferentiated whole and Islamophobia is not limited to Western Europe only, the exact nature and gravity of the threat from both Islamist, as well as non-Islamist, terrorism is still perceived differently across the EU. This is well reflected in the Eurobarometer public opinion polls. For example, when asked to list the two most important issues facing their home country at the moment, the priority given to terrorism (albeit not necessarily international terrorism only) by EU citizens' in the period from 2003-2007 was 5 percent or lower in 20 EU members (see table 5). In five EU members (Denmark, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the UK), however, the terrorist threat was perceived as being rather salient in the same time period, reaching as may as 43 percent in Spain. These five countries together bring the EU-wide average up to 13 percent for the 2003-2007 period and they also make up for much of the difference that appears to exist between the "old" members (EU15) and the "new" members that acceded after 9/11. While on first sight the respective averages may suggest that people in the former EU15 are much more concerned about terrorism than people in the new members (13 percent

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Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 28. Savage also points out that the words "Muslim" and "immigrant" are nowadays virtually synonymous in a number of EU Member States.

60 Christopher Caldwell, "The Cresent and the Tricolor," *Atlantic Monthly*, November 2000, 22.

61 Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 28.

62 Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," 29.

vs. 3 percent), this is largely due to the high scores for Denmark (21 percent), Spain (43 percent), Italy (11 percent), the Netherlands (17 percent) and the UK (23 percent). The Scandinavian countries, Belgium, Greece, Austria, and Portugal exhibit percentages comparable to the new members.

A closer reading of available data suggests that the high terrorist threat perception is limited to a few members, where actual terrorist attacks (Spain, UK) or repeated terrorist threats (Denmark, the Netherlands) already took place. This confirms that, as before 9/11, past (in)experience with terrorism shapes the current EU members' perceptions of the terrorist threat. However, it is also apparent that even in countries with a substantial history of terrorist threats and/or actual attacks, the priority given to terrorism tends to decrease over time, as the memories of the most recent attack fades and the salience of other issues (crime, unemployment, inflation fears etc.) rises. On a more general level, this last point is also illustrated in table 4, which depicts the EU15 citizens' fear of international terrorism in 2001 and 2002. While comparable data is not available due to the 2003 Eurobarometer's survey question changes, the available data for 2001-2002 period shows a drop of fear of international terrorist attack in all old members except for Italy and the UK. Thus, when it comes to explaining the different terrorist threat perceptions among EU members, past terrorist attacks and domestic developments that generate repeated threats of terrorist attacks (e.g. the publication of prophet Mohamed's caricatures in Denmark) are the real explanatory variables. The date of accession to the EU, in contrast, has little explanatory value.

A number of additional findings derived from Eurobarometer's data are worth noting when it comes to the future of EU efforts to fight terrorism. Firstly, EU-wide, the importance of terrorism as one of the most pressing issues faced by EU members is slowly but surely decreasing over time. Secondly, with the possible exception of several months following the 9/11 attacks, terrorism also never became a prime concern for EU citizens in any of the EU members, except for Spain and the UK. The top places have traditionally been occupied by issues such as unemployment, the economic situation, and healthcare. Outside of these purely social and/or economic issues, crime is the only security-related concern that has been consistently mentioned as a major anxiety by just under a quarter of Eurobarometer's respondents. Thirdly, although it may sound surprising given the numerous shortcomings of the EU counterterrorism policy discussed in other volumes,[63] a majority of EU citizens have a positive perception of the Union's role in combating terrorism. In fact, the available data produced by Eurobarometer indicates that the majority of EU citizens see EU efforts to address the terrorist threat more positively than EU actions in any other area of concern,

[63] For a good review, see the special issue of *Journal of Common Marker Studies*, 46, no. 1 (January 2008).

including unemployment, the economic situation, healthcare, or crime (see figure 2 and figure 3). Finally, in stark contrast to national sovereignty concerns exhibited by the political and bureaucratic elites in many members, Eurobarometer data indicates that since 9/11, there is widespread consensus among European citizens, in all EU members, that decisions regarding the fight against terrorism should be made jointly within the European Union.

