

Master Thesis:

*Final research including introduction, literature review, theory, research method,
operationalization, research, conclusion*

**Anti-terrorism cooperation in the European Union: the influence of the
foreign fighters' phenomenon**

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Abstract

Since 2011, a major civil conflict in Syria and Iraq has attracted European nationals who have, for the majority, participated in terrorist activities. As these individuals are involved in actions overseas, they are called foreign fighters. This phenomenon has taken huge proportions, with recent estimates accounting for more than 5000 European nationals in the ranks of terrorist groups. In the European Union, anti-terrorism efforts have been conducted through cooperation, as the member-states had agreed on free movement of people and goods. Terrorist attacks in France and Belgium, in late 2015 and early 2016, were conducted by returnees – foreign fighters who reappeared in the European Union to commit terrorist skirmishes – demonstrating the transnational threat posed by such individuals. However, in the history of the European Union, terrorism was mostly domestically motivated by separatist or national incentives. Therefore, the foreign fighters’ phenomenon has now taken a new dimension, requiring policy makers to modify the scope and extent of the European anti-terrorist response. Using the neo-functionalist and intergovernmentalist theories, the influence of the foreign fighters’ phenomenon on European anti-terrorism cooperation was studied. Ultimately, it can be argued that the scope and extent of European cooperation was increased. Both the European institutional framework and Member States reacted to the issue with a preferable stance for more European anti-terrorism cooperation, leading to an increase in such practice.

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Acknowledgements

As a Frenchman who grew up in Belgium, it was with concern that I witnessed terrorist attacks unfold in both countries in 2015 and 2016. It quickly became clear that returnees from conflict zones in the middle east had played a key role in the horrendous attacks, and that security institutions had underestimated the threat such individuals could represent. Throughout the writing process of this master thesis, many other cities worldwide were hit by terrorist attacks and numerous foreign fighters have returned to their homeland, as their terrorist endeavours in Iraq and Syria have come to an end. This research seems to indicate that the European Union and its Member States have taken the necessary steps towards more security cooperation.

Let's therefore hope for the best!

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents and my brother, considering their unconditional support throughout my studies. It is with their love and backing that I could achieve so much in so little time. In addition, I would like to mention the substantial assistance received from my thesis supervisor Dr. Onderco, for which I will be eternally grateful. Moreover, I would like to mention my two flatmates Marc and Léon, who have supported me during the writing process – although I had to support them through theirs. Furthermore, I must underline the tremendous help received from my IMP colleagues, notably Jan, Niels, Max, Matthijs, Wouter, Josh - among others. As final note, I would like to thank the whole program & University staff for making this year the best of my life (*so far*).

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 What is terrorism ?

Since the end of the 2000's, terrorism has grown to be a major and global security concern. Considerable terrorist attacks have sparked conflicts, claimed countless lives, destroyed infrastructures and cost billions. But what exactly is terrorism? Very different definitions arise from a multitude of perspectives. From the point of view of international law, terrorism was deemed so complex that a comprehensive consensus on a unique definition is yet to be determined (Saul, 2012: 65). Already, it can be emphasized that defining this specific subject is a complicated task. According to working documents from the United Nations (United Nations, 2005) and panel of experts, the definition of terrorism depends largely on a "regional conception" (Saul, 2012: 65). In this research, the way in which the European Union considers and define terrorism will be of prime importance. All Member States have agreed through the 2002 "EU rules on terrorist offences and related penalties" (Council of the European Union, 2002) on a common definition of what a terrorist offence is:

"The notion of terrorist offence as a combination of:

- objective elements (murder, bodily injuries, hostage taking, extortion, committing attacks, threat to commit any of the above, etc.); and*
- subjective elements (acts committed with the objective of seriously intimidating a population, destabilizing or destroying structures of a country or international organization or making a government abstain from performing actions)."*

(Council of the European Union, 2002)

Later, following the creation of Europol – a European agency coordinating security efforts -, a more practical and comprehensive definition was established, which described terrorism as:

"acts which aim to intimate populations, compel states to comply with the perpetrators' demands and/or destabilize the fundamental political, constitutional, economic or social structures of a country or international organization." (Europol, 2014: 5)

In the academic world, obtaining a unique definition was a delicate task, due once again to the intricacy of the topic (Locatelli, 2015: 15). Nevertheless, partial definitions were established, and a small number of scholars have tried to create a "broad range" theory (Locatelli, 2015:

15). Based on the work of Andrea Locatelli (see Figure 1), it can be established that five main elements compose the definition (Locatelli, 2015: 8), which describe terrorism as “a peculiar form of political violence based on an indirect approach, implying a patent breach of accepted rules and enjoying a tactical advantage over defence” (Locatelli, 2015: 10). Using data from the United States Department of State, it is possible to learn more about how terrorist attacks are conducted (see Figure 2).

Figure 1: Terrorism definition (Locatelli, 2015: 7-10)

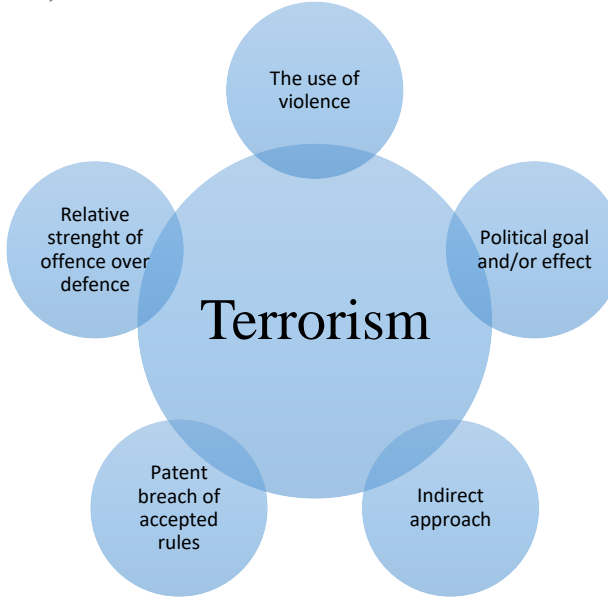
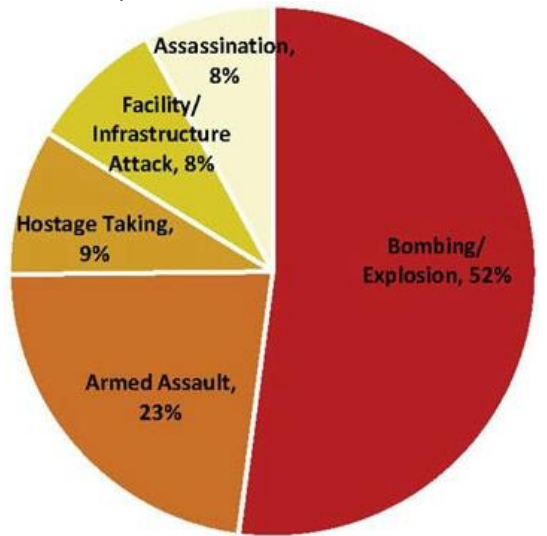


Figure 2: Tactics used in terrorist attacks worldwide (U.S. Department of State, 2015: 14)



