

## The role and significance of Eurojust in countering terrorism

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### Abstract

The text presents the development of the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) and discusses the legal institutions at its disposal for the performance of its tasks. Then, data was cited concerning terrorist cases in which Eurojust had provided assistance. The number of cases in which Eurojust was involved and the related data were compared, on the one hand, with data from previous years and, on the other hand, with data on terrorism contained in Europol's TE-SAT reports (European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report). This procedure led to the confirmation of the research hypothesis that Eurojust is an important element of a complex legal and institutional system aimed at combating terrorism, but its role is not sufficiently reflected in its reports. The summary attempts to answer the following questions: 1. Why do Eurojust reports not fully reflect its position in the counter-terrorism system? 2. What is the value of Eurojust reports in the context of recognising the phenomenon of terrorism? 3. What should be done to increase the practical significance and substantive quality of these reports?

### Keywords

Eurojust, Eurojust Annual Report, Europol, terrorism, judicial cooperation in criminal cases, cross-border investigations

## Introduction

The article presents the Annual Report of the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust) and analyses its significance as a source of knowledge about the terrorist threats in the European Union. This aims to verify the hypothesis that, while Eurojust constitutes an important element of a complex legal and institutional system focused on combating terrorism, this role is not sufficiently reflected in the aforementioned report.

The selection of the research topic and the accompanying research hypothesis stems from the fact that Eurojust plays a significant role in coordinating and supporting cross-border criminal proceedings and thus constitutes an important forum enabling the exchange of information on ongoing criminal proceedings<sup>1</sup>. This activity is carried out with the support of numerous institutions and organisational solutions, which are described in the later part of the article. As a result, a large amount of information is collected concerning cross-border criminal proceedings, including cases related to terrorism. The information collected and processed by Eurojust is of significant importance for supporting specific proceedings. Furthermore, the aforementioned data allows for presenting a broader picture of the activities carried out by Eurojust, which could be reflected in the analysed report. However, this does not occur. Answering the question of why this is the case requires identifying which of the pieces of information collected by Eurojust are presented in the report in question and what is the reason for providing the selected data. The article explains how, despite undeniable limitations, Eurojust report allows for better understanding of a complex phenomenon of terrorism, which is interconnected with multiple issues. The article also discusses the tasks of Eurojust, as well as forms, institutions and practices used to carry them out. From a comparative perspective, it presents data on terrorism-related cases in which Eurojust provided assistance. On one hand, the years 2022–2023 served as a reference point, on the other, the data on terrorism and the way it was presented by Europol in the European Union Terrorism Situation and Trend Report<sup>2</sup> (hereinafter: TE-SAT). For this purpose, Eurojust reports from 2022–2024 and Europol reports from 2023–2025 were

<sup>1</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report 2024*, Luxembourg 2025, p. 3. <https://doi.org/10.2812/2312311>.

<sup>2</sup> This is an annual report prepared by Europol, presenting the situation and trends concerning terrorism in the European Union countries in the previous year.

used, with particular attention paid to the type, source and level of detail of the data contained in both reports. Presenting this data allowed for a comparison of the two reports.

In addition to the comparative method, the text employs document analysis, including reports, informational materials issued by Eurojust and relevant scientific literature.

The conclusion attempts to answer the research questions: 1. Why do Eurojust reports not fully reflect its position in the counter-terrorism system? 2. What is the value of Eurojust reports in the context of recognising the phenomenon of terrorism? 3. What should be done to increase the practical significance and substantive quality of these reports?

## The development of Eurojust

The origins of Eurojust are linked to the progress of European integration, initially aimed at strengthening economic cooperation. In the 1970s and 1980s, as integration deepened, the conviction grew that the development of economic cooperation required ensuring broadly understood security. The Maastricht Treaty<sup>3</sup> was signed, on the basis of which the European Union was established, built on three pillars<sup>4</sup>. The third pillar created at that time was called 'Cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs'<sup>5</sup>. Its creation was intended to deepen cooperation among EU Member States in the area of crime-related issues. The detailed substantive scope

<sup>3</sup> Treaty on the European Union signed in Maastricht on 7 February 1992.

<sup>4</sup> On this matter Krystian Bartosz wrote: 'Until the Maastricht Treaty came into force, Community law primarily covered provisions concerning the economy. It recognised cooperation in criminal matters solely as a sovereign element of a Member State's internal policy. The Maastricht Treaty, established in 1991, was in a way a response to the growing problem of international crime, as well as the increasing strength of terrorist organisations that could pose a real threat to Europe's security'. See in more detail: K. Bartosz, *Prawne aspekty walki z terroryzmem* (Eng. Legal aspects of fighting terrorism), "Security, Economy & Law" 2018, no. 1, p. 20. <https://doi.org/10.24356/SEL/18/1>.

<sup>5</sup> The beginnings of the third pillar can be traced back to the establishment of an internal security group created by the European Council in Rome in 1975, known as TREVI (French: Terrorisme, Radicalisme, Extrémisme, Violence Internationale). Already in 1976, within TREVI, two subgroups emerged: TREVI I and TREVI II. The tasks of TREVI I, whose establishment was linked to the increased activity of terrorist organisations as the IRA, the Black September and the RAF, were to streamline the flow of information about terrorist organisations and to jointly analyse the threats they generated.

of the third pillar was defined by Article K.1, included in Title VI of the then Treaty on European Union, which specified matters considered to be of ‘common interest’, namely:

- 1) asylum policy,
- 2) rules governing the crossing by persons of the external borders of the Member States and the exercise of controls thereon,
- 3) immigration policy and policy regarding nationals of third countries,
- 4) combatting drug addiction,
- 5) combatting fraud on an international scale,
- 6) judicial cooperation in civil matters,
- 7) judicial cooperation in criminal matters,
- 8) customs cooperation,
- 9) police cooperation for the purposes of preventing and combatting terrorism, unlawful drug trafficking and other serious forms of international crime, including if necessary certain aspects of customs cooperation, in connection with the organisation of a Union-wide system for exchanging information within a European Police Office (Europol).