Professional scepticism is, of course, in order when it comes to interpreting the data provided by Eurobarometer. As Edwards and Meyer noted:

> There is little doubt that since 9/11 some politicians and in particular JHA ministers have reacted, and in part also contributed, whether deliberately or unintentionally, to public anxiety about terrorism through their public communication and legislative initiatives. The creation of an emergency discourse at home and in Europe has allowed them in some instances to bend legal constraints and political opposition to measures that expand the resources and competences of law-enforcement services.[64]

Pointing out that the majority of counterterrorism measures adopted after 9/11 in the context of the Action Plan are in fact multi-purpose legislation, which failed to gather sufficient support among European citizens before 9/11, several scholars have argued that the terrorist threat has been exaggerated for instrumental and strategic reasons.[65] A useful summary of this argument has already been provided by Edwards and Meyer and a lengthier citation from their work therefore seems appropriate:

> Fear of terrorism is as much a function of official communication as it is the result of the attacks themselves. In quantitative terms, the risk of falling victim to a terrorist attack was 33 times smaller than dying of meningitis, 822 times than being murdered for non-political reasons and 1,833 times less likely than being killed in a car accident. Yet, according to the Transatlantic Trends survey, 74 per cent of American and 66 of European respondents (of the nine countries surveyed) thought it was 'likely' or 'somewhat likely' that they would be 'personally affected' by terrorism in the next ten years. The director of Europol writes that the terrorist threat is the most serious ever, but the latest report of terrorist activities in 2006 contains mainly terrorist acts causing minor material damage. Of course, statistical probabilities and public risk assessments follow different logics and cannot be expected to be identical, but the politics of risk perceptions are such that, with regard to

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64 Edwards and Meyer, "Introduction: Charting a Contested Transformation," 18.

65 See Didier Bigo, "Liberty, Whose Liberty? The Hague Programme and the Conception of Freedom," in *Security v Freedom? A Challenge for Europe's Future*, ed. Thierry Balzacq and Sergio Carrera (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2006), 35-44; Thierry Balzacq, "The Policy Tools of Securitization: Information Exchange, EU Foreign and Interior Policies," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2008): 75-100.

terrorism, no residual risk seems acceptable and therefore security is never in sufficient supply.[66]

At the same time however, it is important to keep in mind the insights from the pre-9/11 literature on terrorism, which reminds us that what terrorists want is lot of people watching, but not necessarily dying.[67] The actual numbers of terrorist attacks and their victims may therefore be only of secondary importance because what really matters is the so-called "irrational anxiety,"[68] which makes individual EU citizens believe that they will be the next victim of a terrorist attack, even though statistically speaking it indeed may be 1 833 times more likely that they will be killed in a traffic accident. Thus, while certainly far from being perfect, Eurobarometer surveys concerning terrorism and counterterrorism related issues do offer at least some unique and useful public opinion data which can and should be used to complement both the official EU and national levels of counterterrorism discourse analysis.

Lack of a Common EU Terrorist Threat Assessment

Another reason why the EU members have different perceptions of both the nature and the gravity of contemporary terrorist threats is due to the fact that no independent common terrorist threat assessment is currently available at the EU level. Taking into account the different historical experiences and demographic trends in individual EU members, it is hardly surprising that the national threat assessments vary, sometimes considerably. Some argue that these variances are natural and unavoidable because the terrorist threat is objectively different in the individual EU members.[69] This in turn also implies that EU-wide terrorist threat perception is highly unlikely to emerge. Others, however, have suggested that terrorism can be viewed as a form of political communication by means of threat and actual violence,[70] whose impact depends on how it is being perceived and reacted to by those to whom it is addressed. In other words, the extent to which terrorism is seen as a grave security threat depends on a process of social construction, which is inherently intersubjective and takes place *among* various actors and audiences.[71] As Edward and Meyer pointed out,

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66 Edwards and Meyer, "Introduction: Charting a Contested Transformation," 17-18.

67 Brian M. Jenkins, "Terrorism and Beyond: A 21st Century Perspective," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 24, no. 5 (Sept-Oct 2001): 321-27.

68 Marc Nicholson, "An Essay on Terrorism," *American Diplomacy*, 19.08.2003.

69 Personal conversation of the author with Björn Müller-Wille at the ISA 2008 Annual Convention,.

70 Isabelle Duyvesteyn, "How New is the New Terrorism," *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism* 27, no. 5 (2004): 439-54.

71 Barry Buzan, Ole Weaver, and Jaap de Wilde, *Security: A New Framework for Analysis* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Riennier Publishers, Inc., 1998).