1.2 Why is terrorism an issue?

The use of violence by terrorist movements is, over all, aimed towards non-combatants (U.S. Department of State, 2015: 15), which are in the majority civilians (U.S. Department of State, 2015: 14). In fact, according to international data, whether it was to uphold or force their ideologies, besides national or ethnic claims, terrorist groups have also targeted civil servants, such as the police, governments officials and military personnel (U.S. Department of State, 2015: 15). In academic research, known threats of terrorism include the influence on the political process (Thackrah, 2004: 201), social and ethnic disruptions within a society (Thackrah, 2004: 222), as well as disproportionate military response (Thackrah, 2004: 233). Terrorist actions can also be conducted to cause intense repression towards a specific part of the population (Thackrah, 2004: 203), undermining public support for the authorities. Moreover, terrorism is based on the propagation of fear (Thackrah, 2004: 213) fuelled by media coverage (Thackrah, 2004: 169), which can destabilize entire regions, and consequently cause important economic losses (Thackrah, 2004: 218). Furthermore, terrorism can endanger

humanitarian efforts (Choi & Salehyan, 2013: 53) and worsen the state of already weakened countries, as well as threaten democratic regimes (Thackrah, 2004: 79). In European countries, terrorism has nourished mistrust against migrants and fuelled extremist political ideologies (Nail, 2016: 160). Undeniably, the societal impact of terrorism can be tremendous.

1.3 The new rise of the foreign fighters phenomenon

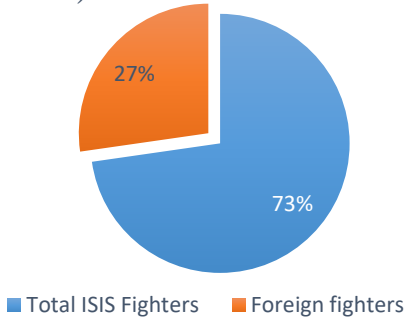
Throughout this work, a specific component of the terrorist threat will be studied: the foreign fighters’ phenomenon. In the European Union, policy documents from Europol characterize the foreign fighters’ phenomenon according to a definition by the United Nations Security Council (Europol, 2016: 7) as:

“individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict” (United Nations, 2014: 2)

This definition of foreign fighters served as an essential basis for the European Member States and institutions’ policy documents related to terrorism (Europol, 2016: 7), and will therefore be a foundation stone to this research. In the academic realm, the latter have been defined by David Malet as:

“non-citizens of conflict states who join insurgencies during civil conflict” (Malet, 2013: 2)

Figure 3: Estimates % of foreign fighters among ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria (ICCT, 2015: 1-23)



In the recent years, the issue of foreign fighters has been a central controversy in international relations, due to the outbreak of a major civil conflict in Syria and Iraq – where the involvement of external individuals has been extensive (De Guttery, Capone, Paulussen, 2016: 15). In fact, according to recent quantitative studies (see Figure 3), foreign fighters originating from other states represent a consequent part of the pool of fighters involved in this conflict.

But from an historical perspective, the foreign fighters’ phenomenon is nothing new. Altogether, this subject has been globally assessed in the literature in recent history, with many conflicts such as the 1936-1939 Spanish Civil War (Malet, 2013: 124), the 1947-1949 Israeli

war of independence (Malet, 2013: 175) or the Afghanistan war (Malet, 2013: 220) in the late eighties producing similar foreign fighters' phenomenon.

1.4 Why are foreign fighters an issue?

Overall, foreign fighters are part of the terrorist threat, and can therefore cause similar issues to those described in sub-section 1.2. But this phenomenon does add new issues to the pool of risks posed by classic terrorist activities. In fact, academic research shows that the flow of foreign fighters joining conflict zone abroad can make their favoured insurgencies durable and more successful (Malet, 2010: 97). Also, and in the meantime, battle does produce increasingly skilled fighters (Byman, 2015: 582) through training, combat experience and can reinforce violence tendencies. But while the threat is, firstly, located outside of their nations of origin, the foreign fighters can also pose a substantial danger to their homeland. In fact, foreign fighters with war experience, especially the ones that would want to come back to their home country, can pose a substantial physical (Jenkis, 2014: 8) and ideological (Jenkis, 2014: 6) threat in the Western world (Byman, 2016: 69). But how dangerous are these individuals to their home country? A study by Thomas Hegghammer has tried to assess the return rate of these foreign fighters (Hegghammer, 2013: 1). Throughout the study, it was shown that the probability of return is, statistically, quite low – around one in nine fighters would return (Hegghammer, 2013: 10). Hypothesis on why such sparse numbers would emphasize on high casualties among foreign fighters, as well as on the stronger legitimation of foreign fighting over domestic fighting (Hegghammer, 2013: 7). Moreover, the work of Thomas Hegghammer and other portions of the literature similarly agree that the likelihood of attacks against domestic population (Hegghammer, 2013: 11) by returning foreign fighters is statistically low (Byman, 2016: 70). At the same time, the literature does identify a gap between perceived threat and the real danger. While statistical research evaluates the risk of foreign returnees action as low (Hegghammer, 2013: 1), as we said prior, other sources are very likely to evaluate the threat as numerically very high (Bakker, Paulussen, Entenmann, 2014). As it was assessed earlier on, a considerable number of foreign nationals have travelled to a foreign land - statistical evidences have greatly increased since previous academic studies were conducted and have reached unseen proportions. It is likely that these numbers continue to evolve positively. For Hegghammer, the return rate and the likelihood of a terrorist action are low. But in this case, the impact of small percentage on a large growing sample is non-negligible. Moreover, his findings have not been updated to consider the recent impressive surge. On the second hand, however, the same study has shown that terrorist activities undertaken with the participation of

returnees are by all means more likely to be executed (Hegghammer, 2013: 11) and cause greater damages. In other words, when it comes to evaluating the threat, studies have shown that despite low statistical risks of being involved in domestic terrorism if they return, the foreign fighters do contribute to the success of a terrorist plot (Hegghammer, 2013: 11). Other scholars seem to agree with the study of Thomas Hegghammer, in that the potential killing power of actions conducted by returning foreign fighters would be, in comparison with domestic grown terrorism, statistically higher (Vidino, 2014: 219). The literature has assessed that, in the last five years, fighters originating from European countries have flooded conflict zones – mainly in Syria and Iraq (De Guttery, Capone, Paulussen, 2016: 15), at an unprecedented rate (Vidino, 2014: 218). In any case, even with the safest estimates, it is commonly emphasized by security organizations as well as journalists that the depth of this phenomenon in terms of numbers and intensity is unprecedented.

