Terrorism – Studies, Analyses, Prevention, 2025, no. 8: 389–410
CC BY-NC-SA 4.0
https://doi.org/10.4467/27204383TER.25.058.23045

Article

Terrorist threats in the European Union in 2024. Analysis of the TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025

SEBASTIAN WOJCIECHOWSKI https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7972-6618
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań
Institute for Western Affairs in Poznań

ARTUR WEJKSZNER https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7638-9708
Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań

Abstract

The authors of the article analysed the terrorist threats in the European Union in 2024 based on the data contained in the Europol report entitled *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025* and characterised them with reference to data concerning individual EU Member States. The authors described both the objective aspect of the threats (from jihadist, right-wing, left-wing and anarchist, ethno-nationalist and separatist groups, and others) and the quantitative aspect (e.g. the number of attacks and people arrested for terrorism). Data from the report indicate that in 2024, the number of terrorist attacks in the EU decreased compared to 2023 (from 120 to 58), but at the same time, the number of EU Member States experiencing attacks increased (from 7 to 14). The number of jihadist attacks has also escalated (from 14 to 24). An increase in the number of people arrested for terrorism-related crimes was also recorded (from 426 to 449). Furthermore, it is evident that the age of terrorists is gradually decreasing. New technological solutions,

such as drones, 3D printing and artificial intelligence, are being used in terrorist activities. Of particular concern are the growing links between terrorists and criminal groups and the intelligence services of hostile states. All the above evidence demonstrates the constant changes in the nature of terrorist threats in the EU.

Keywords

terrorism, European Union, security, Europol, TE-SAT Report

Introduction

The changes taking place in contemporary terrorism occur on many levels and affect different parts of the world[1]. These include changes in the profile of perpetrators (e.g. increasingly younger age), terrorist tactics and strategies, and their use of new technologies (e.g. artificial intelligence, 3D printing, drones, Starlink systems[2]). This can be confirmed by the example of the European Union. In the article, the authors analysed the latest Europol report entitled *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*[3] (hereinafter: TE-SAT 2025 report) and characterised terrorist threats, taking into account data on individual EU Member States. They discussed both the substantive aspect of the threat (from jihadist, right-wing, left-wing and anarchist, ethno-nationalist

[1] On the evolution of the terrorist threat in the EU between 2021 and 2024, see, for example: S. Wojciechowski, *The hybrid dimension of contemporary terrorism and critical infrastructure. Analysis of Europol's TE-SAT reports from 2021–2024*, "Terrorism – Studies, Analyses, Prevention" 2025, special edition: *Terrorist and sabotage threats to critical infrastructure*. https://doi.org/10.4467/27204383TER.25.020.21523; S. Wojciechowski, *Terrorism – old wine in new bottles*, Defence24, 21 VII 2025, https://defence24.com/geopolitics/terrorism-old-wine-in-new-bottles [accessed: 25 VII 2025].

[2] The UN Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee has identified unmanned aerial systems as one of the main terrorist threats. This is due to both the growing logistical and financial capabilities of terrorist structures and the rapid development of the commercial and military drone market. See: *Wojny dronów: jak to się robi w Afryce [ANALIZA]* (Eng. Drone wars: how it's done in Africa [ANALYSIS]), Defence24, 31 V 2025, https://defence24.pl/technologie/wojny-dronow-jak-to-sie-robi-w-afryce-analiza#goog_rewarded [accessed: 18 VII 2025].

[3] Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf [accessed: 20 VII 2025]. https://doi.org/10.2813/5425593.

and separatist groups, among others) and the quantitative aspect (e.g. the number of attacks and people arrested for terrorism).

The international context of the terrorist threat in the European Union

An analysis of the terrorist threat in the EU requires consideration of the broader context. This threat is greatly influenced by the conflict in the Gaza Strip, which has been accompanied by numerous attacks and calls for violence spread by fundamentalists, including on the internet. Attention should also be paid to the success of the opposition in Syria, especially its Islamist factions, which jihadists continue to exploit for propaganda and military purposes[4]. In the context of analysing the threat in the EU, it is also important to note that groups linked to Islamic State and Al-Qaeda have greatly strengthened their position in Africa, mainly in the Sahel. According to Europol, the target of militias trained in Africa is Europe, and these groups are transforming the Sahel countries (especially Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger) into a centre of global terrorism. This has a direct impact on security in the EU. The Sahel has become a base for a growing number of foreign terrorists who are looking for new fronts to fight on after withdrawing from Syria or Iraq, for example. What is more, the groups operating there – e.g. those linked to Al-Qaeda: the Islamic and Muslim Support Group (Jama'at Nusrat ul-Islam wa al-Muslimin, JNIM), Al-Shabaab (Harakat al-Shabaab al-Mujahideen, HSM), the Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) and the Islamic State Sahel Province (ISSP) – are expanding their influence. They now also threaten countries on the Gulf of Guinea, including Togo, Benin, Ghana and Côte d'Ivoire. One consequence of this situation is the dramatic increase in the number of fatalities caused by terrorist activities worldwide. In 2024, more than half of these people (51%) were killed in the Sahel region (in 2023, it was 48%)[5].

[4] One example is the ISIS attack on American soldiers in Syria on 13 December 2025. See: E. Kourdi, N. Bertrand, *Trump pledges retaliation after two US soldiers, one civilian interpreter killed in Syria*, CNN, https://edition.cnn.com/2025/12/13/politics/two-us-army-soldiers-killed-in-syria [accessed: 17 XII 2025].