An analysis of Article K.1 indicates that the primary motivation for cooperation in the fields of justice and home affairs was to ensure the free movement of persons. A detailed interpretation of the specified ‘matters of common interests’ shows that the greatest threats to be addressed within the third pillar were considered to be illegal immigration, organised crime and terrorism<sup>6</sup>.

In the following years, European integration gained momentum. Based on the Treaty of Amsterdam<sup>7</sup>, the name of the third pillar was changed to ‘Police and Judicial Cooperation in Criminal Matters’, and cooperation in the field of security was strengthened, including by transferring some issues from the third pillar to the Community-based first pillar.

<sup>6</sup> These phenomena, as well as cybercrime and human trafficking as major threats arising from globalisation, are also highlighted by Marek Fałdowski. See: M. Fałdowski, *Międzynarodowa Organizacja Policji Kryminalnych – Interpol w zwalczaniu wybranych zagrożeń XXI w.* (Eng. International Organisation of Criminal Police – Interpol in fighting selected threats of the 21<sup>st</sup> century), “Wiedza Obronna” 2023, vol. 282, no. 1, p. 198. <https://doi.org/10.34752/2023-i282>.

<sup>7</sup> *Treaty of Amsterdam amending the Treaty on European Union, the Treaties establishing the European Communities and certain related acts.*

Another significant stage of development was a special meeting of the European Council, which took place on 15–16 October 1999, in the Finnish city of Tampere. The meeting was dedicated to creating an area of freedom, security and justice within the EU. Plans were discussed to establish a judicial body aimed at strengthening cooperation among national authorities in combating serious cross-border organised crime<sup>8</sup>. In March 2001, in Brussels, based on Council Decision 2000/799/JHA of 14 December 2000, the Provisional Judicial Cooperation Unit began its operations, also known as Pro-Eurojust. The terrorist attacks in the US on 11 September 2001, were another factor implying the need to strengthen international cooperation, which resulted in an acceleration of efforts to establish Eurojust<sup>9</sup>. This body was officially established by Council Decision 2002/187/JHA of 28 February 2002<sup>10</sup> as the European Judicial Cooperation Unit. The objectives of Eurojust were defined in Art. 3 of the aforementioned decision. They included stimulating and improving coordination and cooperation between national investigative and law enforcement authorities, as well as supporting, in other ways, the competent authorities of the Member States to streamline the investigation and prosecution of serious crime, particularly organised crime, involving two or more Member States. At this point, it should be noted that the limitation of Eurojust's competencies at that time, which has remained in place to this day, to actions concerning crimes involving more than one EU Member State, significantly affects the scope of data collected by this body. Unlike the data collected by Europol and presented in TE-SAT reports, Eurojust reports provide only information on cases related to transnational terrorism in which Eurojust was involved in prosecution<sup>11</sup>.

<sup>8</sup> *Eurojust: European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation*, The Hague 2020, p. 2. <https://doi.org/10.2812/556790>. In point 46 of the conclusions from the European Council meeting in Tampere, it was stated: 'To reinforce the fight against serious organised crime, the European Council has agreed that a unit (Eurojust) should be set up composed of national prosecutors, magistrates, or police officers of equivalent competence, detached from each Member State according to its legal system. Eurojust should have the task of facilitating the proper coordination of national prosecuting authorities and of supporting criminal investigations in organised crime cases, notably based on Europol's analysis, as well as of co-operating closely with the European Judicial Network (...)'.

<sup>9</sup> *Eurojust: European Union Agency for Criminal...*, p. 2.

<sup>10</sup> *Council Decision of 28 February 2002 setting up Eurojust with a view to reinforcing the fight against serious crime*.

<sup>11</sup> This issue will be discussed in greater detail in the following sections of the article.

In the following years, both the functioning of Eurojust and its normative foundations and political assumptions underwent further changes. On 16 December 2008, the EU Council adopted Decision 2009/426/JHA amending Decision 2002/187/JHA<sup>12</sup>, which led to the strengthening of Eurojust's coordinating role. The reform carried out at that time envisaged the creation of the Eurojust National Coordination System (ENCS) whose tasks were to streamline the flow of information between Eurojust and the Member States, as well as to improve case management, including by assisting in determining whether a case should be referred to Eurojust or the European Judicial Network, and identifying the competent authorities responsible for implementing requests and decisions related to international cooperation in criminal matters. The ENCS operates in every EU Member State. It is managed by national Eurojust correspondents and relies on contact points that function under separate regulations<sup>13</sup>.

Following the signing of the Treaty of Lisbon<sup>14</sup>, the current normative foundations of Eurojust in primary law are set out in Art. 85 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, according to which: *Eurojust's mission shall be to support and strengthen coordination and cooperation between national investigating and prosecuting authorities in relation to serious crime affecting two or more Member States<sup>15</sup> or requiring a prosecution on common bases, on the basis of operations conducted and information supplied by the Member States' authorities and by Europol.* The most important tasks of Eurojust, described in Art. 85 of the TFEU, include:

- a) initiation of criminal investigations, as well as proposing the initiation of prosecutions conducted by competent national authorities, particularly those relating to offences against the financial interests of the Union,
- b) coordination of investigations and prosecutions referred to in point (a),

<sup>12</sup> Council Decision 2009/426/JHA of 16 December 2008 on the strengthening of Eurojust and amending Decision 2002/187/JHA setting up Eurojust with a view to reinforcing the fight against serious crime.

<sup>13</sup> G. Stronikowska, *Prokuratura Europejska jako instytucja ochrony interesów finansowych Unii Europejskiej* (Eng. The European Public Prosecutor's Office as an institution protecting the financial interests of the European Union), Warszawa 2020, p. 231.

<sup>14</sup> Treaty of Lisbon amending the Treaty on European Union and the Treaty establishing the European Community.

<sup>15</sup> The emphasis is by the author (editor's note).

- c) strengthening of judicial cooperation, including by resolution of conflicts of jurisdiction and by close cooperation with the European Judicial Network.

