

Three arrested in Spain for encouraging terrorist attacks against France and its interests abroad



In the early hours of 27 April, officers of the Spanish National Police (Policia Nacional) with the support of Europol swooped on the members of a terrorist cell in the city of Granada. A total of three individuals were arrested on suspicion of encouraging terrorist attacks against France.

After the French magazine Charlie Hebdo republished caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad in September of last year, the arrestees posted numerous videos on their social media accounts threatening to carry out violent actions against France, its citizens and interests abroad to avenge the said-publication.

The Spanish National Police used its specialist capabilities to identify the individuals behind these social media profiles with totalled almost 19 000 followers.

The seriousness of these threats, together with the suspects' social media following, represented a serious security concern.

Europol deployed one of its experts to the field to assist the Spanish authorities during the day of action. The evidence gathered during the house searches will now be analysed by Europol to identify potential links with

ongoing investigations.

Council ready for talks on €5 billion Brexit adjustment reserve

EU member states today endorsed the Council's position on a five-billion-euro fund designed to mitigate the immediate impact of the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the European Union.

The fund, known as the Brexit adjustment reserve, will focus on the most affected regions, areas and sectors in the EU and will be used to pay for a variety of measures such as compensating businesses for lost trade, keeping people in employment and setting up customs checks at ports.



The reserve aims to support all member states to counter the negative consequences of the UK's withdrawal. In a spirit of solidarity, we are committed to help European regions, companies and citizens, and especially the hardest hit communities, to tackle the unprecedented challenges of Brexit.

Augusto Santos Silva, Minister of State and of Foreign Affairs of Portugal, Council presidency

The Council's position endorses a four-year period from 1 January 2020 until 31 December 2023, meaning that costs incurred during that time as a result of Brexit can be covered in full or in part.

Since the economic consequences of the UK's withdrawal are multiple and unpredictable, the draft regulation establishing the reserve provides an indicative and non-exhaustive list of eligible measures.

The list includes, among other things, assistance to businesses and fishing communities, short-term work schemes and retraining programmes, border, customs, sanitary and phytosanitary checks, collection of indirect taxation, and reintegration of EU nationals who have left the UK due to the withdrawal.

Whatever measures member states decide to take, they have to be directly linked to mitigating the adverse consequences of Brexit to qualify for funding.

Allocation

In line with the policy of strengthening cohesion across the EU, the allocation method takes into account the uneven impact of Brexit on different regions and sectors.

According to the Council's position, all five billion euros (in 2018 prices) will be provisionally allocated upfront. Each member state's share is determined by three main factors: the value of fish caught in the UK exclusive economic zone, the importance of trade with the UK, and a factor linked to the population of maritime border regions with the UK.

Overall, €600 million will be allocated in accordance with the factor linked to fishing, €4.150 billion based on trade, and €250 million under the factor linked to maritime border regions.

Four billion euros, or 80% of the reserve, will be disbursed as pre-financing in three instalments, in 2021, 2022 and 2023. The remaining one billion will be made available in 2025, and how it is shared will depend on how member states have spent the funding in the previous years, also taking into consideration any unused amounts.

Next steps

Once the European Parliament approves its position, the co-legislators will hold talks on the draft regulation. The aim is to reach an agreement before the summer recess, so that the first instalment can be disbursed before the end of the year.

The five-billion-euro fund was agreed last year by EU leaders as part of the 2021-2027 budget.

French Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs visits EASO

On 29 April 2021, the Minister for Europe and Foreign Affairs of France, **Jean-Yves Le Drian**, accompanied by the French Ambassador to Malta, **Brigitte Curmi**, visited the Headquarters of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) in Valletta. During the visit, the Minister met with the Senior Management of the Agency.

During the meetings, discussions with the French delegation focussed on a general overview of EASO's activities including EASO's operational role. Discussions also touched upon the draft Regulation transforming EASO into the EU Asylum Agency (EUAA), emphasising the importance to have the new

Regulation adopted swiftly.

Commenting on the visit of the Minister, the Executive Director of the Agency, **Nina Gregori** stated *''It is important that EASO's activities were presented to Minister Le Drian. I'm confident we will work closely together towards a new mandate for the Agency, also supporting France in the upcoming Presidency.''*

EASO is an agency of the European Union mandated with supporting EU Member States in implementing the Common European Asylum System. The agency acts as a center of expertise on EU asylum procedures and obligations, providing technical assistance and guidance, training and operational support. EASO also works closely with the rotating Presidency of the Council of the EU. In view of the fact that France will hold the Presidency in the first semester of 2022, EASO's Senior Management also explained the support the agency can provide in this context.

Any further information may be obtained from the European Asylum Support Office on the following email address: press@easo.europa.eu

[Conditions applicable to the cooperation with the UK since 1 January 2021](#)



The EU and the UK have concluded a Trade and Partnership Agreement specifying the possibilities and conditions for their cooperation after the end of the transition period that followed the UK's withdrawal from the EU on 31 January 2020.

The EU-UK Trade and Partnership Agreement includes provisions on the cooperation between Europol and the competent authorities of the UK.

Thanks to the conclusion of the Agreement, Europol could initiate the operational cooperation with the UK as third state already at the start of this year.

Europol is working on fully implementing the relevant provisions of the EU-UK Trade and Partnership Agreement as soon as possible in consultation with the UK and under the authority of its Management Board. Until an arrangement fully implementing those provisions is concluded between Europol and its UK counterpart, Europol is adhering to additional data protection safeguards that were defined in consultation with the European Data Protection Supervisor (EDPS) and the Management Board.

[Europol's Management Board](#) is an integral part of Europol's administrative and management structure.

EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement: Council adopts decision on conclusion

The Council has today adopted a decision on the conclusion of the EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement and the security of information agreement. This is the last step for the EU in the ratification of the agreements.

The UK will now be notified of the finalisation of the internal EU procedures. Following this, the agreements and accompanying texts will be published in the Official Journal of the EU before the end of the month. On 1 May 2021, both agreements will enter into force.



Today we open a new chapter in our relations with the UK. The conclusion of the trade and cooperation agreement will give legal certainty to the new EU-UK relationship, in the interests of citizens and business on both sides of the channel. We value the UK as a good neighbour, an old ally and an important partner.

Ana Paula Zacarias, Secretary of State for European Affairs of Portugal

Background

Negotiators reached an agreement on an EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement and a security of information agreement on 24 December 2020.

On 29 December 2020, the Council adopted the decision on the signing of the EU-UK trade and cooperation agreement and a security of information agreement and on their provisional application as of 1 January 2021. The agreements were then signed by the two parties on 30 December 2020. The agreements have been provisionally applied since 1 January 2021.

The agreements provided for a time-limited provisional application until the end of February, unless a later date was agreed by the parties. On 23 February, the EU-UK Partnership Council decided, at the EU's request, to extend the provisional application until 30 April 2021 to allow sufficient time to complete the legal-linguistic revision of the agreement in all 24 languages. The authentication of all 24 language versions of the agreement was finalised on 21 April.

On 26 February 2021, the Council requested the European Parliament's consent to its decision on the conclusion of the agreements, which the European

Parliament gave on 27 April.