[5] *Europol: Afryka jest problemem dla bezpieczeństwa Unii Europejskiej* (Eng. Europol: Africa is a problem for the security of the European Union), Onet, 26 VI 2025, https://wiadomosci.

As already mentioned, fundamentalists in Africa spread propaganda via digital platforms. It is disseminated in many languages and also targets young Europeans. Another serious problem is the use of Starlink systems by terrorists, both for communication and armed combat. These systems are particularly useful in the vast areas of West Africa, which lack traditional communication infrastructure. This is highlighted in a report by the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime[6]. Europol is therefore calling on European countries to strengthen their cooperation with African entities and to anticipate the risks associated with potential threats, including the influx of trained Islamic terrorists into Europe[7].

Another serious challenge to the security of EU Member States is state terrorism supported or directly carried out by Russia and its allies. This manifests itself not only in cyberattacks and acts of terror, but also in the recruitment of foreigners, including via the Telegram messaging app, to organise sabotage in Europe. This has been noted by both European intelligence services and, for example, the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, an American non-governmental organisation involved in investigative journalism[8]. This is also directly referenced in the report *Russia's Crime–Terror Nexus. Criminality as a Tool of Hybrid Warfare in Europe*[9].

onet.pl/swiat/europol-afryka-jest-problemem-dla-bezpieczenstwa-unii-europejskiej/f6pm9xl [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

[6] *Observatory of Illicit Economies in West Africa*, https://riskbulletins.globalinitiative.net/download/wea-obs-012-screen-pdf.pdf [accessed: 10 VII 2025].

[7] See e.g.: A. Wejkszner, *Europejska armia kalifatu*. Tom 1. *Centrum supersieci* (Eng. The European Army of the Caliphate. Volume 1. The centre of the supernetwork), Warszawa 2020; A. Wejkszner, *Europejska armia kalifatu.* Tom 2. *Peryferie supersieci* (Eng. The European Army of the Caliphate. Volume 2. The Peripheries of the Supernetwork), Warszawa 2023.

[8] *'Make a Molotov Cocktail': How Europeans Are Recruited Through Telegram to Commit Sabotage, Arson, and Murder*, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, 26 IX 2024, https://www.occrp.org/en/investigation/make-a-molotov-cocktail-how-europeans-are-recruited-through-telegram-to-commit-sabotage-arson-and-murder [accessed: 20 VII 2025]; *How crime is accelerated by AI*, Europol, https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/europol-podcast/episode-21-how-crime-is-accelerated-by-ai [accessed: 21 VII 2025].

[9] *Russia's Crime–Terror Nexus. Criminality as a Tool of Hybrid Warfare in Europe*, https://icct.nl/sites/default/files/2025-09/Russia%20Crime%20Terror%20Nexus_Criminality%20as%20a%20Tool.pdf [accessed: 16 XII 2025].

Terrorist threats in the European Union in 2024 compared to data from 2022–2023

Presenting data from 2024 against previous years will enable us to track the dynamics of changes occurring in the phenomena discussed.

Terrorist attacks – general characteristics

According to the TE-SAT 2025 report, in 2024 Europol recorded a total of 58 terrorist attacks (including 34 carried out, 5 unsuccessful and 19 foiled) in 14 EU Member States. The highest number of attacks took place in Italy (20), followed by France (14), Germany (6), Austria and Greece (3 each), the Czech Republic, Denmark, Lithuania (2 each), and Belgium, Ireland, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Spain and Malta (1 each). Jihadist terrorists were attributed 24 attacks, left-wing and anarchist terrorists – 21. Eight attacks were classified as other forms of terrorist threat, 4 were separatist in nature and 1 was right-wing (Table 1).

Although the number of attacks fell significantly in 2024 (there were 120 in 2023[10], and 58 in 2024), the data contained in the Europol report does not inspire optimism. The number of EU Member States affected by attacks rose from 7 to 14. This is particularly evident in the case of the jihadist threat. In 2023, 14 attacks of this nature were recorded in 4 countries, while in 2024 there were 24 attacks in 7 countries. Jihadist attacks caused the highest number of fatalities compared to other types of terrorist attacks. In 2024, they resulted in 5 deaths and 18 injuries in the EU.

In 2024, most attacks (12) were directed at civilians. Eight attacks were carried out by jihadists, three by perpetrators linked to ethno-nationalist or separatist terrorism, and one was classified as another form of terrorism. The second most frequently attacked target was the industrial (state-owned) sector, with nine incidents. All attacks were organised by left-wing and anarchist terrorists. Other popular targets included private companies (5), religious entities/symbols (5), critical infrastructure (4), political entities (4) and law enforcement agencies (4). The attacks took place mainly in cities (45), with significantly fewer in rural areas (13).

[10] See e.g.: S. Wojciechowski, A. Wejkszner, *The new face of terrorist threat in the European Union. Analysis of the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2024 (TE-SAT) and other sources,* "Terrorism – Studies, Analyses, Prevention" 2025, no. 7, pp. 307–326. https://doi.org/10.4467/27204383TER.25.035.21812.

Table 1. Number of terrorist attacks in EU countries in 2024, broken down by ideological motivations of perpetrators (figures include attacks carried out, failed and foiled).