The evolution of Eurojust resulted in two legal acts. The first is Regulation (EU) 2018/1727<sup>16</sup> adopted on 14 November 2018, implementing the provisions of the Lisbon Treaty<sup>17</sup>, which, as of 12 December 2019, replaced Decision 2002/187/JHA. On this basis, the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation became the legal successor of Eurojust, established under Council Decision 2002/187/JHA<sup>18</sup>. Grażyna Stronikowska notes that: *The purpose of Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 is to align Eurojust with the requirements of Art. 85 TFEU by introducing a mechanism for evaluating its activities by the European Parliament and national parliaments, replacing the decision with a regulation, and adapting the agency for cooperation with the newly established EP*<sup>19</sup>. Stronikowska emphasises that Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 did not introduce radical changes regarding the functioning of Eurojust and the tasks it performs, it rather played an organisational and clarifying role<sup>20</sup>. It should be noted that, due to the abandonment of the formal linkage of Eurojust's subject-matter competence with the subject-matter jurisdiction of Europol, Eurojust's competence was defined by reference to the types of serious crime listed in the annex to Regulation (EU) 2018/1727<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> See: G. Stronikowska, *Prokuratura Europejska jako instytucja...*, p. 250.

<sup>17</sup> *Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 14 November 2018 on the European Union Agency for Criminal Justice Cooperation (Eurojust), and replacing and repealing Council Decision 2002/187/JHA.*

<sup>18</sup> Stronikowska notes that the succession established under Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 also covers all agreements and other obligations undertaken by Eurojust under Council Decision 2002/187/JHA. See: G. Stronikowska, *Prokuratura Europejska jako Instytucja...*, p. 251.

<sup>19</sup> European Public Prosecutor's Office (EPPO) is an independent body operating on the basis of Council Regulation (EU) 2017/1939 of 12 October 2017 implementing enhanced cooperation (Articles 20 TEU and 329 TFEU) on the establishment of the European Public Prosecutor's Office. The material and functional competence of the European Public Prosecutor's Office includes conducting preparatory proceedings and bringing or supporting indictments against perpetrators of crimes affecting the financial interests of the European Union.

<sup>20</sup> G. Stronikowska, *Prokuratura Europejska jako instytucja...*, p. 251.

<sup>21</sup> Among the forms of serious crime for which Eurojust has competence to take action, the mentioned annex lists terrorism.

The second act is Regulation (EU) 2023/2131 of 4 October 2023<sup>22</sup>, concerning the digital information exchange, which aims to streamline the operation of Eurojust's Counter-Terrorism Register (hereinafter: CTR)<sup>23</sup> established in 2019. This database is used to collect information on judicial proceedings related to terrorism. It contains, inter alia, data on the identity of persons suspected of terrorism-related offences and their links to terrorist networks, as well as other detailed information concerning ongoing proceedings. Due to the sensitive nature of the collected information, there is no public access to the CTR, which means that these data are not presented or discussed in the annual Eurojust reports.

### Forms of operation and cooperation of Eurojust

An analysis of regulations governing the functioning of Eurojust, including the changes that have occurred over the years, leads to the conclusion that it has been steadily gaining a stronger institutional position within the EU legal system<sup>24</sup>, and that the scope of its powers has been expanding. Nevertheless, it is still not an autonomous body conducting independent preparatory proceedings, but rather a supporting body. The four most important forms of support provided by Eurojust in connection with preparatory proceedings conducted by the competent authorities of the Member States and the EPPO are<sup>25</sup>:

<sup>22</sup> *Regulation (EU) 2023/2131 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 4 October 2023 amending Regulation (EU) 2018/1727 of the European Parliament and of the Council and Council Decision 2005/671/JHA, as regards digital information exchange in terrorism cases.*

<sup>23</sup> CTR is a special database established by Eurojust to strengthen the response – particularly through the processing of relevant information – to terrorist threats in the EU Member States. The legal basis for CTR is *Council Decision 2005/671/JHA of 20 September 2005 on the exchange of information and cooperation concerning terrorist offences*. However, CTR was launched only on 1 IX 2019, in response to the terrorist attacks of 13 X 2015 in Paris. See in more detail: *Launch of Judicial Counter-Terrorism Register at Eurojust*, Eurojust, 5 IX 2019, <https://www.eurojust.europa.eu/news/launch-judicial-counter-terrorism-register-eurojust> [accessed: 9 VIII 2025].

<sup>24</sup> Eurojust currently operates on the basis of a regulation rather than a decision.

<sup>25</sup> *Eurojust: European Union Agency for Criminal...*, pp. 6–7.



- support for joint investigation teams<sup>26</sup>,
- assistance in the use of EU judicial cooperation instruments, in particular the European Arrest Warrant<sup>27</sup> and the European Investigation Order<sup>28</sup>,
- support in organising coordination meetings<sup>29</sup>,
- serving as coordination centres<sup>30</sup>.

When discussing the competencies and capabilities of Eurojust regarding information collection, it should be noted that increasing globalisation translates into a systematic rise in human mobility. This results, among other things, in criminals increasingly crossing both internal

<sup>26</sup> Joint Investigation Teams (JIT) are established on the basis of an agreement between law enforcement and judicial authorities of two or more states – most often EU Member States – for the purpose of conducting a joint criminal investigation. Their aim is to coordinate activities and enable the direct exchange of information and evidence. The legal basis for establishing the JIT is *Council Framework Decision 2002/465/JHA of 13 June 2002 on joint investigation teams*. The details of JIT operations involving Polish authorities have been specified in the Code of Criminal Procedure, Articles 589b – 589f. See in more detail: K. Leśniewski, *Słów kilka o instytucji wspólnych zespołów śledczych w pryzmacie polskiej procedury karnej* (Eng. A few words about joint investigation teams from the perspective of Polish criminal procedure), *Przegląd Prawno-Ekonomiczny* 2019, no. 2(47), pp. 177–186.