1.5 Problem Statement

These “insurgencies that recruit foreign nationals to join rebel groups in various civil wars around the globe are a source of growing concern to policymakers” (Malet, 2010: 97). Policy documents from the United Nations present similar concern to those found in academic literature, such as the effect of foreign fighters on conflict in war torn countries along with the domestic risk of returnees (United Nations, 2014: 2). The United Nations Security Council has adopted, in 2014, several resolutions related to the issue of foreign fighters – mainly to define the phenomenon and underline solutions on this matter. Resolution 2178 (2014) drew recommendations to circumvent the foreign fighters’ phenomenon, through the disruption and prevention of financing (United Nations, 2014: 7) and through cooperation between Member States (United Nations, 2014: 6). Similarly, and in the same time frame, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) has developed its own response – with members of the alliance agreeing to enhance the “exchange of information” (Deni, 2015: 56), but not without experiencing challenges (Deni, 2015: 57). Finally, the European Union has itself renewed its interest for the topic in the recent years. The foreign fighters’ phenomenon has been, since 2014, set as a top priority by the European Council and Europol (Europol, 2016: 6).

Undoubtedly, the issue of the foreign fighters has had an influence on the counter terrorism efforts of many international organizations. With a focus on European institutions, this thesis will try to understand the influence of the phenomenon on anti-terrorism efforts of the Union. This new development in the terrorist threat is confronted by institutions built through the scope of European integration over many years – institutions which are by nature susceptible to

change. It can be deemed important to try and measure to what extent the phenomenon has influenced the common security apparatus of the European Union, and in what way.

1.6 Scope and aim of the research

Undoubtedly, terrorist incidents can materialize in several forms and have countless consequences, and knowing the immense diversity in both reach and nature of the phenomenon, it can be deemed useful to reduce the scope of the research. In this thesis, a specific aspect of the terrorist threat will be the centre of attention: the issue of foreign fighters. The goal of the research is to study, understand and explain the influence of this specific terrorist threat on the security cooperation in the European Union.

The hypotheses tested could, firstly, assume that the European institutions are dealing with the issue of foreign fighters as a classic terrorist threat, within the regular anti-terrorism cooperation framework. In other words, the phenomenon of foreign fighters has not extended the scope of the cooperation. On opposite hand, the hypotheses tested could also assume that the recent development regarding foreign fighters have reinforced European integration, and therefore expanded the role of European institutions.

In terms of the scope of the research, limitations do arise. Firstly, the latest studies evaluating the threat posed by foreign fighters to their home countries could have weak statistical relevance in light with recent developments. In fact, since the research of Thomas Hegghammer on the risk of returning foreign fighters was conducted, the phenomenon has taken huge proportions. When a European Member States has a high number of its nationals among foreign fighters in a conflict, it will be assumed that the returnees' threat is high – but this relationship has not been correlated quantitatively in recent studies. Secondly, the issue of foreign fighters has not struck every member of the European Union in the same way; huge disparities exist. Thirdly, part of the cooperation between Member States is made through other framework, such as bilateral exchange of information (Thackrah, 2004: 94). It is therefore important to stress that cooperation between Member States could be influenced by new developments, but without visible or measurable effects this would be hard to assess. Finally, anti-terrorism cooperation could be conducted in secret due the importance of the issue – meaning the lack of documents and sources could limit the generalization and relevance of the results.

1.7 Research question and sub-questions

Throughout this thesis, the following research question will be answered:

How has the foreign fighters' phenomenon influenced anti-terrorism cooperation in the European Union?

To answer this question, the first goal will be to identify how anti-terrorism cooperation is conducted, and what is the relationship between the European institutional framework and the Member States. The first sub-question will therefore be:

How is European anti-terrorism cooperation conducted?

This will be answered in the second chapter through a literature review and the third chapter in the form of a theoretical model. Then, the second sub-question will focus on the influence of this phenomenon on the European institutional framework, remembering how the latter can play a role in shaping how Member States behave:

How has the issue of foreign fighters affected the European institutional framework?

Furthermore, the third sub-question will focus on the effect of the phenomenon on the Member States, keeping in mind their importance in the European decision-making process:

How has the foreign fighters' threat influenced Member States' preference for European anti-terrorist cooperation?

Finally, a sub-goal of the work will be to identify why, in the case of the issue of foreign fighters, more European cooperation is needed.

The general goal of the thesis will be to analyse the influence of the foreign fighter phenomenon on the European cooperation framework, and determine in what manner and to what extent the latter has evolved.

1.8 Theoretical and societal relevance

Conducting a research about the impact of the foreign fighters' phenomenon on the security cooperation within the European Union has both a theoretical and societal relevance. In terms of theoretical relevance, such work could lead to a better understanding of the terrorist threat and more specifically its impact on the European Union security apparatus. As stated

beforehand, the terrorist threat can take a variety of forms and is in a constant evolution, the foreign fighters being its latest development in the European Union. Understanding how the issue of foreign fighters is impacting European countries' cooperation in the Union and their stance toward a European security union can be of interest. Moreover, this research could help to determine the underlying dynamics of security cooperation in the Union— helping to compose a global understanding for situations that could, like the terrorist threat, be acquainted with new developments.

In terms of societal relevance, this work could provide a better understanding of how the European Union has responded to a major surge and modification in the terrorist threat - reassuring pessimist visions that accuse authorities of laxness. Furthermore, the risk represented by the foreign fighters' phenomenon can be overly perceived by the civil society through the media scope, when terrorist attacks happen. This work can provide perspectives on and explain the European response to terrorism, underlining the importance of sound public policy. Finally, this work could emphasize the importance of European cooperation on such topic, and help the reader assess to what extent the European level fight against terrorism is in line with political engagements of Member States.

1.9 Structure of the thesis

The thesis will be structured in the following manner. Firstly, an extensive review of the existing academic literature as well as policy documents will be conducted to comprehensively understand the specificity of anti-terrorism cooperation in the European Union (section 2.1), as well as how it has been defined, classified and dealt with (section 2.2). Moreover, the relationship between the foreign fighters' phenomenon and the European Union will be analysed (section 2.3). To do so, a study of the academic articles and publications related to security cooperation in Europe will be operated. The literature will be assessed to see how previous studies have analysed this phenomenon and will serve as a basis for investigating the research question (section 2.4). Secondly, a comprehensive analysis of the theoretical foundation will be conducted to guide the research (section 3.1). From there, a theoretical framework will be built (section 3.5) and two theories defined (sections 3.6 and 3.7). The latter will serve as a basis to construct the hypotheses. Then, the research method will be developed (sections 4.1 and 4.2) and the operationalization' criteria defined (sections 4.4 to 4.10). From there, the research will be conducted, testing the explanatory power of the theories in relation to the hypotheses (chapter 5 and 6). In the end, the results will be discussed (section 7.1) and a conclusion will be produced (section 7.2).