COUNTRY	TERRORISM TYPE					TOTAL
	JIHADIST	RIGHT-WING	LEFT-WING AND ANARCHIST	ETHNO-NATIONALIST AND SEPARATIST	OTHER	
Austria	3					**3**
Belgium	1					**1**
Czechia					2	**2**
Denmark					2	**2**
France	11			3		**14**
Greece			3			**3**
Spain	1					**1**
Netherlands	1					**1**
Ireland	1					**1**
Lithuania					2	**2**
Malta					1	**1**
Germany	6					**6**
Slovakia					1	**1**
Italy		1	18	1		**20**
TOTAL	**24**	**1**	**21**	**4**	**8**	**58**

Source: own elaboration based on: Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf, p. 62 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

The most common form of terrorist activity was arson (used in 22 attacks). This was followed by bombings (11 attacks), stabbings (8), the use of firearms (6), destruction of property (6) and kidnappings (1). In most attacks (15), escalators of fire were used. They were used primarily by left-wing and anarchist terrorists (11 attacks). Improvised explosive devices were used in 10 cases, bladed weapons also in 10 (attacks carried out by jihadists), and improvised incendiary devices in 6.

Arrests for terrorist offences

It should be emphasised that the overall number of persons arrested for terrorist offences has increased[11]. In 2023, there were 426 such persons, and in 2024 – 449 (Figure 1) in 20 EU Member States. Those detained were mainly men – 405 persons. The highest number of arrests was made in Spain (90 persons), followed by France (69), Italy (62) and Germany (55). In Poland, 13 arrests were recorded, with 1 case involving jihadist terrorist activities and 12 unclassified incidents.

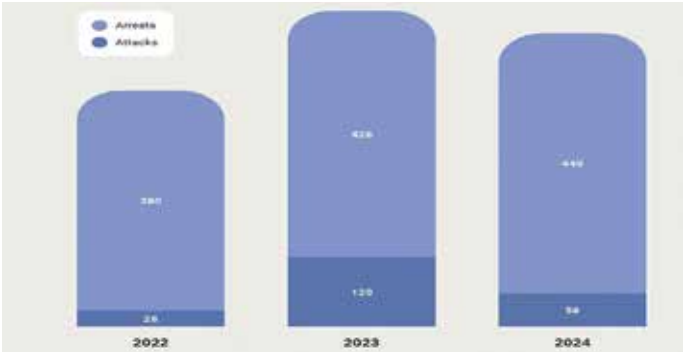

Figure 1. Number of terrorist attacks and number of persons arrested for terrorist activities in the EU between 2022 and 2024 (the figures presented for attacks include attacks that were carried out, failed and foiled).

Source: Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf, p. 13 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

[11] In *Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA*, a 'terrorist offence' is defined as a criminal act committed with the aim of seriously intimidating the population, unduly compelling a government or an international organisation or destabilising the fundamental structures of a State. This Directive establishes a common framework for definitions, but the internal provisions of EU Member States differ in detail.

In the EU, most arrests in 2024 concerned perpetrators of jihadist terrorism (289). Compared to the previous year, this number decreased from 334 (Figure 2).

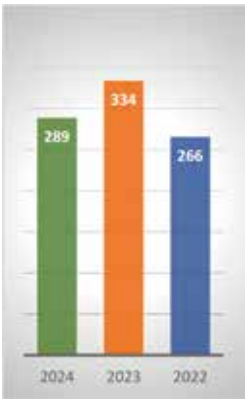

Figure 2. Number of arrests of persons suspected of jihadist terrorist offences in EU Member States between 2022 and 2024.

Source: own elaboration based on: Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf, p. 26 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Almost half (136) of the 289 people arrested were detained in two countries – France and Spain. The vast majority (88%) of those arrested were men. Most of them were teenagers or men under the age of 27. Less than half of those arrested were charged with belonging to a terrorist organisation or distributing jihadist propaganda on the internet[12].

In the case of other forms of terrorism, there has been an increase in the number of arrests. This applies in particular to perpetrators of: extreme right-wing, extreme left-wing and anarchist terrorism, as well as unclassified forms of terrorism[13].

[12] Europol, *TE-SAT*..., pp. 26–27.

[13] This group includes, for example, acts of sabotage reported by Poland and Spain and carried out on behalf of foreign services. During the period analysed, 9 people recruited by Russian agents were detained in these countries. As Jacek Dobrzyński, spokesperson for the Minister-Coordinator of Special Services, announced on 29 July 2025: 'Officers of the Internal Security Agency have determined that a 27-year-old Colombian acting on behalf of Russian intelligence was behind two arson attacks that took place in Poland in 2024. The incidents occurred on 23 May last year in Warsaw and a week later, on 30 May,

In 2024, almost twice as many people were arrested in EU Member States on suspicion of terrorist activity motivated by far-right ideology than in the previous year (47 and 26 respectively). Those arrested were exclusively men aged between 12 and 76 with EU citizenship.

In the case of terrorist activities motivated by extreme left-wing and anarchist ideology, however, the police arrested a relatively small number of people associated with this type of activity, considering the number of such activities. There were 28 people in total, 20 of whom were arrested in Greece. Among those arrested, there were almost five times more men than women, and their ages ranged from 26 to 78. Their terrorist affiliations were not disclosed, indicating that they belonged to independent cells operating autonomously. However, Greek investigators managed to identify at least three terrorist groups, to which a total of ten detainees belonged. These were: 'Partnership of Revenge', 'Conspiracy of Revenge' and 'Armed Response'.

In connection with suspicions of extremism motivated by ethno-nationalist ideology, 27 people were detained in EU Member States in 2024. More than half of them belonged to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê). They were accused of preparing a terrorist attack, membership of a terrorist organisation, financing its activities and spreading terrorist propaganda[14].

The most common terrorism-related offences were: membership of a terrorist organisation (110), planning or preparing an attack (107) and creating and/or disseminating terrorist propaganda (90)[15].