<sup>27</sup> European Arrest Warrant is a simplified form of extradition existing between EU Member States, established under *2002/584/JHA: Council Framework Decision of 13 June 2002 on the European arrest warrant and the surrender procedures between Member States*. This issue is regulated in Chapters 65a and 65b of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

<sup>28</sup> European Investigation Order (EIO) is based on a ruling issued by the competent judicial or law enforcement authority of an EU Member State. The aim of EIO is to carry out specified procedural actions in another EU country aimed at obtaining evidence. The legal basis for the operation of EIO is *Directive 2014/41/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 3 April 2014 regarding the European Investigation Order in criminal matters*. This issue is regulated in Chapters 62c and 62d of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

<sup>29</sup> Coordination meetings are a form of cooperation that enables contact between judicial and law enforcement authorities from EU Member States and, in some cases, from third countries. During these meetings, participants have the opportunity to exchange information, discuss, and resolve legal issues typical of cross-border cooperation, most often concerning jurisdictional conflicts and matters related to the assumption or transfer of ongoing criminal proceedings. Coordination meetings also provide an opportunity to develop plans for the further conduct of criminal proceedings, including discussing the potential need to establish JIT. See in more detail: *Eurojust: European Union Agency for Criminal...*, p. 7.

<sup>30</sup> Eurojust coordination centres constitute a special form of cooperation, organised to manage in real time coordinated operations targeting organised crime groups or terrorist networks. See in more detail: *Eurojust: European Union Agency for Criminal...*, p. 7.

and external borders of Member States. Consequently, there is an increasing need to support the fight against serious cross-border crime extending beyond the EU, which in Eurojust's practice is reflected in a steady rise in the number of supported proceedings initiated in non-EU countries<sup>31</sup>. This trend makes it necessary to develop, including the institutionalisation of cooperation with countries outside of the united Europe. This particularly concerns the fight against complex crimes in the areas of illegal migration, smuggling and counter-terrorism. In March 2024, Eurojust adopted the *Strategy on cooperation with international partners 2024–2027*, outlining actions aimed at strengthening its role in cooperation with law enforcement authorities both within the EU and beyond its borders.

In the context of Eurojust's cooperation with third countries, it should be noted that it currently has contact points in over 70 countries and in three international organisations. Furthermore, this network is continually being expanded – in 2024, a contact point was established in the United Arab Emirates, and the activities of similar points were resumed in Nigeria and Mongolia<sup>32</sup>. Twelve third countries have delegated their liaison prosecutors (LPs) to Eurojust – these are: Albania, Georgia, Iceland, Moldova, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Norway, Serbia, Switzerland, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and the United States. Eurojust has signed agreements with the above-mentioned countries and additionally with Liechtenstein, which enable cooperation in the exchange of information including evidentiary materials and personal data. Eurojust has concluded working agreements with nine additional countries: Nigeria, Panama, Costa Rica, Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, Peru, Egypt and South Korea, enabling strategic cooperation in the exchange of information, including sharing

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<sup>31</sup> Ibid., p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report...*, p. 14. It is worth noting that Nigeria has been grappling for years with Islamic terrorism, primarily propagated by the Boko Haram organisation. See in more detail: A. Wejksznier, *Boko Haram – the evolution of jihad activity in Nigeria 2015–2019*, "Przegląd Strategiczny" 2020, no. 13, p. 349. <https://doi.org/10.14746/ps.2020.1.21>. It should also be added that, according to the annual *Global Terrorism Index* (GTI) report prepared by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Nigeria moved from 8<sup>th</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> place in 2025 among the countries most affected by terrorism. At the same time, the country is an important economic partner of the EU, and its increasing destabilisation threatens to undermine the situation across the Sahel region, which could result in a sharp rise in unwanted immigration to the EU. Therefore, developing all forms of cooperation with this country aimed at identifying and combating terrorism should be considered highly beneficial.

best practices, but without sharing operational information. Eurojust also signed a working agreement with the Ibero-American Association of Public Prosecutors Offices (AIAMP)<sup>33</sup>.

Eurojust is also involved in many additional activities or initiatives that enable, or at least create, conditions for the exchange of information relevant to combating international crime. In October 2024, its representatives participated in the first Summit of the Heads of Prosecution Services of G20 Members, hosted by the Federal Prosecutor's Office of Brazil. Participation in this event was used to organise bilateral meetings with representatives of Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Chile, Egypt, India, Nigeria, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom, which may lead to the development of future cooperation with these countries<sup>34</sup>. It should be emphasised that good cooperation with some of the above-mentioned countries, such as Nigeria<sup>35</sup>, Saudi Arabia<sup>36</sup> and the United Kingdom<sup>37</sup>, may be particularly important in preventing and combating terrorism. Similar positive effects may result from the co-organisation by Eurojust of study visits for representatives of the general prosecutor's offices of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan<sup>38</sup>, as well as from the participation of Eurojust representatives in workshops organised in Baghdad that were devoted to issues of cooperation between judicial authorities.

<sup>33</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report...*, p. 15.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> See: footnote 32.

<sup>36</sup> It is worth paying attention to analyses concerning the involvement of the Wahhabi movement – supported and playing a major role in the Saudi state – in the development of Islamic terrorism, as contained in the thesis of Michał Harkot. See: M. Harkot, *Wpływ wahabizmu na pozycję społeczno-polityczną Arabii Saudyjskiej* (Eng. Impact of Wahhabism on the socio-political position of Saudi Arabia), "Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Lublin – Polonia" 2020, no. 1, vol. 27, pp. 97–110. <https://doi.org/10.17951/k.2020.27.1.97-110>.

<sup>37</sup> The importance of cooperation with the United Kingdom in combating terrorism stems from the fact that the country has repeatedly faced terrorism motivated by various factors, which has translated into extensive experience on the part of British services in countering this threat.