> Responses to a given threat will depend on how it is interpreted: as an unprecedented, imminent, large-scale, deadly risk linked to fanatical foreigners who 'hate us for what we are', or, as a crime committed by a group with distinct ethnic and social characteristics, radicalized by identifiable and resolvable social and political grievances and motivated by both short and long-term goals.[72]

This implies that neither the security threats, nor the responses to them, have an "objective" independent reality on their own. Thus, if terrorist threat perceptions are indeed inter-subjective social constructs, they are largely shaped on the available information, existing knowledge, and prevailing expectations. A common EU-wide perception of the terrorist threat may therefore emerge if there is a) enough information regarding the nature and gravity of terrorist activity in all EU members, and b) a common baseline terrorist threat assessment mechanism exists to process the available data and turn it into "common EU knowledge" about the terrorist threat.

Thus far, however, information sharing among the EU members has been far from perfect and primarily takes places outside of EU's structures. Since Europol does not have the mandate to gather intelligence on its own, and lacks both trust from the national intelligence and law enforcement agencies and a common threat assessment methodology, the EU has neither the data nor the means to generate knowledge that could significantly influence how terrorism is perceived in Europe.[73] Consequently, terrorist threat perceptions are rather inward-looking and vary considerably from one member to another and different national security authorities are "neither willing nor able to coordinate their efforts to provide security efficiently."[74]

As long as EU citizens and policy-makers do not have access to an authoritative EU-wide terrorist threat analysis at the strategic level, domestic developments and past national (in-) experience with terrorism will remain the key variables in the construction of perception of both the terrorist threat and the corresponding counterterrorism policies. In the age of global terrorism however this is bound to be an unsatisfactory state of affairs. As one analyst put it, "whereas previous forms of terrorism in Europe have generally been bounded by national borders, the non-hierarchical, networked, cross-border character of jihadist terrorism transformed fundamentally the characteristics

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72 Edwards and Meyer, "Introduction: Charting a Contested Transformation," 6.

73 Europol does produce an annual EU Terrorism Situation and Trend report but it must rely on data supplied by the national police and intelligence agencies. Oldrich Bures, "Europol's Fledgling Counterterrorism Role." *Terrorism and Political Violence* 20, no. 4 (Winter 2008): 498–517.

74 Müller-Wille, *For Our Eyes Only? Shaping an Intelligence Community Within the EU*, 12.

of the threat."[75] As such, even the national agencies of the biggest EU members are simply incapable of monitoring, evaluating and responding to all possible terrorist threats within the territory of the EU and they should not be expected to do so. Consequentially, both the public and policymakers in the EU members are unlikely to ever fully grasp both the country-specific and transnational terrorist threats before their own homeland is directly affected. Under these circumstances, it is also extremely difficult, if not impossible, to agree on and implement a coherent EU counterterrorism policy.

Point of Consensus: Terrorism Is Not an Occasion for War

To be fair, it is important to note at this point that while there is no common EU-wide terrorist threat perception, it appears that most European politicians and a majority of EU members' citizen do at least agree on what terrorism is not – an occasion for war. Although for some Europeans the Madrid and London bombings undoubtedly represented a watershed event comparable to the 9/11 attacks in the United States as they brought the realisation that the EU is a target for Islamist, and increasingly home-grown, terrorists, most Europeans have continued to reject the "war model" of fighting terrorism and prefer to think about terrorism as of another, albeit special, category of serious crime.

The available literature offers several explanations why this has been the case. Therese Delpech claims that most Europeans do not accept the idea of a "war" on terrorism because they are "used to dealing with this phenomenon with other methods (intelligence services, police, justice), and have not really taken in the consequences of the magnitude of the change wrought by the events of 11 September 2001."[76] Others have argued that Europe's past counterterrorism experience is getting in the way of adapting to the current terrorism threat and some even accused the governments of fighting yesterday's war:

> In their strategies, both Europeans and Americans are still responding to their last terrorist attacks, and are not doing enough to prevent future ones. The attacks of September 11th 2001 convinced Americans that Islamist terrorism is an existential threat, and that their enemies are located abroad, primarily in the greater Middle East. Europe's enemies might be located abroad too; but since they have not yet struck in Europe on a scale comparable to the September 11th attacks, EU governments are much more focused on the threat within Europe and on preventing bombings like those carried out in Madrid in 2004. Consequently, EU governments do not yet see the

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[75] Javier Argomaniz, "Counter-Terrorism Policy-Making in the EU," School of Politics & International Relations, University of Nottingham, 2008, 118.

[76] Therese Delpech, *International Terrorism in Europe.* Chaillot Papers No. 56 (Paris: Institute for Security Studies, December 2002), 21.