Chapter 2: Anti-terrorism efforts in the European Union

2.1 A short history of anti-terrorism efforts in the European Union

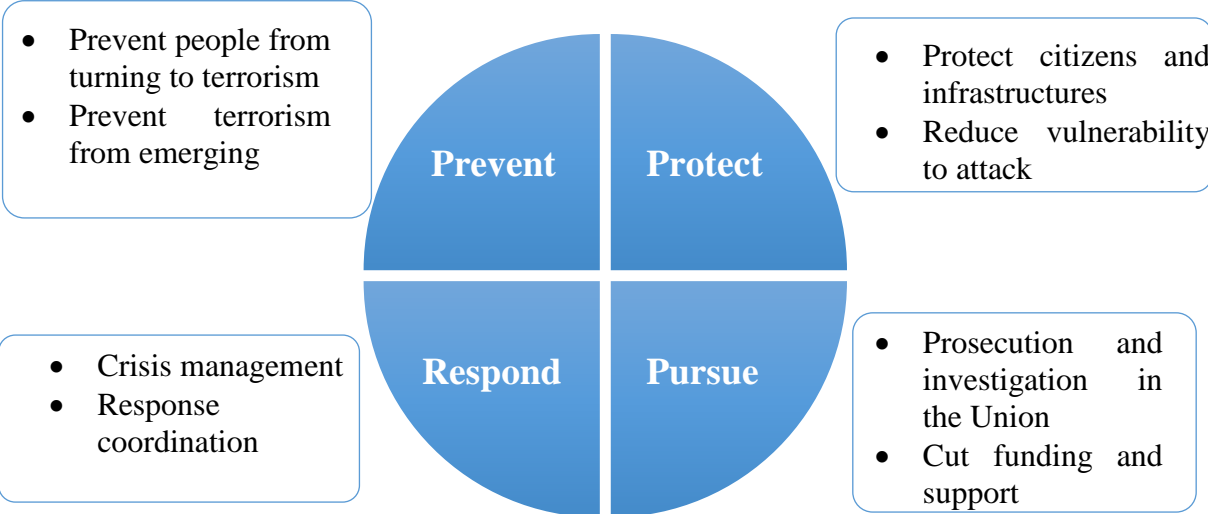
In the field of academic research, it is commonly admitted that the main strategy of the European Union in the fight against terrorism is the promotion of cooperation. But how and why was cooperation developed? European security authorities have gone to great lengths to try and reduce the terrorist threat in all its forms, considering the devastating terrorist attacks that had occurred throughout the history of the Union. In 1978, the Council of Europe “adopted the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism” (Thackrah, 2004: 91). The convention was “the first agreement reached by members of the European community in reaction to the rise of terrorism” (Thackrah, 2004: 91). This effort was greatly followed by the European Economic Community (former European Union); over three quarter of the European Member States had, at that time, signed the convention (Thackrah, 2004: 93). In addition, the Member States established a platform to coordinate anti-terrorism efforts, named the TREVI working groups, with the objective to share information or best practices (Wade, Maljević, 2009: 107). This attempt was “from a political and practical perspective considered a success” (Wade, Maljević, 2009: 108).

Building on that experience, what became the European Union formally began to conduct its own institutional efforts regarding terrorism only in the late 1990’s. This endeavour started with the 1995 “La Gomera Declaration”, which stressed that conducting an effective response to terrorism would require better coordination and cooperation among Member States (Council of the European Union, 1995: annex 3). The latter was followed with a Joint action by the Council of the European Union, concerning the “creation and maintenance of a Directory of specialized counter-terrorist competences [...] to facilitate counter-terrorist cooperation between the Member States” (Council of the European Union, 1996: 1). Following the deadly attacks of 9/11, European institutions and Member States had pushed for a united strategy in the fight against terrorism (Argomaniz, Bures & Kaunert, 2015: 192). This path was further developed thoroughly in the first decade of the new millennium, with the Council adopting in 2002 a “Framework Decision on Combating Terrorism” (Council of the European Union, 2002: 1) - establishing an “harmonization of criminal law in the European Union” (Wade, Maljević, 2009: 122) regarding terrorist penalties. After a European-wide law harmonization, other major reforms of the European institutions were conducted in the fields of security, following

unanimous support for the Union (Wade & Maljević, 2009: 112). The Council of the European Union acted so that the European Police Office or Europol (created following the Maastricht Treaty (Wade & Maljević, 2009: 138)) could expand its competencies to terrorism and serve as a platform for information sharing among Member States (Wade & Maljević, 2009: 143). At the same time, a European Judicial Cooperation Unit or Eurojust (Wade & Maljević, 2009: 114) was created, to “improve judicial cooperation between EU Member States” (Wade & Maljević, 2009: 147). The European reforms all included a desire to increase cooperation among domestic security agencies, as free movement of people and goods is a core characteristic of the Union. As each Member States had its own intelligence, police and judicial system, coordination in that domain was needed (Argomaniz, Bures & Kaunert, 2015: 192) to thwart threats that would be aimed at one country but prepared in another. Therefore, the goal of the Union was the creation of various institutional frameworks (Wade & Maljević, 2009: 114) to ensure good collaboration (Boer, 2015: 405). To operate an efficient internal fight against terrorism, the new institutions mentioned above were created, and did foster the exchange of best practices, information and expertise.

After these reforms were conducted, the European Union adopted in 2005 an official counter-terrorism strategy (Wade, Maljević, 2009: 119), comprised of four pillars – or approaches, namely prevent, protect, pursue and respond (Council of the European Union, 2005: 2). Globally, using policy documents (Council of the European Union, 2005: 3) and academic literature (Wade & Maljević, 2009: 120) these pillars can be described as follow:

Figure 4: European Union counter-terrorism strategy (Council of the European Union, 2005: 3)



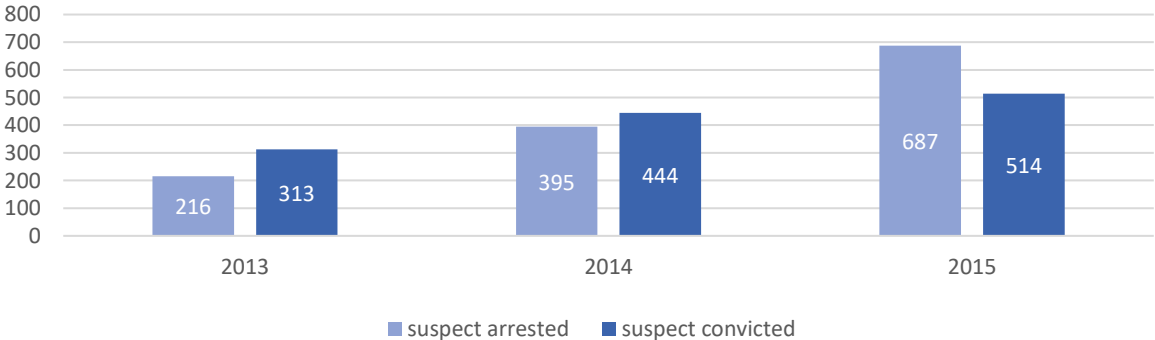
In 2008, the Union adopted a “revised strategy on terrorist financing” (Kaunert, 2012: 475), which further developed the role of European institutions in the issue of terrorism. Over time, it can be emphasized that a European institutional response to terrorism was developed, responding to major crisis or events, and leading to the “construction of a European interest in counter-terrorism” (Kaunert, 2012: 475).

2.2 Terrorism in the European Union

Since 2000, terrorism has grown to be a major and global security concern for the European Union (Wade, Maljević, 2009: 107). As the freedom of movement for people and goods is a core characteristic of the European Union, institutions such as the European Council have considered that terrorist activities on European soil are a violent and transnational threat de facto (Europol, 2008: 7), demanding a Union wide response. Accordingly, the European Union ‘law enforcement agency, Europol, has classified terrorism into five categories, namely jihadism, right-wing, left-wing and anarchist, ethno-nationalism and separatism, as well as single-issue (Europol, 2016: 53-54). This classification was established to reflect the complexity of the terrorist threat (Europol, 2016: 52), to produce effective statistics and to implement targeted policies.