<sup>38</sup> The significant involvement of Central Asian residents in jihadist terrorism is indicated, for example, by Krzysztof Strachota. See: K. Strachota, *Islamic State-Khorasan: global jihad's new front*, Ośrodek Studiów Wschodnich, 29 III 2024, <https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/osw-commentary/2024-03-29/islamic-state-khorasan-global-jihads-new-front> [accessed: 15 VIII 2025].

In addition to organising one-off meetings with certain countries, more permanent forms of cooperation are also being developed. An example is the EuroMed Justice Project, whose aim is to strengthen cross-border cooperation in criminal matters between EU countries and states such as: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Palestine and Tunisia. As part of the indicated programme, among other things, 18 working meetings were organised<sup>39</sup>. It is also worth mentioning the Western Balkans Criminal Justice Project, under which Eurojust has been strengthening cooperation with Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia and has so far supported 25 cross-border proceedings, including those concerning money laundering and arms trafficking. Among the specific forms of support, it is worth noting, inter alia, assistance in the establishment of three new joint investigation teams and two so-called action days<sup>40</sup>.

In addition to cooperation with foreign states or entities, Eurojust also cooperates with the law enforcement authorities of the Member States as well as with other EU agencies established to combat crime, i.e. Europol, the European Public Prosecutor's Office and the European Anti-Fraud Office<sup>41</sup>.

## Figures concerning Eurojust's activities

The steadily expanding network of entities with which Eurojust cooperates to prevent and combat crime translates into a systematic year-on-year increase in the number of cases in which it provides assistance. In 2019, there were approx. 8000 such cases. By 2024, this number had reached nearly 13 000, representing an increase of almost 60%<sup>42</sup>. These were cases

<sup>39</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report...*, p. 16.

<sup>40</sup> Action days are days on which complex procedural operations are carried out simultaneously in multiple countries, the coordination and real-time management of which may be supported by Eurojust coordination centres.

<sup>41</sup> The European Anti-Fraud Office, known as OLAF (French: L'Office européen de lutte antifraude), was established on the basis of *Commission Decision of 28 April 1999 establishing the European Anti-fraud Office (OLAF)*.

<sup>42</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report...*, p. 7. At the same time, it should be noted that the number of criminal proceedings in which Eurojust does not provide assistance is many times higher – in 2024 in Poland alone, the Police conducted 440 269 preparatory proceedings. See: *Zwalczanie przestępczości kryminalnej* (Eng. Combating criminal offences),

covering 14 categories of serious cross-border crime, including drug-related crime, money laundering, financial crimes/fraud, facilitating illegal migration and intellectual property theft<sup>43</sup>. The first three categories accounted for the majority of the crime combated by Eurojust. In 2024, it was involved in over 4000 proceedings concerning financial fraud and approx. 2000 cases related to drug trafficking and money laundering. Altogether, these three categories accounted for more than two-thirds of the cases in which Eurojust provided assistance<sup>44</sup>.

With regard to the above data, it should be noted that although many terrorist organisations operate simultaneously in multiple countries, and the use of modern technologies facilitates the easy dissemination of content promoting and enabling terrorism<sup>45</sup>, the number of terrorism-related proceedings in which Eurojust was involved in 2024 is significantly lower than those concerning the aforementioned types of crime with a typical criminal and economic character. This situation appears to result from at least two reasons. Firstly, the overall number of terrorist offences is considerably smaller than the number of typical criminal offences. Secondly, despite global spread of propaganda calling for violence and glorifying acts of terror, a significant portion of terrorist offences is committed by individuals acting alone, who have no real connections with organisations such as ISIS or Al-Qaeda, and are at most influenced by materials produced by them<sup>46</sup>. Only the virtual contact of perpetrators of many terrorist offences with these organisations and their members –

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Informacyjny Serwis Policyjny, 9 I 2025, <https://isp.policja.pl/isp/aktualnosci/18325,Zwalczanie-przestepczosci-kryminalnej.html> [accessed: 2 XI 2025].

<sup>43</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report...*, p. 19.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>45</sup> It is worth emphasising that in many countries, the mere dissemination of content promoting terrorism already constitutes a criminal offence. For instance, in Poland, this is penalised under Art. 255a of the Criminal Code, in Germany – in Art. 86 StGB (Strafgesetzbuch – the German Criminal Code), and in Austria in Art. 282a öStGB (Österreichische Strafgesetzbuch – the Austrian Criminal Code).

<sup>46</sup> Andrzej Czop proposes to refer to such individuals as ‘solo terrorists’. Meanwhile, he defines a ‘lone wolf’ as ‘a perpetrator who carries out acts of terror alone, completely isolated and devoid of any direct or indirect connections with terrorist groups, and lacking any form of command structure’. See in more detail: A. Czop, *Nowe trendy terroryzmu i możliwości podniesienia efektywności jego zwalczania* (Eng. New trends in terrorism and ways to increase the effectiveness of combating them), “*Studia de Securitate*” 2023, no. 13(2), p. 161. <https://doi.org/10.24917/26578549.13.2.9>.

who are most often located in countries (or areas) that do not provide international legal assistance – makes seeking support offered by Eurojust irrelevant. It also sometimes happens that even if international assistance in criminal matters is theoretically justified and possible, the proceedings are so straightforward that there is no need to involve Eurojust. An example of such investigations are those in which only a few evidentiary actions need to be carried out abroad<sup>47</sup>. There is also a group of terrorist offences of a strictly local nature – their effects are limited to a single country and, importantly, they are committed by groups whose area of activity is also narrowly defined. This category includes Corsican groups that were particularly active in 2023.

In 2024, with regard to criminal proceedings related to terrorism cases, Eurojust provided support in 191 cases (63 new cases and 128 ongoing cases). In connection with these cases, 10 joint investigation teams were active (including two new ones established in 2024). Thirty two coordination meetings and one coordination centre were organised<sup>48</sup>. Eurojust also provided support in the application of the European investigation order for mutual legal assistance requests and assisted in the execution of European arrest warrants. It continuously collected information in the CTR from national authorities regarding ongoing and completed criminal proceedings related to terrorism, thereby expanding its existing database on crime, particularly concerning individuals involved in it<sup>49</sup>.