It is very worrying that in 2024, the number of minors and young people involved in terrorist and extremist activities in the EU increased. Of the 449 people arrested in 2024, 133 were aged between 12 and 20, accounting for over 29% of all arrests for terrorist offences. The youngest suspect was 12 years old and was arrested for planning an attack. The vast majority of juvenile offenders were linked to jihadist terrorism. The charges against them most often concerned: participation in attacks, creating and

in Radom'. See: *Pożary w Polsce. Kolumbijczyk miał działać na zlecenie Rosji. Ustalenia ABW* (Eng. Fires in Poland. Colombian man allegedly acting on behalf of Russia. Findings of the ABW), Rzeczpospolita, 29 VII 2025, https://www.rp.pl/przestepczosc/art42769991-pozary-w-polsce-kolumbijczyk-mial-dzialac-na-zlecenie-rosji-ustalenia-abw [accessed: 30 VII 2025].

[14] Europol, *TE-SAT*..., pp. 50–51.

[15] Ibid., p. 14.

disseminating radical content, and membership of a terrorist or extremist group. The juvenile terrorists were mostly males who were radicalised online and operated independently of any organisational structures[16].

Terrorism motivated by jihadist ideology

In 2024, terrorism motivated by jihadist ideology[17] posed a significant challenge to the security of EU countries. This is evidenced by data on both successful and unsuccessful terrorist attacks. Jihadists carried out two attacks both in France and Germany and one each in Ireland and the Netherlands. As a result, five people were killed and 18 were injured[18]. There were three times as many failed attacks (Figure 3).

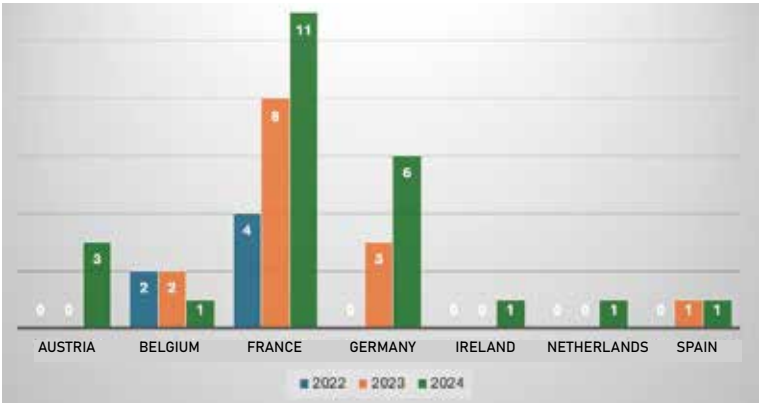

Figure 3. Number of terrorist attacks motivated by jihadist ideology in EU Member States between 2022 and 2024 (the figures presented include attacks that were carried out, failed and foiled).

Source: own elaboration based on: Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf, p. 24 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

[16] Ibid., p. 10.

[17] According to the authors of the report, jihadism is defined as a radical branch of Salafism (a Sunni Muslim revivalist movement). Its supporters reject modern democracy because, in their view, man-made laws contradict God's status as the sole lawgiver. Jihadists seek to create an Islamic state governed exclusively by Islamic law (Sharia). Unlike other Salafi movements, jihadists legitimise the use of violence by referring to classical Islamic doctrines of jihad (the term literally means 'striving' or 'effort', but jihadists understand it as religiously sanctioned warfare). All those who oppose jihadist interpretations of Islamic law are considered enemies of Islam and therefore legitimate targets for attack. Some jihadists also view Shiites and other Muslims as enemies. See ibid., p. 23.

[18] Ibid.

The modus operandi of jihadist terrorists should be considered characteristic of this group of religious extremists. It involved only the activities of individual jihadist terrorists[19]. In at least two cases (Germany and France), the perpetrators were suspected or confirmed to have links to Islamic State[20]. Their targets were primarily mass events, including football matches and other sporting events in France, and a concert in Austria. In addition, attempts were made to attack places of worship (mainly synagogues) and targets related to the justice system. The attackers most often used primitive weapons, mainly knives. One example of this tactic is the attack carried out on 2 March 2024 in Zurich by a 15-year-old boy. He attacked a 50-year-old Orthodox Jew. Shortly before, he had posted an oath of allegiance to the Caliph of the Islamic State on social media and called for attacks on Jews and Christians. The radicalisation process of the attacker (a Swiss citizen with immigrant roots) began in Tunisia, where he stayed between 2017 and 2021[21]. What was unique about this incident was that it was broadcast live, which, according to the perpetrator, was intended to have a propaganda effect. Another example of the use of this tactic is the attack in Solingen, Germany, on 23 August 2024. The attacker used a knife to attack random participants at a city festival, killing 3 people[22]. Just before the attack, he contacted a representative of Islamic State via instant messaging, who encouraged him to document his intentions so that the material could later be used for propaganda purposes[23]. A similar tactic was used during the terrorist attacks carried out on 15 August 2024 in Galway, Ireland, and on 19 September 2024 in Rotterdam, the Netherlands. The perpetrators were young men aged 16 and 22[24].

---

[19] On the subject of so-called individual jihadist terrorism, see: A. Wejkszner, *Samotne wilki kalifatu? Państwo Islamskie i indywidualny terroryzm dżihadystyczny w Europie Zachodniej* (Eng. Lone wolves of the caliphate? The Islamic State and individual jihadist terrorism in Western Europe), Warszawa 2018, pp. 27–47.

[20] Europol, *TE-SAT*..., p. 23.