Out of these five categories, the European Union has in the recent years put an important emphasize on Jihadism. In the last three years it was measured, and according to data retrieved from Europol, a considerable number of judicial verdicts or convictions (Europol, 2016: 46) and arrests (Europol, 2016: 19) were in the European Union linked to jihadist terrorism (see Figure 5).

Figure 5: Suspect arrested and convicted to jihadist-linked offence (Europol, 2016: 19-46)



2.3 The European Union and the foreign fighters’ phenomenon

In the recent years, the way in which Member States have perceived the terrorist threat has evolved and the phenomenon took a new dimension. The issue of foreign fighters has been seen as of prime importance by European countries (Vidino, 2014: 218), such as France, Belgium or Germany, as well as by European Union’s institutions (Vidino, 2014: 219). Moreover, the European institutions have considered the foreign fighters’ phenomenon to be the most important terrorist threat faced by the Union, in both 2015 (Europol, 2016: 6) and 2014 (Europol, 2015: 6), whereas in the years preceding separatist terrorism was monopolizing the agenda (Europol, 2014: 11). It can be emphasized that this was the case because, on that same time span, terrorist insurgencies in conflict zone overseas have attracted an important number of fighters unassimilable to the conflict coming directly from European Member States (The Soufan Group, 2015: 5). Moreover, some states have been providers of foreign fighters on a very high level, when numbers are compared to the national population (Vidino, 2014: 218). European institutions have increased their interest on the issue of foreign fighters as the latter have been fuelling conflicts abroad. European countries have been aware of the development of this issue, as these fighters could potentially participate to the terrorist cause by attacking their homeland once they come back. On this issue, the literature seems unanimous: the potential danger of returnees has never been so high (Vidino, 2014: 218), and the threat is rapidly expanding (De Guttry, Capone, Paulussen, 2016: v) – it is therefore a subject of prime importance.

Overall, a great portion of the recent academic studies focus on European foreign fighters

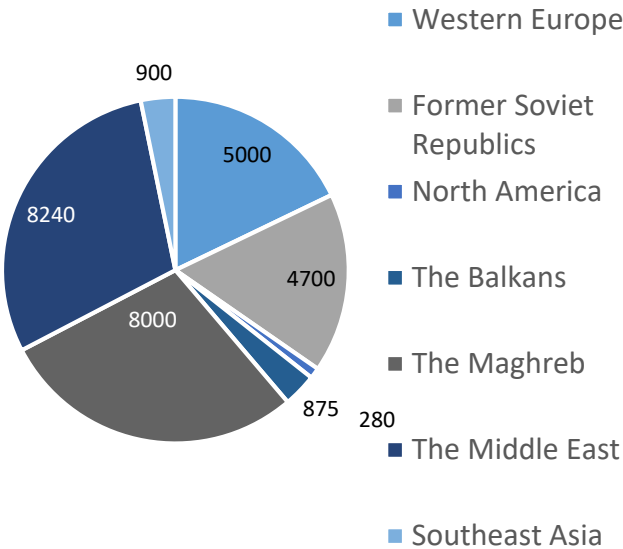


Figure 6: Origin of the Foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq (by Region) (The Soufan Group, 2015: 5)

returning from Syria and Iraq, hotspots of foreign involvements (De Guttry, Capone, Paulussen, 2016: 15), as it is the biggest historical manifestation of such nature in terms of numbers (De Guttry, Capone, Paulussen, 2016: 16) and intensity (Vidino, 2014: 218). Whether as supporters or actual combatants, it is undeniable that an expanding number of European citizens have joined foreign insurgencies (see Figure

4), often terrorist groups, and mainly in the Middle East region. These estimates are confirmed by draft report of the European Parliament (European Parliament, 2015: 4) and Europol's Terrorism Situation and Trend report (Europol, 2016: 26). It is on these issues that European Countries have been, in the last years, very active (Europol, 2008). Following the 2015 terrorist attacks in France, it was realized by European security agencies that the deadly assaults had been "plotted by returnees" (Europol, 2016: 5), in other words European combatants that returned from war zones. The attacks, by both its scales and destructiveness, confirmed previous assumptions about the potential danger of European foreign fighters returning home. For many years, the principal concern of the Member States had been the potential impact of terrorism in general, but the focus had now shifted to the impact of returning foreign terrorist fighters on their security (Europol, 2016: 6). It is hard to argue that terrorist movements have not benefited from this burgeoning flow of militant to advance their agenda overseas. But if the threat was only of this nature, it would have been dealt with through Member States or European external actions.

By assessing the literature, it can be argued that "a wealth of available information from past cases may suggest how the problem of foreign fighters can be managed successfully" (Malet, 2010: 97). On this note, the literature globally agrees that some core elements, such as fighting initial recruitments (Malet, 2010), resolving the conflict (Bakker, Paulussen, Entendmann, 2014) or preventing the individuals from leaving in the first place (Byman, 2016: 595) are of prime importance and could universally contribute to prevent the issue discussed. But while the literature is keen to indicate broad historical solutions in dealing with the threat of foreign fighters (Malet, 2013), it is lacking an adapted, in depth global European perspective. As it was argued in recent analysis, modern technologies and reduced travel cost (what we can argue result from a globalized Europe) may be an important factor influencing the surge in departures to Syria and Iraq (Byman, 2016: 595). In the same way, European security institutions such as Europol or Eurojust believe that some European specificities, such as the free movement of people and capital or lack of common counter terrorist policy, affect how the foreign fighters threat is dealt with. Their recommendation is to push for increasing cooperation between Member States (Europol, 2008: 7).

2.4 Foreign fighters and European Member States

In the European Union, Member States have produced very different counts of foreign fighters. The biggest countries in term of population, France the United Kingdom and Germany, have contributed to a substantial portion of the foreign fighters (The Soufan Group, 2015: 13). It

could be assumed that such settings would be caused by differences in demography, but other smaller countries such as Belgium (The Soufan Group, 2015: 13) or the Netherlands (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016: 25) have also seen an important number of foreign fighters despite their smaller populations. Overall, disparities in terms of foreign fighters per capital are clear, with countries such as the Czech Republic or Malta having no reported foreign fighters (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016: 46). With these various levels of foreign fighters, in fact, it can be deemed relevant to look at the influence of the level of foreign fighters on the perception of threat for Member States. In the research of Stephen Saideman, a focus was put on the contribution per countries to the current multilateral coalition against the Islamic State in Syria (Saideman, 2016: 289). Overall, it was assessed that “if one’s country is a source of foreign fighters, then it is going to do something to participate in the effort” (Saideman, 2016: 299). This would be the case because the national government would be pressured by its security agencies or public opinion to act (Saideman, 2016: 299), in countries where foreign fighters are a known problem. Even if this study is focused on external actions, which can be considered as foreign policy, it does provide interesting insights on the link between a high number of foreign fighters and state actions. The paper is showing that countries with a prominent level of foreign fighters, and in a broader way those which have seen domestic attacks plotted by returnees, have contributed to the airstrikes the most (Saideman, 2016: 296). Looking at the countries previously mentioned, such as Germany, France or the Netherlands, for the higher number of foreign fighters, confirms the previous assumptions (Saideman, 2016: 296). In another research, conducted by Tim Haesebrouck, the factors influencing collective actions in the security realm were analysed. Using the case of NATO’ intervention in Libya, Haesenbrouck demonstrates that national politics, hence national security interest, and the goals of an action, hence getting rid of a threat, are closely linked (Haesebrouck, 2016: 20). Using in his dataset the same European countries as those mentioned before, Haesenbrouck partly emphasizes that national threat would be an incentive for a state to participate in collective action (Haesebrouck, 2016: 20), giving more credit to the assumption that states are more likely to act when they have considered the threat level to be high.