The majority of cases referred to Eurojust were initiated by Italy, France, Spain and Germany. The largest number of requests for assistance in terrorism-related cases, however, was sent via Eurojust to the Netherlands and France. Among non-EU countries, the United Kingdom and Norway most frequently submitted cases to Eurojust. Meanwhile, the highest number of assistance requests was directed to Ukraine and the United Kingdom<sup>50</sup>.

Based on the data presented, it can be observed that participation in international forms of cooperation in criminal matters is related to the level of terrorist threat in a given country. States in which many terrorist

<sup>47</sup> Kamil Leśniewski emphasises the need to analyse each time whether it is necessary to establish a joint investigation team. See in more detail: K. Leśniewski, *Słów kilka o instytucji...*, p. 181.

<sup>48</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report...*, p. 20.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*

offences occur, and consequently have a higher number of individuals involved in these offences who may benefit from EU freedom of movement, are more likely to be compelled to conduct cross-border proceedings, for which they seek assistance from Eurojust. The report does not provide specific data or more detailed information on the cases mentioned, limiting itself to a rather brief reference to the number and nature of individual acts. In this latter regard, it is generally indicated that the cases supported by Eurojust concerned terrorist offences inspired by various ideologies and included criminal acts such as: the preparation of terrorist attacks, participation in terrorist organisations, financing of terrorism, recruitment into terrorist organisations and incitement to commit terrorist offences. In the report under discussion (also without providing specific data), it was stated that in some cases the proceedings concerning terrorist offences also included acts of a typically criminal nature: killings/murders, deprivation of liberty (including hostage taking), the illegal trafficking of weapons, explosives and ammunition<sup>51</sup>.

For comparison, in 2023 Eurojust was involved in 205 cases related to terrorism (70 new and 135 carried over from previous years). In connection with these cases, it supported 9 joint investigation teams (3 new and 6 initiated in previous years) and organised 22 coordination meetings. The 2023 report, unlike the 2024 report, does not include additional details, such as specifying the countries that initiated the largest number of cases or those to which requests for assistance were most frequently directed<sup>52</sup>.

In 2022, Eurojust provided assistance in 203 cases (53 new and 150 initiated in previous years). In 2022, it was involved in supporting 8 joint investigation teams, of which 3 were initiated in 2022. During the period under review, 21 coordination meetings were organised<sup>53</sup>.

### Data from Europol's TE-SAT reports

According to Europol reports, compiled based on qualitative and quantitative data provided by Member States concerning terrorist attacks, arrests, convictions and penalties for terrorist offences, in 2024 there were

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report 2023*, Luxembourg 2024, p. 27. <https://doi.org/10.2812/356222>.

<sup>53</sup> *Eurojust Annual Report 2022*, Luxembourg 2023, p. 52. <https://doi.org/10.2812/022275>.



58 terrorist attacks recorded (34 carried out, 5 unsuccessful and 19 foiled) in 14 Member States<sup>54</sup>. Among them, 24 were related to jihadist terrorism<sup>55</sup>, indicating an increase in this type of attacks, 21 attacks were motivated by anarchism and left-wing ideology<sup>56</sup>, 4 were ethnonationalist/separatist in nature<sup>57</sup>, 1 was driven by right-wing ideology<sup>58</sup>, and 8 were classified as not linked to any specific ideology. The deadliest form of terrorism was that motivated by jihadist ideology, which resulted in 5 deaths and 18 injuries. In 20 Member States, 449 individuals were arrested for offences related to terrorism. The majority of arrests concerned jihadist terrorism (289), followed by right-wing terrorism (47), left-wing and anarchist terrorism (28) as well as ethnonationalist and separatist terrorism (27). For terrorist offences related to other or unspecified forms of terrorism, 8 individuals were arrested<sup>59</sup>. The highest number of arrests took place in Spain (90), France (69), Italy (62) and Germany (55)<sup>60</sup>.

In 2023, as many as 120 terrorist attacks were recorded in the EU, including 98 carried out, 9 unsuccessful and 13 foiled. The majority

<sup>54</sup> *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2025*, Luxembourg 2025, p. 13. <https://doi.org/10.2813/5425593>.

<sup>55</sup> TE-SAT defines jihadism as a violent sub-set of Salafism, a revivalist Sunni Muslim movement that rejects democracy and elected parliaments, arguing that human legislation is at odds with God's status as the sole lawgiver. See in more detail: *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2025...*, p. 23.

<sup>56</sup> According to Europol, left-wing terrorist groups seek to provoke a violent revolution against the political, social and economic system of the state in order to establish socialism and, ultimately, a communist and classless society. Their ideology is often Marxist-Leninist. Anarchist terrorism is a term used to describe acts of violence carried out by groups or individuals promoting the absence of authority as a social model. Anarchists pursue a revolutionary, anti-capitalist and anti-authoritarian agenda. See in more detail: *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2025...*, p. 34.

<sup>57</sup> According to TE-SAT, ethnonationalist and separatist terrorist groups are motivated by nationalism, ethnic identity, and/or religion. Separatist groups seek to carve out a state for themselves from a larger country or to annex the territory of one country to another. See in more detail: *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2025...*, p. 49.

<sup>58</sup> According TE-SAT, right-wing terrorism is associated with aggressive right-wing actors (groups or individuals) who seek to use violence to transform the entire political, social, and economic system into an authoritarian model, rejecting the democratic order, values, and fundamental rights. Aggressive right-wing ideologies employ narratives centred on exclusionary nationalism, racism, xenophobia and/or intolerance. See in more detail: *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2025...*, p. 42.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.



of attacks were motivated by ethnonationalist and separatist ideologies (70)<sup>61</sup>, with fewer driven by anarchist and left-wing views (32). During the period in question, there were 14 jihadist attacks and 2 attacks linked to far-right ideology. 426 people were arrested on charges related to terrorism. The highest number of arrests was recorded in Spain (84), France (78) and Belgium (75)<sup>62</sup>. In fourth place, but with significantly fewer arrests, was Germany (51). With regard to the type of terrorism in 2023, most arrests (334) were related to jihadist terrorism, 26 people were arrested for right-wing terrorism, and 14 for left-wing and anarchist terrorism. Terrorist activity related to separatist and ethno-nationalist terrorism resulted in 25 arrests, of which 18 arrests in terrorist cases were linked to other forms of terrorism and 9 were classified as unspecified<sup>63</sup>.