> terrorist threat as an existential one, and their past experiences of European terrorism have in some ways blinded them to the different nature of the Islamist terrorist threat today.[77]

Not all commentators however see Europe's past counterterrorism experiences as a burden and/or a blinder. Some posit that Europeans actually worry greatly about terrorist attacks on their soil, but generally feel that terrorism is a long-term challenge that can hardly be addressed by military means. This view was perhaps best espoused by Gilles Andréani, the former head of policy planning in the French Foreign Ministry, when he argued that the US war on terror is "a good cause" but the "wrong concept."[78] In Keohane's view, this criticism is partly, but not only, based on Europe's history with terrorist groups:

> EU governments have learnt that terrorism is a means rather than an end. In other words, European governments try to focus not only on the types of attacks that terrorists intend to carry out, but also on why these people become terrorists and why sections of society support them; and they generally agree that terrorism can only be defeated with a long-term political approach.[79]

The other likely underlying thinking behind Andréani's remark reflects the opinion of many Europeans that the US-led war in Iraq has increased, rather then diminished, the threat from radical Islamist terrorism. Here, once again, the demography of Europe clearly matters.

But even more importantly, this whole debate lends further support to the aforementioned constructivist claim that responses to a given threat depend on how it is interpreted in the first place: While the Bush administration declared a "global war on terror" on an enemy that was portrayed as fanatical and evil and needed to be defeated ("Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists"[80]), European perceptions of the terrorist threat have been more varied and inward-looking.[81] Here it is especially useful to look to the European Union, whose position arguably reflects an intermediate European stance to the extent that its 2003 European Security Strategy (ESS) lists terrorism only as one of several grave threats and argues that it "arises out of complex causes, including the pressures of modernisation, cultural, social and political crises

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77 Keohane, *The EU and Counter-Terrorism* , 12-3.

78 Gilles Andréani, "The War on Terror: Good Cause, Wrong Concept," *Survival* 46, no. 4 (2004): 31-50.

79 Daniel Keohane, "The Absent Friend: EU Foreign Policy and Counter-Terrorism," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 46, no. 1 (January 2008): 134-5.

80 George W. Bush, *Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People*. September 2001, The White House, 20.5.2006 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2001/09/20010920-8.html>.

81 Edwards and Meyer. "Introduction: Charting a Contested Transformation," 7.

and the alienation of young people living in foreign societies."[82] The ESS also states that this phenomenon is also part of our own society and while it also describes international terrorism as linked to "violent religious extremism,"[83] which seeks weapons of mass destruction and unlike "traditional terrorist organizations" is ultimately not "ready to abandon violence for negotiations,"[84] it places a much stronger emphasis on "effective multilateralism," "prevention" and "non-military means" than the US 2002 National Security Strategy.[85]

Concluding Remarks

The Treaty on European Union stipulates that one of the key objectives of the European Union is to provide citizens with a high level of safety within an area of freedom, security and justice.[86] In December 2003, the European Council adopted a "European Security Strategy," where terrorism heads the list of threats facing EU members, and which proclaims that concerted European action against terrorism is "indispensable."[87] Already in November 2001, the European Council adopted an Action Plan on Combating Terrorism and an EU Counterterrorism Strategy was agreed in December 2005, following the terrorist attacks in Madrid and London. Despite the limited competences for fighting terrorism at the EU level, a March 2007 Commission memorandum listed 51 adopted and 33 proposed pieces of legislation as well as 22 Communications and 21 reports under the heading of the fight against terrorism.[88] Although "counterterrorism" is not yet a clearly defined area and in its broadest and fullest sense, it spans across a number of policy areas across all of the EU's three pillars, the aforementioned set of legal and institutional measures are nowadays commonly referred to as the "EU counterterrorism policy." Moreover, according to the EU's first Counterterrorism Coordinator, the fight against terrorism is changing "the role and functioning of the European Union" insofar as the Union adopts an increasingly operational role.[89]

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82 European Council, *European Security Strategy*. 12.12. 2003, 14/04/2004 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>, 3.

83 European Council, *European Security Strategy*, 5.

84 European Council, *European Security Strategy*, 4.

85 The White House, *National Security Strategy of the United States of America*. 2002, 12.02.2003 <http://www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss.pdf>.

86 Article 29.

87 European Council, *European Security Strategy*. 12.12. 2003, 14/04/2004 <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/78367.pdf>, 3.

88 European Commission, *Commission Activities in the Fight Against Terrorism*, MEMO/07/98. 12.03. 2007, 30.05.2008 <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/98&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>.