[21] *Anti-Semitism: Zurich attacker radicalised in Tunisia and online,* swissinfo.ch, 25 III 2024, https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss-politics/zurich-stabber-radicalized-in-tunisia-and-online/74284770 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

[22] *Anklage gegen ein mutmaßliches Mitglied der ausländischen terroristischen Vereinigung "Islamischer Staat (IS)" wegen des Messerangriffs in Solingen erhoben,* Der Generalbundesanwalt beim Bundesgerichtshof, 27 II 2025, https://www.generalbundesanwalt.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2025/Pressemitteilung-vom-27-02-2025.html [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

[23] Ibid.

[24] Europol, *TE-SAT*..., p. 25.

The events discussed above indicate that the threat of jihadist terrorism persisted in the EU (or, more broadly, in Western Europe) during the period under review. This is also confirmed by the number of people arrested on suspicion of involvement in such activities.

One of the main drivers of jihadist radicalisation in the EU during the period under review, including attacks on Jewish targets and targets associated with the State of Israel, were the events in the Gaza Strip in 2024, triggered by Hamas terrorist attacks on targets in Israel in October 2023. Al-Qaeda and Islamic State propagandists used anti-Israeli and anti-Christian narratives, drawing on images of the effects of Israel's retaliatory actions in the Gaza Strip[25].

Terrorism motivated by extreme right-wing ideology

In 2024, terrorism perpetrated by far-right groups[26] posed a significantly lower threat to the EU than jihadist terrorism. During this period, there was only one attack motivated by this ideology (Figure 4).

The attack covered in the Europol report took place in Montello, Italy, on 18 March 2024. The alleged attacker attempted to set fire to the entrance of the Islamic Centre. However, the classification of this case seems questionable, as neither the perpetrator's political agenda nor his terrorist affiliation has been disclosed. The targets of attacks motivated by far-right ideology were to be people of non-white races, far-left activists and unidentified 'enemies and traitors'[27].

[25] Ibid., pp. 29–30.

[26] The authors of the report understand the term 'far-right terrorism' to mean the use of violence to transform the contemporary political, social and economic system into an authoritarian model in which democratic values and institutions would be rejected. Right-wing ideologies that refer to this model use aggressive narratives focused on nationalism, racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance. The basic concept of right-wing extremism is the supremacy of a nation or race. In practice, this means that a common element characterising a given group of people makes them superior to others and they consider domination over the rest of the population to be their natural right. In addition, right-wing extremist ideologies also promote ideas that oppose social diversity and equal rights for minorities, such as misogyny, hostility towards the LGBTQ+ community, and anti-immigration attitudes. See ibid., p. 34.

[27] Ibid., pp. 36–37.

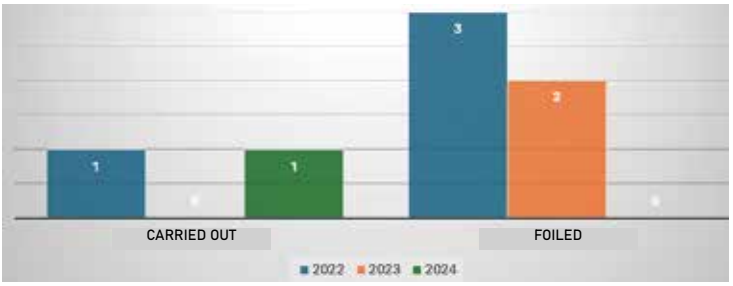

Figure 4. Number of terrorist attacks motivated by far-right ideology in EU Member States between 2022 and 2024.

Source: own elaboration based on: Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf, p. 36 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

In order to intensify the recruitment of new extremists and encourage them to use violence, supporters of this ideology used online tools. Their efforts were primarily directed at representatives of socially and economically dysfunctional communities, dominated by a cult of strength and opposition to current social processes (e.g. legal and illegal migration). In this context, neo-Nazi circles were particularly dangerous, as their network structure (reminiscent of that created by jihadists) made it difficult for the police and the judiciary to effectively penetrate them. It is worth noting that representatives of these circles gained experience in the use of various types of weapons during the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, fighting on both sides of the conflict[28].

Terrorism motivated by extreme left-wing and anarchist ideology

In 2024, far-left and anarchist groups in the EU were noticeably more active than in the two cases discussed above[29]. They were responsible for a total of 21 terrorist attacks – 17 successful and 4 unsuccessful (Figure 5). These attacks were mainly carried out in Italy and Greece.

[28] Ibid., p. 38.

[29] In the report, terrorist activity by extreme left-wing groups is understood as activity involving the use of violence and aimed at provoking a revolution motivated by Marxist-Leninist ideology, directed against the democratic state. The aim of such activities is to establish socialism, communism or a classless society. Anarchist terrorism, in turn, is a form of political violence aimed at destroying the current model of political power and replacing it with an anti-discriminatory and anti-capitalist model that promotes equality, freedom and social justice. See ibid., p. 42.

Figure 5. Number of terrorist attacks motivated by extreme left-wing and anarchist ideology in EU Member States between 2022 and 2024.

Source: own elaboration based on: Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf, p. 42 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

The perpetrators' modus operandi did not change significantly compared to previous years. The attacks were mainly directed at critical infrastructure, including properties belonging to state institutions. From a tactical point of view, arson attacks were the most effective. Of the 13 cases in which this tactic was used, 2 involved the use of improvised incendiary devices and 4 involved improvised explosive devices. The perpetrators claimed political responsibility for 10 terrorist attacks, in most cases by posting a statement on the internet. The most frequently cited reasons for such activity were opposition to government policy (mainly migration policy) and anti-war and anti-capitalist views. To a lesser extent, emphasis was placed on the fight for animal rights or solidarity with comrades repressed by the justice system. The Europol report cites the attack on a photovoltaic farm in Tuili, Italy, on 10 September 2024 as an example of a terrorist attack of this type. The arson attack destroyed approx. 2000 panels belonging to the Portuguese company Greenvolt Power, causing losses of at least EUR 1 million[30]. The perpetrators have not been identified. Therefore, attributing this criminal activity to the indicated group of terrorist attacks solely on the basis of the perpetrators' modus operandi should be considered methodologically questionable.