In 2022, there were 28 attacks recorded, 16 of which were considered successful. This year, most attacks were left-wing and anarchist (18, including 13 successful ones), 6 attacks were jihadist (including 2 successful ones) and 4 were right-wing (1 successful and 3 unsuccessful). A total of 380 people were arrested. Of this number, 266 arrests were for jihadist crimes, with the highest number of arrests made in France (93),

<sup>61</sup> All attacks of this nature took place in Corsica, as many as 34 of them were carried out on the night of 8–9 October 2022 and are assessed as a reaction to the visit of French President Emmanuel Macron to the island. The attacks involved the detonation of small explosive devices placed in holiday homes and at construction sites. They did not cause serious damage or casualties. See in more detail: *France's Corsica rocked by blasts claimed by separatist group*, RFI, 9 X 2023, <https://www.rfi.fr/en/france/20231009-france-s-corsica-rocked-by-blasts-claimed-by-separatist-group> [accessed: 10 VIII 2025].

<sup>62</sup> It is worth noting that the Belgian capital has a district called Molenbeek, inhabited by a very large number of Muslims. Many of them have become radicalised and left for Syria and Iraq to support ISIS. Available data for the years 2011–2017 indicate that as many as 47 people living in Molenbeek left for areas controlled by the so-called Islamic State. See: *Molenbeek. Fabryka terrorystów w stolicy Europy* (Eng. Molenbeek. A terrorist factory in the capital of Europe), Magazyn TVN24, <https://archiwum.tvn24.pl/magazyn-tvn24/14/tvn24.pl/magazyn-tvn24/molenbeek-przystan-dzihadystow-w-sercu-europy%2c14%2c296.html> [accessed: 10 VIII 2025]. The article also points out that it was among Belgian citizens that ISIS recruited the most foreign fighters. Similar information confirming that Belgium had the highest *per capita* rate of departures to ISIS in Europe in the second decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is cited by Matthew Levitt. See: M. Levitt, *My Journey Through Brussels' Terrorist Safe Haven*, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/my-journey-through-brussels-terrorist-safe-haven> [accessed: 10 VIII 2025].

<sup>63</sup> *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2024*, Luxembourg 2024, pp. 11–13. <https://doi.org/10.2813/4435152>.

Spain (46), Germany (30), Belgium (22), Italy (21) and the Netherlands (21). The number of arrests for right-wing terrorism was 45. There were also 18 arrests for ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism and 19 for left-wing and anarchist terrorism. Twenty-six people were arrested for other types of terrorism. In the case of 6 arrests, the type of terrorism with which they could be linked was not specified<sup>64</sup>.

In addition to the information indicated, Europol reports on terrorist offences contain a wealth of other data (although the scope of their presentation may vary depending on the edition), such as the country where the crime was committed, sometimes the number of victims broken down into those killed and injured, and some details about the perpetrators, such as their age, gender and nationality. TE-SAT reports also provide data on the *modus operandi* of the perpetrators, including information on the tools used, indicating whether the attack was carried out with a knife, an improvised explosive device, a drone, a firearm, etc. In some cases, the communication channels and technologies used are described. Europol data also provides information on judgments handed down in cases related to terrorism. Their important and cognitively valuable elements include the presentation of a larger number (than in the case of Eurojust reports) of actual cases and an in-depth analysis of trends in terrorist crime. While maintaining a distinction between types of terrorism, information is presented on the communities associated with them, the structures of individual groups or organisations, recruitment methods, including among persons deprived of liberty, the characteristics of the propaganda used, with an emphasis on social and political events that are used to recruit new supporters and methods of financing. TE-SAT also identifies and analyses events that may have a particular impact on the level of terrorist crime. For example, the 2023 report on 2022 discussed, among other things, the possible impact of the war in Ukraine on terrorism<sup>65</sup>. In TE-SAT 2024<sup>66</sup> attention was focused, among other things, on the conflict in Gaza in the context of its impact on the rise of radicalisation leading to terrorism. TE-SAT 2025 again addressed the implications of Israeli actions in the Gaza Strip and the effects of the weakening of the Syrian regime

<sup>64</sup> *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2023*, Luxembourg 2023, p. 10. <https://doi.org/10.2813/302117>.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

<sup>66</sup> *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2024*, p. 7.

on the situation in the region<sup>67</sup>. The development of modern technologies in the context of facilitating terrorist activities was also mentioned, including the increasingly serious threat posed by the development of 3D printing, which makes it increasingly easy to obtain firearms<sup>68</sup>.

## Comparison of Eurojust and Europol reports

The information presented shows that the data contained in TE-SAT is much more detailed and thus provides a more complete picture of terrorism in the EU<sup>69</sup>. This is undoubtedly a result of the fact that the aim of Europol reports is to provide an accurate description of the terrorist threat situation in EU countries. The wide range of information used and issues addressed implies the comprehensiveness of the documents in question – for example, TE-SAT 2025 is 75 pages long. By comparison, terrorism issues are covered in 2 pages in the latest Eurojust report.

Table 1 presents some of the differences between the annual reports of Eurojust and Europol's TE-SAT.

**Table 1.** Differences between the annual reports of Eurojust and Europol's TE-SAT.

Criterion	Eurojust's reports	Europol's TE-SAT reports
Aim	Presentation of cooperation and coordination activities related to combating cross-border crime. Presentation of Eurojust's activities in this area and their effects	Monitoring terrorist threats, their scale and development trends in order to provide decision-makers and those involved in combating terrorism with a precise and detailed picture of this threat

<sup>67</sup> The report was written before Bashar al-Assad's government fell in December 2024.