89 Gijs De Vries, *The European Union and the Fight Against Terrorism*, Presentation of the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator at the Seminar of the Centre for European Reform. 19.01. 2006, <http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cmsUpload/060119CenterEuropeanReform.pdf>.

In this paper, however, I have identified a major shortcoming of EU-level efforts to cooperate more closely in the fight against terrorism – the lack of a shared perception of the contemporary terrorist threat among EU members. This is due to a number of factors, including different historical records, ongoing scholarly debates concerning the exact nature of the contemporary terrorist threat, demographic trends and the current immigration and natality patterns in EU members as well as the absence of a genuine baseline terrorist threat assessment, which all make the development of a common terrorist threat perception rather difficult, if not impossible. While EU members do, at least, share the opinion that (counter-) terrorism is not an occasion for war, this "negative" consensus is not likely to be sufficient for the design and execution of an EU counterterrorism policy worthy of the name.

The ongoing debates concerning both the novelty and gravity of the post-9/11 terrorist threat may therefore not only explain the lack of consensus concerning the most appropriate response(s) to it, but also the key dilemma of the EU's counterterrorism policy: the need to cooperate more closely to fight terrorism and the reluctance to agree on, and/or duly implement, centralised solutions at the EU level. Due to the persistence of this dilemma, when even the "windows of opportunity" created by the 9/11, 3/11 and 7/7 terrorist attacks were not compelling enough for EU politicians to offer a clear answer, the EU "cannot ensure that a European citizen living in a proclaimed area of freedom, security and justice enjoys the same level of protection – not just in terms of actual risks and safeguards, but in terms of the governing instruments that are applicable to a given national territory."[90] Undoubtedly, this is in part because of the political sensitivity of counterterrorism which goes to the very heart of national security. At the same time however, both academic research and foiled terrorist attacks confirm the continued presence of the terrorist threat in Europe, confirm that national level responses to contemporary terrorist threats are woefully insufficient. Thus, as one Commission official put it, "we can only hope that politicians [in EU members] will not need another 3/11 to take terrorism seriously."[91]

[90] Edwards and Meyer. "Introduction: Charting a Contested Transformation," 22.
[91] Interview with Commission Officials, DG JLS, October 2008.

Table 1: Growth of Muslim Populations in EU Member States

	Muslims populations in 2007		**Muslims populations in 1982**	
	Muslim population	*Muslims % of total population*	*Muslim population*	*Muslims % of total population*
Austria	344,391	4.20 %	80,000	1.10 %
Belgium	415,689	4.00 %	350,000	3.60 %
Bulgaria	893,389	12.20 %	1,700,000	19.30 %
Cyprus	141,922	18.00 %	155,000	24.40 %
Czech Rep.	10,229	0.10 %	NA	NA
Denmark	202,320	3.70 %	35,000	0.70 %
Estonia	5,264	0.40 %	NA	NA
Finland	20,654	0.40 %	NA	NA
France	6,371,819	10.00 %	2,500,000	4.60 %
Germany	3,213,639	3.90 %	1,800,000	2.90 %
Greece	139,182	1.30 %	160,000	1.60 %
Hungary	3,201	0.03 %	NA	NA
Ireland	20,135	0.49 %	NA	NA
Italy	814,068	1.40 %	120,000	0.20 %
Latvia	384	0.02 %	NA	NA
Lithuania	2,682	0.08 %	NA	NA
Luxembourg	9,604	2.00 %	NA	NA
Malta	3,000	0.75 %	NA	NA
Netherlands	994,237	6.00 %	400,000	2.80 %
Poland	3,850	0.01 %	22,000	0.10 %
Portugal	35,121	0.33 %	NA	NA
Rumania	44,552	0.20 %	65,000	0.30 %
Slovakia	3,051	0.06 %	NA	NA
Slovenia	48,222	2.40 %	20,000	1.10 %
Spain	930,308	2.30 %	120,000	0.30 %
Sweden	270,933	3.00 %	30,000	0.30 %
United Kingdom	1,640,958	2.70 %	1,250,000	2.20 %

Sources: The 2007 data for Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Sweden where 2007 data comes from BBC Muslims in Europe: Country guide 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4385768.stm. The 2007 data for Hungary comes from the Hungarian Central Statistical Office 2007, http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/eng/volumes/26/tables/load4_1_1.html. The 2007 for all remaining EU MSs comes from the US Department of State Background notes 2007 and/or International Religious Freedom Reports 2007. The

1982 data for all countries comes from M. Ali Kettani, Muslim Minorities in the World Today (London: Mansell Publishing Ltd., 1986). NA = no data available.