From the two articles, it can therefore be assumed that the national quantity of foreign fighters is subsequently linked to the level of action a state is willing to take. In other words, a member state with more foreign fighters would consider that it is facing a greater threat, as its nationals may come back on the territory, and would be more inclined to take further actions against this type of terrorist menace. From these findings, it can be emphasized that Member States with

the most foreign fighters would be in favor of new ways to tackle the issue – as it would be in its best interest to conduct additional actions.

2.5 Identifying the literature gap

Giving all these factors, the literature does not explore what impact, if any, the phenomenon of returning foreign fighters has on the actual anti-terrorism cooperation between Member States. To mitigate the terrorist risk, security institutions have traditionally developed a range of policies, mainly promoting criminal persecutions (Pickering, McCulloch, Wright-Neville, 2008:13) and ensuring police and intelligence cooperation (Argomaniz, Bures & Kaunert, 2015). As scholars and policy makers have agreed on the potential danger caused by this foreign fighter phenomenon, a study assessing the impact of such development on the dynamics of security cooperation in the European Union is relevant. In other words, it seems that the literature is lacking an understanding of the impact of the foreign fighter phenomena on European states anti-terrorism cooperation. Moreover, a part of the recent literature agrees on the lack of European response to a mutated terrorist threat, while many new projects by diverse national and subnational entities are being created (Vidino, 2014: 222) outside of the European framework. The latter, aligned with new realities of the world and current lawmaker actions, need to be further assessed. On the same note, while the literature globally present an abundance of potential threats (Bakker, Paulussen, Entenmann, 2014), it seems that there are next to no study assessing the impact of the foreign fighters' phenomenon on current practice of the public policy response. Guidelines for the latter have been given, such as reinforcing European cooperation (Byman, 2016: 95), pushing for an end to the original conflict (Bakker, Paulussen, Entenmann, 2014) or promote international exchange of information (Byman, 2016: 95) – but these recommendations were issued while the issue of foreign fighters was a terrorist threat of low importance. In general, the literature did not analyse the real impact of the foreign fighters' phenomenon on what European security institutions consider as their prime strategy, namely its four-pillar strategy. To reach a global approach, and reduce the potential threat of terrorism, European Member States did rely on the cooperation method. But as it has been assessed, the terrorist threat as evolved; both in terms of numbers and nature. It is therefore likely that European cooperation in the field of anti-terrorism has derived equivalently.

Chapter 3: Developing a theoretical framework

3. 1 Establishing a theoretical framework

In the following chapter, a theoretical framework will be developed to serve as a basis to the research. Overall, the goal will be to determine the theory settings to explain the effect of terrorism on cooperation between European Member States. With this setting, it will be possible to research the effect of a specific new development in the terrorist realm – the issue of foreign fighter – on the anti-terrorism cooperation of the European Union. Therefore, a strong theory base is needed. To begin with, the effect of terrorism on the European institutional setting will be assessed. The goal will be to determine if terrorism can influence the scope and intensity of security cooperation in the European Union. Then, a focus will be put on the influence of terrorism on the member state' preference for European cooperation.

Using the theory, a double relationship between the European institutional setting and the member state will then be established. The first relation can describe the effect of member state decisions on the institutional framework, using the intergovernmentalism theory. The second relation will emphasize the integration effect of the institutional structure on Member States using the socialization theory. Using these four relations, a model will be created to represent the European response to terrorism.

3. 2 The effect of terrorism on the European institutional framework and Member States

In the literature review, it was assessed how the European institutional framework was, over time, created and developed – in line with the anti-terrorism efforts in the Union. The latter was set up with the participation of its Member States, as they represent the base of the policy making mechanism (Hix & Hoyland, 2011: 12). When looking at European-level policy documents, such as Europol reports or decisions taken by the European Council, it can be argued that the anti-terrorism evolutions were driven by the evolution of the terrorist threat. Overall, it can therefore be emphasized that anti-terrorism cooperation in the European Union is adapting, through time, to new threats. Major evolutions did take place, as it was described here, after events of prime importance, such as the 9/11 attacks or the Madrid and London attacks – each time reinforcing the mechanism of cooperation in the Union. From this, and knowing how the politics of the European Union is conducted, it can consequently be emphasized that terrorism does influence both the Member States and European institutional

framework. It could thus be assumed that the issue of foreign fighters, being the latest development of the terrorist threat in the Union, should have an influence on the anti-terrorism cooperation.

3.3 The effect of the European Union institutional framework on Member States: A neofunctionalist approach

When trying to understand the dynamics of the European Union anti-terrorism effort, a neo-functional view can provide theoretical insights. The neo-functional theory is an approach concerning European integration. In the neo-functional theory, developed by Ernst Haas in the book entitled “The Uniting of Europe”, the author has applied the concept of integration to the political sphere of the Union, therefore defining European political integration as “a process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their loyalties, expectations and political activities towards a new centre, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing national states” (Haas, 1968: 139). For Haas, the creation of a supranational entity, such as the European Union, based on cooperation can lead to a push for more integration (Haas, 1968: 139). This is due to an effect called spillover. In the literature, three types of spillover can be distinguished.

3.3.1 Functional spillover

Firstly, the supranational power, such as the European Union, could consider that an “original objective can be assured only by taking further integrative actions” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5). In other words, this would be a “functional spillover” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5); existing in situations where the reality of an issue is in line with a supranational policy response – therefore requiring the national level to delegate to achieve its goals (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5). Moreover, this type of spillover will assume that successful cooperation in one domain will push European institutions to expand to other domain, fostering integration. Therefore, following the functional spillover, it can be argued that the European institutional framework is likely to push for a pan-European anti-terrorist approach, using other policy areas as example- such as crime or judicial prosecution. In the European Union, and concerning the issue of terrorism in the Union, policy documents from supranational entities such as Europol indicate that this security matter is viewed as transnational (Europol, 2008: 7) – given the specificity of the Schengen area. For example, the police cooperation in the domain of terrorism financing has been done on a European level since the first part of the new millennium (Kaunert,

2012: 475), given that the single market created an economic realm without borders for people and goods. In addition, other domains of cooperation are often given as guidelines (Europol, 2016: 19) by European institutions. Therefore, one could argue that such effect is to be expected in the European Union.