<sup>68</sup> *European Union terrorism situation and trend report 2025*, pp. 9–12.

<sup>69</sup> Sebastian Wojciechowski and Artur Wejksznier also point out that TE-SAT takes the broader context into account. See: S. Wojciechowski, A. Wejksznier, *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, p. 310. <https://doi.org/10.4467/27204383TER.25.035.21812>.

Criterion	Eurojust's reports	Europol's TE-SAT reports
Subject area	Eurojust's tasks, detailed forms of their implementation in the field of combating the most serious cross-border crime and their results	The phenomenon of terrorism in the European Union. Its scale, manifestations, evolutionary trends and etiological factors
Level of detail	<p>General data on various forms of serious crime (financial crime, drug-related crime, money laundering, human trafficking, cross-border crime, cybercrime, terrorist offences).</p> <p>Data on the main forms of support provided by Eurojust in relation to specific types of crime. Figures broken down by specific types of crime, indicating the countries that most frequently requested assistance from Eurojust and vice versa</p>	<p>Detailed and in-depth data, supplemented with additional analyses concerning terrorist offences.</p> <p>Descriptions and analyses of selected terrorist offences.</p> <p>Discussion of specific phenomena contributing to an increased terrorist threat (e.g. Israel's attack on the Gaza Strip, aggression by the Russian Federation against Ukraine) and changes in the way terrorist crimes are committed (e.g. the development of 3D printing as a factor influencing the ease of access to firearms)</p>
Data type	<p>Information on cases involving cross-border crime in which Eurojust was involved in the investigation. Information on the tools/forms of support (joint investigation teams, assistance in using EAW and EIO, assistance in organising meetings and coordination centres) provided by Eurojust.</p> <p>Information on other forms of cooperation between Eurojust and its international partners (third countries, international organisations)</p>	Very detailed data on terrorist acts – number of attacks, nature (broken down into jihadist, right-wing, left-wing, ethno-nationalist and separatist terrorism, and other), outcome (attacks successful, unsuccessful and foiled). Additionally, data on the number of arrests, convictions and sentences imposed in connection with terrorist offences. Information on the locations of the attacks, the number of victims, the nature of the targets (civilian facilities, public facilities, facilities related to critical infrastructure), modus operandi

Criterion	Eurojust's reports	Europol's TE-SAT reports
Data sources	<p>Prosecutors, courts, law enforcement agencies of Member States, foreign partners, OLAF, Interpol, Europol.</p> <p>No sensitive/classified operational data collected in CTR</p>	<p>Law enforcement and security/special services of Member States, Eurojust, Europol's own materials, primarily of an analytical nature.</p> <p>No sensitive/classified operational data used in Europol's core business.</p>

Source: own elaboration.

## Summary

A comparison of Eurojust and Europol reports and the established detail of the latter, combined with the growing role of Eurojust and the tools at its disposal, confirm the hypothesis put forward at the outset. In response to the research questions, it should be noted that the modest catalogue of data in Eurojust's reports on terrorism and other types of crime is due to the fact that its reports are designed to present only a certain aspect related to terrorism, namely the form, scale and development trends of law enforcement cooperation in preventing and combating this phenomenon, rather than presenting it in its entirety<sup>70</sup>. Unlike the data contained in TE-SAT, which includes detailed qualitative and quantitative statistics on terrorist attacks along with an in-depth analysis of specific types of terrorism, the data in the Eurojust's report only illustrates the development and forms of cooperation in cross-border criminal proceedings. In its reports, Eurojust also does not include detailed operational data obtained from entities to which it provides assistance and which is collected in CTR. This restriction, which also applies to Europol's reports, stems from the fact that information about persons suspected of terrorism cannot be made publicly available for both legal and praxeological reasons.

Although the data contained in Eurojust's reports does not provide a direct picture of terrorist crime, by presenting the scale of cooperation

<sup>70</sup> More comprehensive data enabling the development of a picture of terrorist crime is presented by Eurojust in other materials it publishes. See, for example, the brochure *Eurojust Meeting on Counter-Terrorism. 27–28 November 2024. Outcome report*, The Hague 2025. <https://doi.org/10.2812/4325013>.

between law enforcement agencies in the field of international crime, they create an additional perspective that can be adopted in the analysis of the phenomenon of terrorism. First and foremost, it allows us to identify and examine development trends in cross-border cooperation in the prosecution of terrorist offences. In this regard, data indicating a systematic increase in the number of cases involving Eurojust, accompanied by an intensification in the frequency and diversity of legal instruments used, in the absence of a radical increase in terrorist crime, can be seen as an argument in favour of a growing understanding of the benefits offered by Eurojust. Assuming that over time skills in using the tools and solutions offered by Eurojust will also develop, it can be assumed that in the coming years it will become an increasingly important element of an extensive legal and organisational system aimed at preventing various crimes and prosecuting them, including those of a terrorist nature. In this context, it can be suggested that in future Eurojust's reports, more detailed statistical data be published, for example in the form of an annex. The value of the reports would be enhanced by the presentation of additional information concerning, for example, the average response time and the processing of requests for assistance, so that the effectiveness of cooperation could be assessed. It would also be highly informative to cite data relating to the results of proceedings, e.g. in how many cases convictions were secured, funds were frozen, or criminal networks were uncovered. The presentation of such information would certainly allow for more in-depth assessments of the effectiveness and extent of international cooperation in criminal matters and Eurojust's participation therein. The significance of its reports in the context of combating terrorism would also be positively influenced by the presentation of a larger number of case studies and more extensive considerations concerning the basic scope of Eurojust's activities, i.e. analyses of problems in cross-border cooperation. Detailed discussion of the difficulties encountered in international investigations, including legal barriers and restrictions, as well as the procedures and good practices developed to overcome them, would most likely lead to the gradual elimination of the identified obstacles. Such an effect of the reports would be not only cognitive but also practical.

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The article expresses the view of the author and does not represent the position of the Internal Security Agency.

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