Table 2: Muslim Citizenship and Recognition & Rank of Islam as a Religion

	Muslim citizenship – % of total Muslim population (2003)	Official recognition of Islam	Rank of Islam among major religions
Austria	28%	Yes (1979)	3rd
Belgium	NA	Yes (1974)	2nd
Bulgaria	100%	Yes	2nd
Cyprus	100%	Yes	2nd
Czech Rep.	NA	Yes (2004)	4th
Denmark	11%	No	2nd
Estonia	NA	Yes	5th
Finland	NA	Yes (1980s)	4th
France	60%	Yes (2002)	2nd
Germany	15%	No	3rd
Greece	22%	Yes (1923)	2nd
Hungary	NA	No	5th
Ireland	NA	No	3rd
Italy	7%	No	2nd
Latvia	NA	Yes	5th
Lithuania	NA	Yes	5th
Luxembourg	NA	No	3rd
Malta	25%	Yes	3rd
Netherlands	50%	Yes (1988)	3rd
Poland	NA	No	4th
Portugal	NA	Yes (1976)	2nd
Rumania	100%	Yes	4th
Slovakia	NA	No	5th
Slovenia	NA	Yes	4th
Spain	NA	Yes (1992)	2nd
Sweden	15–30%	Yes (1979)	2nd
United Kingdom	60%	No	3rd

Source: Timothy M. Savage, "Europe and Islam: Crescent Waxing, Cultures Clashing," The Washington Quarterly 27, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 25–50

Notes: NA = data not available. Recognition = official state recognition of Islam. Where known, year of recognition is provided in parentheses. Rank = rank among

the five major religions: Catholic, Islamic, Jewish, Orthodox, and Protestant. Muslim citizenship = % of Muslims holding citizenship out of the total Muslim population in the country.

Table 3: Muslim Population in EU Member States as % of Total Population

Country	Total population	Muslim population	Muslim population % of total
Cyprus	788,457	141,922	18.00 %
Bulgaria	7,322,858	893,389	12.20 %
France	63,718,187	6,371,819	10.00 %
Netherlands	16,570,613	994,237	6.00 %
Austria	8,199,783	344,391	4.20 %
Belgium	10,392,226	415,689	4.00 %
Germany	82,400,996	3,213,639	3.90 %
Denmark	5,468,120	202,320	3.70 %
Sweden	9,031,088	270,933	3.00 %
United Kingdom	60,776,238	1,640,958	2.70 %
Slovenia	2,009,245	48,222	2.40 %
Spain	40,448,191	930,308	2.30 %
Luxembourg	480,222	9,604	2.00 %
Italy	58,147,733	814,068	1.40 %
Greece	10,706,290	139,182	1.30 %
Malta	400,000	3,000	0.75 %
Ireland	4,109,086	20,135	0.49 %
Finland	5,238,460	20,654	0.40 %
Estonia	1,315,912	5,264	0.40 %
Portugal	10,642,836	35,121	0.33 %
Rumania	22,276,056	44,552	0.20 %
Czech Republic	10,228,744	10,229	0.10 %
Lithuania	3,575,439	2,682	0.08 %
Slovakia	5,447,502	3,051	0.06 %
Hungary	9,956,108	3,201	0.03 %
Latvia	2,259,810	384	0.02 %
Poland	38,518,241	3,850	0.01 %
EU-27	490,428,441	16,582,804	3.30 %

Sources: The 2007 data for Belgium, Italy, Spain, and Sweden where 2007 data comes from BBC Muslims in Europe: Country guide 2005, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4385768.stm. The 2007 data for Hungary comes from the Hungarian

Central Statistical Office 2007, http://www.nepszamlalas.hu/eng/volumes/26/tables/load4_1_1.html. The 2007 for all remaining EU MSs comes from the US Department of State Background notes 2007 and/or International Religious Freedom Reports 2007.

Table 4: EU Citizens' Fear of International Terrorism (2001–2002)

	BE	DK	DE	EL	ES	FR	IR	IT	LU	NL	AT	PT	FI	SE	UK	EU15
2001	78	79	85	91	90	91	83	92	84	76	70	90	69	83	83	86
2002	76	77	75	86	82	88	82	92	85	69	62	85	67	78	85	82

Note: For 2001–2002 period, the exact question was: "Here is a list of things that some people say they are afraid of. For each of these, please tell me if, personally, you are afraid of it, or not?" The answers indicate the percentage of people who answered this question positively for "international terrorism." Data prior to 2001 is not available because terrorism was not included on the list. Data after 2002 is not available because Eurobarometer surveys no longer included the same question.