[30] *Attack in Tuili during the night: hundreds of photovoltaic panels destroyed*, L'Unione Sarda.it, 10 IX 2024, https://www.unionesarda.it/en/sardinia/attack-in-tuili-during-the-night-hundreds-of-photovoltaic-panels-destroyed-nuyrob0o [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Among the main propaganda themes promoted by members of extreme left-wing and anarchist groups were anti-fascist, anti-imperialist, anti-colonial, anti-war and anti-authoritarian slogans. Slogans of solidarity with persecuted Palestinians and Kurds were also proclaimed, and NATO and the EU were criticised[31].

Terrorism motivated by ethno-nationalist ideology

Terrorists motivated by ethno-nationalist ideology[32] carried out relatively few terrorist acts in 2024 compared to the perpetrators with other motivations described above. They were responsible for only 4 attacks, which is a significant decrease compared to the previous year (70 attacks). Three of these attacks took place in France and one in Italy[33] (Figure 6). According to the French police, the attacks in France were carried out by the National Liberation Front of Corsica (Front de libération nationale corse) and the Secret Corsican Youth (Ghjuventù Clandestina Corsa). The tactics used in the attacks (arson attacks on property) remained unchanged.

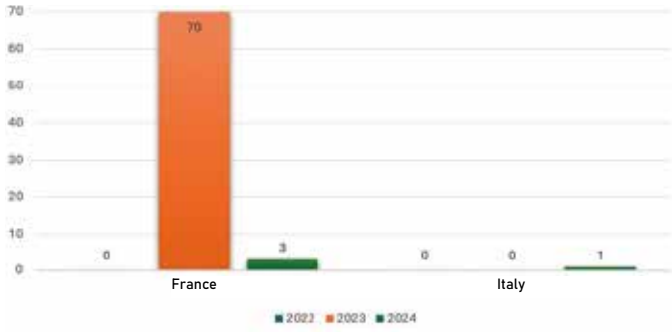

Figure 6. Number of terrorist attacks motivated by ethno-nationalist and separatist ideology in the EU between 2022 and 2024 (the figures presented include attacks that were carried out, failed and foiled).

Source: own elaboration based on: Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf, p. 50 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

[31] Europol, *TE-SAT*..., pp. 46–47.

[32] The concept of ethno-nationalist or separatist terrorist groups includes groups whose members refer to nationalist ideologies or ethnic or national affiliation as part of their political agenda. The strategic goal of these groups is to separate a territory from an existing state and/or to annex a territory to another state. See ibid., p. 49.

[33] Ibid., p. 50.

The TE-SAT 2025 report also contains information on activities undertaken by Irish terrorists linked to groups that do not support the peace process in Northern Ireland (the New IRA, the Continuity IRA). However, during the period analysed, no members of either group returned to terrorist activity[34].

Other forms of terrorist activity

The TE-SAT 2025 report also mentions 8 other cases of terrorist activity, but does not specify the affiliation of the perpetrators. The most well-known example is the attempted assassination of Prime Minister Robert Fico on 15 May 2024 in Handlova, Slovakia. The perpetrator, Juraj Cintula, had been planning the attack since at least April[35]. However, there was no manifesto published shortly before the attack, which is characteristic of individual terrorist attacks, in which the attacker would indicate the motives for the use of violence. Political motivations for his criminal actions were attributed a posteriori by the Slovak authorities investigating the case[36]. Equally controversial is the attack mentioned in the report, which took place on 30 May 2024 in Malta. Near the Labour Party office, an 18-year-old criminal detonated TATP (trimeric peroxide acetone) explosives. According to the authorities investigating the case, the perpetrator was insane at the time of the attack. This makes it impossible to classify his act as terrorism[37]. It is difficult to agree with the decision to classify a criminal act as terrorist activity when it is impossible to reconstruct the political agenda or confirm the declared terrorist affiliation of a person suspected of such activity. The inclusion of such terrorist activity in the report should therefore be considered debatable. This is all the more so given that, in the context of arrests of persons suspected of links to terrorism, we are talking about members of organised criminal groups whose activities resemble typical criminal activities (illegal accumulation of weapons

[34] Ibid., p. 53.

[35] J. Zadražilová, *Atentátník se k činu rozhodl hned po prezidentských volbách*, Novinky.cz, 15 V 2024, https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/zahranicni-atentatnik-se-k-cinu-rozhodl-hned-po-prezidentskych-volbach-rekl-ministr-40471949 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

[36] B. Szandelszky, P.D. Josek, P. Jenne, *Slovak authorities charge 'lone wolf' with assassination attempt on the prime minister*, AP, 16 V 2024, https://apnews.com/article/slovakia-prime-minister-shooting-fico-23faba11c0f371ef0f69a34861337ae0 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

[37] Europol, *TE-SAT*..., p. 56.

and explosives, sabotage, disinformation activities) or, ultimately, hybrid activities undertaken by third countries hostile to EU Member States.