3.3.2 Political spillover

Then, a “political spillover” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5) effect could arise, happening when Member States’ governments “come to perceive that problems of substantial interest cannot be effectively addressed at the domestic level” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5). When analysing recommendations from the Council of the European Union, it can be argued that the position of Member States is clearly following this trend; with for example the La Gomera Declaration emphasizing that “to prevent and combat terrorist action effectively, there is a need for thorough coordination between Member States” (Council of the European Union, 1995: annex 3). In addition, the Council clearly consider the national level to be unable to effectively address the terrorist challenge, considering that the latter “is operating on a transnational scale, which cannot be dealt with effectively solely by means of isolated action and using each individual State’s own resources” (Council of the European Union, 1995: annex 3). This type of spillover is therefore relevant to the European Union.

3.3.3 Cultural spillover

Finally, a “cultural spillover” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5) effect could be established. This type of spillover sees the supranational institutions as “agents of integration” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5). Through their attitude, the later are inclined to “increase their own powers, [...] because they are likely to benefit from the progression of” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5) integration. The supranational actors could act in this regard through a range of strategies, such as a “policy entrepreneur” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5) stance.

Moreover, according to this theory the supranational entity is likely to push for more and “affect political integration meaningfully” (Hass, 1968: 141) if it seizes the opportunity to value its importance for a policy field, with even more integrative effect when such three spillover effects are present (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 5). In other words, the European Union can reinforce the integration process if there are policy issues developed on its level. It was emphasized earlier that the phenomenon described by Hass was happening in that domain too. In the latest study, Monica Boer found that the European measures had a “converging influence” (den Boer & Wiegand, 2015: 399) on the cooperation behaviour inside the Union. This cooperation was

analysed from the perspectives of Member States, and provided the same findings when it comes to the mechanism of cooperation between security agencies within the Member States. Through the second chapter, a theoretical analysis and the study mentioned previously, it can therefore be emphasized that the scope of European anti-terrorism cooperation has increased over time, responding to actual threat. Both researches seem to correspond to the fundamental understanding of the neo-functional theory, which expect actor socialization in the Union “to bring about new – European – loyalties and identifications” (Schimmelfenning, 2000: 114) over time.

3. 4 The effect of Member States on the Institutional framework: a intergovernmentalist approach

To study the effect of Member States on the Institutional framework, academic research can be conducted from an intergovernmentalist point of view. The intergovernmentalist theory is an approach concerning European integration, which was defined in the previous point. This theory shades a light on the importance of Member States’ sovereignty in the European Union (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 7). The initial research question is based on the reality that European Member States do already cooperate in matter of security – and especially in anti-terrorism (Council of the European Union, 1996: 1). With this approach, it is considered that the Member States are at the basis of the decision-making processes underlining the functioning of the European Union (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 8), as they are fully exercising the concept of national sovereignty in this environment (CIVITAS Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2015: 1). Sovereignty can have several meanings, as it is “associated as it is with notions of power, authority, independence and the exercise of will” (Nugent, 1996: 3). In terms of the definition related to Member States in the European Union, sovereignty can be understood as the capacity of the latter to make decisions concerning “laws and policies without being subject to external restraints [...]” (Nugent, 1996: 3) – such phenomenon also being “called national sovereignty or, sometimes, state sovereignty” (Nugent, 1996: 3). By acknowledging the definition of sovereignty, and the decision-making processes in the Union, this theory argues that Member States are the ultimate deciders and controller of the integration process. With this approach, it is interesting to try and detect what factors influences the decisions of the member of the Union in an intergovernmentalist approach. According to this theoretical school, nation states are in this institutional context taking decisions to reflect their best interest (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 8). This vision puts the focus on the interest of the Member States to delegate its sovereignty to supranational entity, as they would do so when

“potential joint gains are large” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 7). In other words, the Member States are the main actors in the Union and are willing to further integration if they “see their interest best served through such undertaking” (Bergmann & Niemann, 2013: 8).

Knowing the potential influence of the intergovernmentalist view and the institutional setting of the European Union, it could be relevant to understand how the Member States’ interests are shaped. From the perspective of the intergovernmentalist theory, risky phenomenon such as domestic or European terrorist threat could mean states are pressured into more cooperation. In previous study of cooperation between European Member States in the field of terrorism, such as work of Monica den Boer, elevated level of national threats or attacks were a factor clearly influencing the preference of the Member States for cooperation (den Boer & Wiegand, 2015: 381). Also, the effect of older form of terrorist threat, so in this case not the foreign fighters’ phenomenon, on European police cooperation has been previously studied, also emphasizing that the level of threat per countries was a major factor also influencing states preference for cooperation (den Boer & Wiegand, 2015: 381). As the previously described phenomenon, expected by the theory, has been found to happen by various academic research, this theory could be considered relevant for the research.

Furthermore, in studies conducted Tim Haesebrouck, the factors influencing collective actions by Member States in the security realm were analysed. Using the case of NATO’ intervention in Libya, Haesenbrouck demonstrated that national politics, hence national security interest, and the goals of an action, hence getting rid of a threat, are closely linked (Haesebrouck, 2016: 20). When the scholar applied the same method to European Member States, Haesenbrouck discovered that domestic level of threat would be an incentive for a state to increase participation in collective action (Haesebrouck, 2016: 20), giving more credit to the assumption that European states would be more likely to favour cooperation when they have considered the threat level to be high.

In addition, in the intergovernmentalist approach a phenomenon best described as a policy window of opportunity may arise. Member States are likely to take actions in the Union when it is in their best interest, but the latter can be emerging following crisis or high threat period. In this approach, scholars “argued that they are able to explain periods of radical change in the EU as when interests of the Member States governments converge, and they have shared goals, and periods of slower integration” (CIVITAS Institute for the Study of Civil Society, 2015: 1). By looking at major terrorist events in the European Union, with the 9/11 attack on American soil as a starting point, and important Council decisions or declarations related to terrorism (see

Figure 7), it can be emphasized that this intergovernmentalist specificity do provide explanatory power in this research:

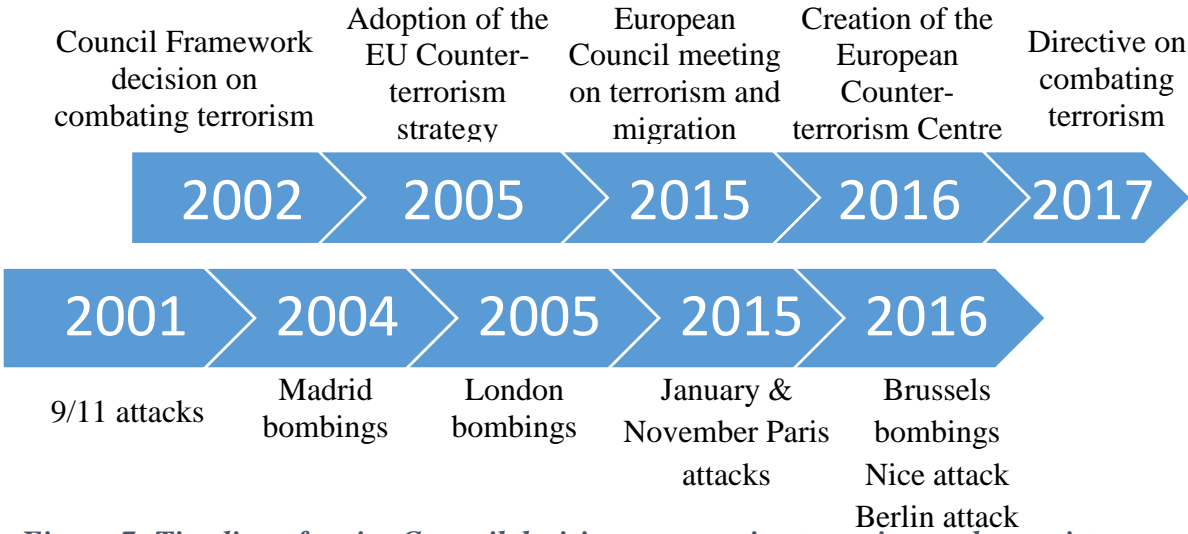


Figure 7: Timeline of major Council decisions concerning terrorism and terrorist attacks in the European Union since 2001