Sources: Eurobarometer surveys no. 56 (2001) and no. 58 (2002).

Table 5: EU Citizens' Perceptions of the Salience of the Terrorist Threat (2003–2007)

	BE	CZ	DK	DE	EE	EL	ES	FR	IR	IT	CY	LV	LT	HU	LU
2003	4	NA	12	3	NA	4	51	9	2	9	NA	NA	NA	NA	7
2004	6	4	20	4	2	2	59	10	6	17	3	2	3	5	10
2005	5	3	32	4	3	1	31	10	6	11	1	2	1	2	4
2006	6	1	28	2	2	3	36	4	5	9	7	0	1	2	4
2007	4	3	17	11	1	2	37	6	4	7	2	0	1	1	3
Avg.[1]	5	3	21	5	2	2	43	8	5	11	3	1	2	3	6

	MT	NL	AT	PL	PT	SI	SK	FI	SE	UK	BG	RO	EU15	NMSs[3]	EU25[2]
2003	NA	4	4	NA	3	NA	NA	2	3	17	NA	NA	12	NA	NA
2004	2	12	5	6	4	3	4	5	6	28	5	4	18	5	16
2005	2	40	3	3	1	2	5	5	6	34	5	4	16	3	14
2006	1	19	2	3	2	2	2	3	5	17	5	4	11	2	10
2007	1	9	9	2	2	1	5	1	2	17	1	2	9	2	7
Avg.[1]	2	17	5	4	2	2	4	3	4	23	4	4	13	3	12

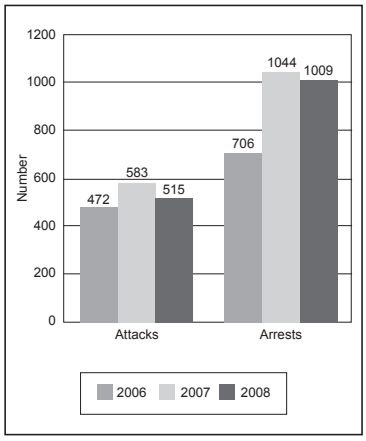
Notes: For 2003–2007 period, the exact question was: "What do you think are the two most important issues facing (OUR COUNTRY) at the moment?" As in the 2001 and 2002 Eurobarometer surveys, those questioned would still be shown a list of

things some people say they are afraid of, but they were asked to select a maximum of two things only. Thus, the answers indicate the percentage of people who named "terrorism" as one of the two most important issues facing their country. Data prior to 2003 is not available because Eurobarometer surveys did not include the same question.

[1] *Five/four years average.* [2]*EU27 data for 2007.* [3]*Only the 2007 data includes figures for Rumania and Bulgaria in EU and New Members States (NMSs) totals.*

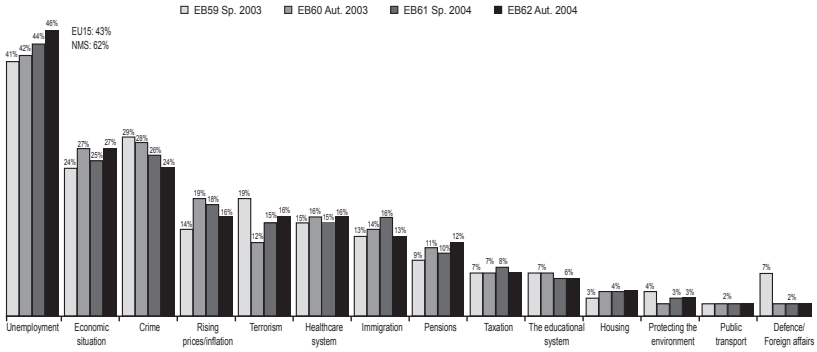
Sources: Eurobarometer surveys no. 60 (2003), no. 62 (2004), no. 64 (2005), no. 66 (2006), no. 68 (2007).