Use of networks for terrorist activities

A rapidly growing problem is the increasing number of various online platforms used, for example, to recruit minors for terrorist activities or to commit acts of violence. Groups associated with such online activity often advocate the breakdown of democratic structures by introducing chaos or using terror. Many of them represent ideological views associated with jihadist terrorism, the extreme right, the extreme left, but also Satanism and the occult.

In 2024, the number of new services in cyberspace using new technologies, including artificial intelligence, to create and disseminate propaganda or hate speech reached a record high. This applies particularly to far-right terrorism, but also affects, to varying degrees, far-left and anarchist terrorist groups. One example is the anarchist terrorist organisation Partnership of Revenge. Most of its members did not declare any ideological affiliation. They were mainly motivated by financial gain, which indicates a break with the traditional practices used so far by anarchist-motivated terrorists[38].

Throughout 2024, Al-Qaeda and Islamic State propaganda was very active, using, as already mentioned, events in the Gaza Strip, among other things. Several coordinated jihadist propaganda campaigns were aimed at inciting their supporters to carry out attacks. Representatives of other terrorist groups also engaged in such activities[39].

Combating terrorism in the European Union

The European Union is constantly taking measures to prevent and combat terrorism. Examples of such measures include: 'Referral Action Days' – a campaign to quickly report and remove terrorist content from the internet, the creation of task forces dealing with, for example, cryptocurrencies and updating the list of foreign fighters, and the use of mobile laboratories

[38] Ibid., p. 8.

[39] See e.g.: *Steal, deal and repeat: How cybercriminals trade and exploit your data*, Europol, https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/steal-deal-and-repeat-how-cybercriminals-trade-and-exploit-your-data [accessed: 15 VII 2025].

to analyse improvised explosive devices. However, these measures should be considered insufficient. The EU needs a new, comprehensive approach to terrorism. This is important due to the escalation and evolution of this threat, including, among others: mass arms smuggling from the Balkans and Ukraine, the use of modern solutions by terrorists, e.g. drones, 3D-printed weapons, artificial intelligence, cryptocurrencies. It is also necessary to combat terrorist activities in cyberspace and links between terrorists and criminal groups and state secret services. This applies in particular to the policies of Russia and its partners, targeting, among others, Poland, the Czech Republic, Romania, Spain and the Baltic states.

Effective counter-terrorism measures must be implemented not only through enhanced cooperation (in terms of intelligence, logistics, legal and political matters) between all EU Member States, but also through expanded cooperation with NATO and other allies in various parts of the world, e.g. in the Middle East or Africa. The aim is to build multi-faceted resilience both externally and internally. The effective implementation of counter-terrorism plans may be threatened by the particular interests of individual EU Member States, the ongoing political crisis in some of them, discord in transatlantic relations, a lack of financial resources and the increasingly frequent predictions of economic collapse.

Conclusions

1. The changes in terrorism indicated in the TE-SAT 2025 report include, among others, a gradual decrease in the age of terrorists, as well as the use of increasingly newer technological solutions by perpetrators of attacks, such as drones, 3D printing and artificial intelligence.
2. A particularly worrying phenomenon is the increasingly strong links between terrorists and criminal groups and state secret services. This is manifested, among other things, in frequent cases of terrorism and sabotage in EU Member States.
3. Although the number of terrorist attacks fell significantly in 2024, it should be noted that the number of EU Member States affected by attacks increased. The number of people arrested for terrorism and the scale of international links between terrorist structures also increased.

4. Two types of terrorism: jihadist as well as extreme left-wing and anarchist, posed the most serious security challenge in many EU Member States (due, among other things, to the number of incidents). Only the terrorist incidents in Italy had a much broader ideological basis.
5. The European Union needs a new comprehensive approach to terrorism-related threats. This is important due to the intensity and evolution of the threat under analysis. Effective counter-terrorism must be pursued not only through deeper cooperation between EU Member States, but also through broader cooperation with other allies.

Bibliography

Wejkszner A., *Europejska armia kalifatu. Tom 1. Centrum supersieci* (Eng. The European Army of the Caliphate. Volume 1. The Supernetwork Centre), Warszawa 2020.

Wejkszner A., *Europejska armia kalifatu. Tom 2. Peryferie supersieci* (Eng. The European Army of the Caliphate. Volume 2. The Peripheries of the Supernetwork), Warszawa 2023.

Wejkszner A., *Samotne wilki kalifatu? Państwo Islamskie i indywidualny terroryzm dżihadystyczny w Europie Zachodniej* (Eng. Lone wolves of the caliphate? The Islamic State and individual jihadist terrorism in Western Europe), Warszawa 2018.

Wojciechowski S., *The hybrid dimension of contemporary terrorism and critical infrastructure. Analysis of Europol's TE-SAT reports from 2021–2024*, "Terrorism – Studies, Analyses, Prevention" 2025, special edition: *Terrorist and sabotage threats to critical infrastructure*. https://doi.org/10.4467/27204383TER.25.020.21523.

Wojciechowski S., Wejkszner A., *The new face of terrorist threat in the European Union. Analysis of the EU Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2024 (TE-SAT) and other sources*, "Terrorism – Studies, Analyses, Prevention" 2025, no. 7, pp. 307–326. https://doi.org/10.4467/27204383TER.25.035.21812.

