

# EUROPEAN NEWS

by Tony Moore

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In 2016, a total of 142 failed, foiled and completed attacks were reported to have taken place in eight Member States. More than half of them (76) were reported by the United Kingdom. France reported 23 attacks, Italy 17, Spain 10, Greece 6, Germany 5, Belgium 4 and the Netherlands 1.

The number of jihadist attacks actually decreased in 2016 (13) compared with 16 the previous year. Six of the 13 were linked to Islamic State. However, the number of arrests related to jihadist terrorism rose for the third consecutive year. The European Counter Terrorism Centre at Europol supported 127 counter terrorism investigations in 2016 which showed a clear indication of the growing range of jihadist activity.

A total of 142 people died as a result of terrorist attacks and 379 were injured in 2016. Of the 142 people who died, 135 were killed in the 13 attacks by jihadists.

Attacks carried out by left-wing violent extremists have also risen since 2014, reaching a total of 27 in 2016 of which by far the largest number (16) was reported by Italy.

Other key findings in the report were:

- 1,002 persons were arrested for terrorist offences in 2016. Most arrests were related to jihadist terrorism, for which the number rose for the third consecutive year, 395 in 2014, 687 in 2015, and 718 in 2016.
- Almost one-third of the total number of persons arrested (291) were 25 years of age or younger.
- Although terrorists use a wide range of readily available weapons, because of their high impact and symbolic power, explosive devices were used in 40% of the attacks.
- It is believed that 40% of terrorist plots in Europe have been funded or partly financed through crime, especially drug dealing, theft, robberies, loan fraud, burglaries and the sale of counterfeit goods.
- Women and children have increasingly assumed more operational roles in jihadist terrorism activities, One in four (26%) of those arrested in 2016 were women, a significant increase compared to 2015 (18%). The United Kingdom reported an increase in the number of women, families and children engaging in the conflict in Syria and Iraq and the Netherlands reported that more than 40 children, aged 0-12 years, travelled to the two countries.
- 99 of the foiled, failed and completed attacks were carried out by those labelled as ethno-nationalist or separatist terrorists. Dissident



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Republican groups in Northern Ireland were involved in 76 attacks.

- The number of attacks of left-wing and anarchist terrorists increased in 2016 to 27; all took place in Greece, Italy or Spain. A total of 31 people were arrested in EU Member States.
- The quantity of Islamic State propaganda decreased in 2016.
- Jihadist groups demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of social networks, launching well-organised concerted social media campaigns to recruit followers and to glorify acts of terrorism. This has been restricted to some extent by the collaborative efforts of law enforcement agencies, the Europol Internet Referral Unit and the private sector.