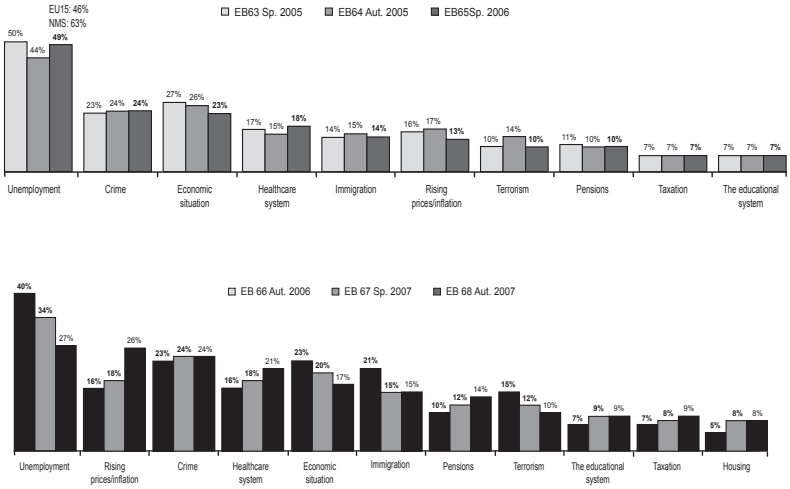
Figure 1: Number of failed, foiled or successful attacks and number of arrested suspects in EU MSs (2006–2008)



Source: Europol, Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2009

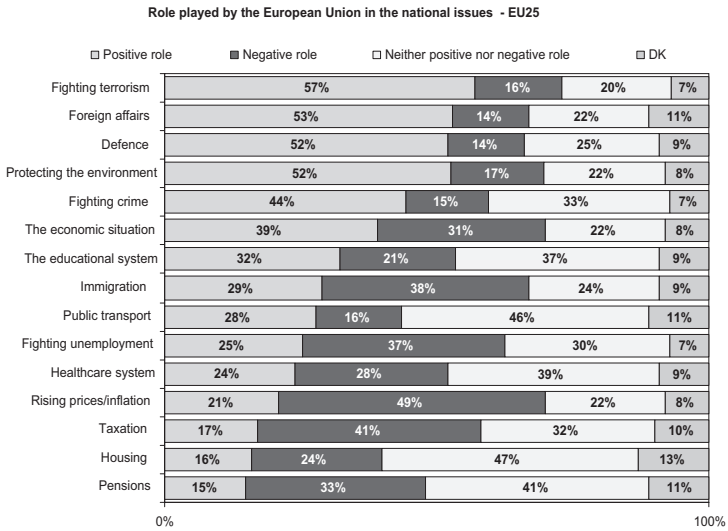
Figure 2: Two most important issues facing EU Member States according to EU citizens (2003–2007)





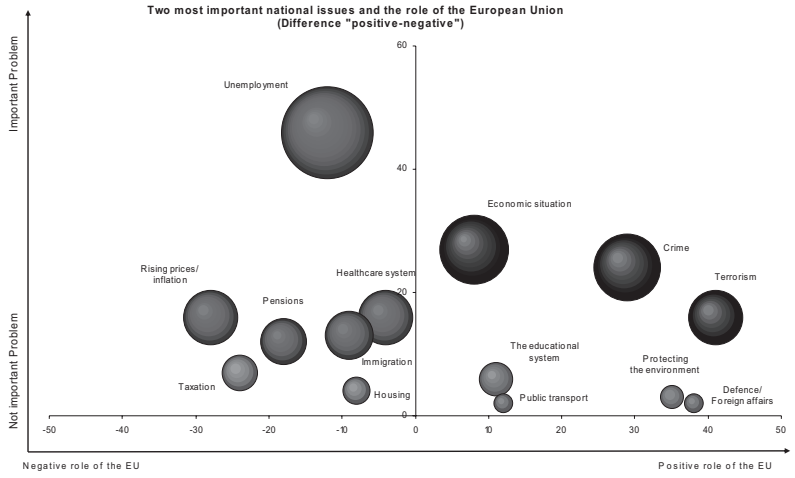
Source: Eurobarometers no. 62 (2004), no. 65 (65), and no. 68 (2007).

Figure 3: Role Played by the EU in National Issues



Source: Eurobarometer no. 62 (2004), p. 25.

Figure 4: Two Most Important National Issues and the Role of the EU



Note: This chart summarises the two sets of information: on the one hand, the importance of the various problems facing the EU MSs countries (Y-axis) and, on the other hand, the perception of the role played by the European Union in combating these problems (X-axis). The size of the bubbles varies according to the importance attached to the issue in question. In other words, the bigger the bubble, the more important the issue. Source: Eurobarometer no. 62 (2004), p. 27.