Internet sources

Anklage gegen ein mutmaßliches Mitglied der ausländischen terroristischen Vereinigung "Islamischer Staat (IS)" wegen des Messerangriffs in Solingen erhoben,

Der Generalbundesanwalt beim Bundesgerichtshof, 27 II 2025, https://www.generalbundesanwalt.de/SharedDocs/Pressemitteilungen/DE/2025/Pressemitteilung-vom-27-02-2025.html [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Anti-Semitism: Zurich attacker radicalised in Tunisia and online, swissinfo.ch, 25 III 2024, https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/swiss-politics/zurich-stabber-radicalized-in-tunisia-and-online/74284770 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Attack in Tuili during the night: hundreds of photovoltaic panels destroyed, L'Unione Sarda.it, 10 IX 2024, https://www.unionesarda.it/en/sardinia/attack-in-tuili-during-the-night-hundreds-of-photovoltaic-panels-destroyed-nuyrob0o [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Europol: Afryka jest problemem dla bezpieczeństwa Unii Europejskiej (Eng. Europol: Africa is a problem for the security of the European Union), Onet, 26 VI 2025, https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/swiat/europol-afryka-jest-problemem-dla-bezpieczenstwa-unii-europejskiej/f6pm9xl [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Europol, *TE-SAT. European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report 2025*, https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf [accessed: 20 VII 2025]. https://doi.org/10.2813/5425593.

How crime is accelerated by AI, Europol, https://www.europol.europa.eu/media-press/europol-podcast/episode-21-how-crime-is-accelerated-by-ai [accessed: 21 VII 2025].

Kourdi E., Bertrand N., *Trump pledges retaliation after two US soldiers, one civilian interpreter killed in Syria*, CNN, https://edition.cnn.com/2025/12/13/politics/two-us-army-soldiers-killed-in-syria [accessed: 17 XII 2025].

'Make a Molotov Cocktail': How Europeans Are Recruited Through Telegram to Commit Sabotage, Arson, and Murder, Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, 26 IX 2024, https://www.occrp.org/en/investigation/make-a-molotov-cocktail-how-europeans-are-recruited-through-telegram-to-commit-sabotage-arson-and-murder [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Observatory of Illicit Economies in West Africa, https://riskbulletins.globalinitiative.net/download/wea-obs-012-screen-pdf.pdf [accessed: 10 VII 2025].

Pożary w Polsce. Kolumbijczyk miał działać na zlecenie Rosji. Ustalenia ABW (Eng. Fires in Poland. Colombian man allegedly acting on behalf of Russia. Findings of the ABW), Rzeczpospolita, 29 VII 2025, https://www.rp.pl/przestepczosc/art42769991-pozary-w-polsce-kolumbijczyk-mial-dzialac-na-zlecenie-rosji-ustalenia-abw [accessed: 30 VII 2025].

Russia's Crime–Terror Nexus. Criminality as a Tool of Hybrid Warfare in Europe, https://icct.nl/sites/default/files/2025-09/Russia%20Crime%20Terror%20Nexus_Criminality%20as%20a%20Tool.pdf [accessed: 16 XII 2025].

Steal, deal and repeat: How cybercriminals trade and exploit your data, Europol, https://www.europol.europa.eu/publication-events/main-reports/steal-deal-and-repeat-how-cybercriminals-trade-and-exploit-your-data [accessed: 15 VII 2025].

Szandelszky B., Josek P.D., Jenne P., *Slovak authorities charge 'lone wolf' with assassination attempt on the prime minister*, AP, 16 V 2024, https://apnews.com/article/slovakia-prime-minister-shooting-fico-23faba11c0f371ef0f69a34861337ae0 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Wojciechowski S., *Terrorism – old wine in new bottles*, Defence24, 21 VII 2025, https://defence24.com/geopolitics/terrorism-old-wine-in-new-bottles [accessed: 25 VII 2025].

Wojny dronów: jak to się robi w Afryce [ANALIZA] (Eng. Drone wars: how it's done in Africa [ANALYSIS]), Defence24, 31 V 2025, https://defence24.pl/technologie/wojny-dronow-jak-to-sie-robi-w-afryce-analiza#goog_rewarded [accessed: 18 VII 2025].

Zadražilová J., *Atentátník se k činu rozhodl hned po prezidentských volbách*, Novinky.cz, 15 V 2024, https://www.novinky.cz/clanek/zahranicni-atentatnik-se-k-cinu-rozhodl-hned-po-prezidentskych-volbach-rekl-ministr-40471949 [accessed: 20 VII 2025].

Legal acts

Directive (EU) 2017/541 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 15 March 2017 on combating terrorism and replacing Council Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA and amending Council Decision 2005/671/JHA (Official Journal of the EU L 88 of 31 March 2017).

Sebastian Wojciechowski, Professor

Head of the Department of Strategic Studies and International Security at the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Chief analyst at the Institute for Western Affairs in Poznań. Expert on security issues, including

terrorism, of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. Editor-in chief of "Przegląd Strategiczny".

Recipient of two scholarships from the Foundation for Polish Science and the US State Department. Winner of the scientific award of the Prime Minister of the Republic of Poland and the scientific award funded by the European Union. Member of, among others: the Commission on Balkan Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Scientific Board of the Terrorism Research Center at Collegium Civitas.

Author of many expert opinions and analyses prepared for Polish and foreign institutions, as well as publications in the field of international relations and internal and international security. He is also NATO DEEP eAcademy security expert.

Contact: sebastian.wojciechowski@amu.edu.pl

Assoc. Prof. Artur Wejkszner, Professor at the Adam Mickiewicz University

Political scientist, professor in the Department of Strategic Studies and International Security at the Faculty of Political Science and Journalism of Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. Author of dozens of publications on contemporary international relations and the issues of international terrorism and Islamic radicalism, including a two-volume monograph entitled *Europejska armia kalifatu* (Eng. The European Army of the Caliphate).

Contact: artur.wejkszner@amu.edu.pl