Here, it can be observed that major Council decisions (see annex 4) seem to correspond to the aftermath of major terrorist attacks (see annex 5) in the European Union.

By underlining the work of Thomas Hegghammer, which was focused on analysing the threat of foreign fighters, a theory base to assess the level of threats in states can be established. With the framework of Hegghammer, the threat in terms of ratio was measured, and this could help to determine if a country follows the assumptions: a more important threat would mean more likelihood to cooperate. Also, in this framework uncertainty is considered, and this is of prime importance as it can be a key restraint to a correct and accurate research. Using the latest estimates, the issue of terrorism can be refurbished to include recent development, with the help of detailed documents from the various European institutions – and include counts of foreign fighters per country. The level of threat per country could then be discovered, and the impact this intergovernmentalist argument on cooperation operationalized. Using all the points mentioned above, it can be argued that a research focused on the impact of the foreign fighter phenomenon on the security cooperation between European Member States can be operationalized with the help of a intergovernmentalist perspective.

3. 5 Building a theoretical model

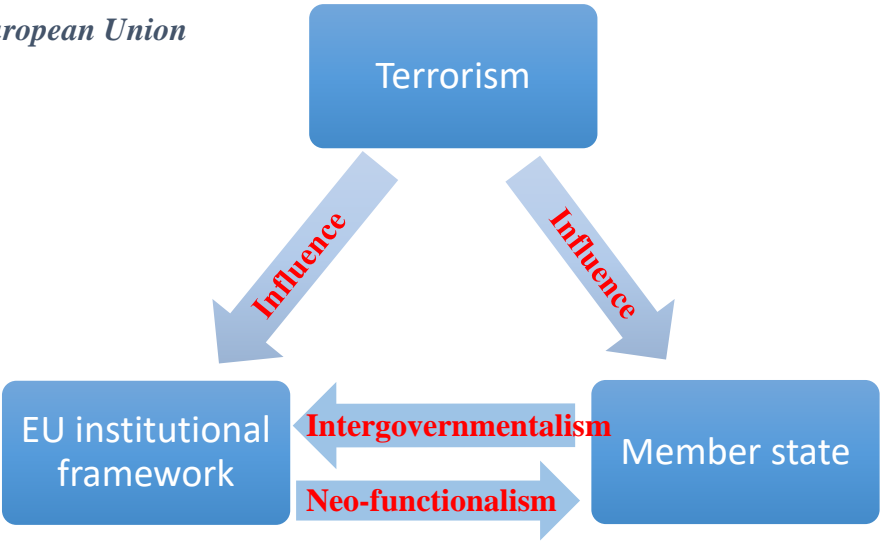
Firstly, it was assessed prior that important European institutional changes and decisions in the security realm have themselves been influenced by existing and evolving threats. By analysing European police reports and work documents, it was shown that new developments or threats

in the field of terrorism are highly likely to produce a response, influencing the extent or intensity of the European institutional framework. On the second hand, an analysis of the behaviour of Member States do provide indications that new developments in the terrorist reality could impact how Member States react. From there, it can therefore be established that terrorism has influence on the European institutional framework as well as the Member States. Thirdly, the literature has evaluated the impact of the European institutional framework on the Member States, how new practice would emerge and how old ones would be adjusted. With the neo-functional theory, elements of explanation can help to understand how the European institutional framework can have an integrative influence on the Member States, through three types of spillover effects.

Fourthly, using an intergovernmentalist approach however, academic studies have also suggested that member-states security cooperation inside the European Union can be greatly influenced by actual national preferences (themselves shaped by transnational threats (den Boer & Wiegand, 2015: 381)), less so by European policies. In other words, because Member States are agent controlling the European process, their best interests are shaping the preference for European cooperation.

Ultimately, it was established that terrorism influences Member States and the institutional framework. At the same type, the European members are the basis of the policy making mechanism of the Union –influencing the institutional framework according to the intergovernmentalist theory. Following these assumptions extracted from the literature, the following model could be established:

Figure 8: The effect of Terrorism on the cooperation mechanism in the European Union



3. 6 The issue of foreign fighters and the theoretical model: hypothesis and expectations of the neofunctionalist perspective

As the issue of foreign fighters is a recent development of the terrorist threat, it could be assumed that such phenomenon has had effect on the European institutional framework, following the model. Then, the European institutional framework may have influenced the member state preference for cooperation, through the three spillover effects of the neofunctionalist theory. When applied to the issue of foreign fighters, this theoretical model can help to build hypothesis for the research. Using the three spillover effects previously described, the following three hypotheses as well as expectations may arise.

3.6.1 Functional spillover: first hypothesis

From the perspective of a functional spillover, and as it was emphasized earlier on, the European institutional framework is likely to push for more cooperation if this strategy has been proven to work in another domain. From the literature review, it was assessed that the financing of terrorism was, soon after 9/11, a policy area which comprised an important European cooperation. From there, it can be expected that the European institutional framework has pushed for more cooperation in the case of foreign fighters if previous European cooperation efforts in the case of terrorism financing were successful. As terrorism financing was a main topic of European security cooperation, it can be expected that the hypothesis will be verified.

3.6.2 Political spillover: second hypothesis

In the case of political spillover, the European institutional framework could be inclined to push for further anti-terrorism cooperation if it has perceived that the issue of foreign fighters cannot be addressed at the level of Member States, but rather at the European level. This would be the case because this policy issue would be a transnational problem.

3.6.3 Cultural spillover: third hypothesis

When it comes to the cultural spillover, it can be considered that if the European institutional framework has been acting as a policy entrepreneur, more anti-terrorism cooperation could be expected. This might be the case because European institutions may take the lead and decide that it is of their duty or role to push for European actions to reduce the threat posed by foreign fighters. In other words, by acting accordingly the European intuitions are agent of integrations, so more cooperation could arise.

3.7 The issue of foreign fighters and the theoretical model: hypothesis and expectations of the intergovernmentalist perspective

In the theoretical model produced earlier, it was emphasized that the Member States have an influence on the European institutional framework, which foster the cooperation regarding the problem of terrorism, because they are the basis of the policy making mechanism in the Union. From the perspective of the intergovernmentalist theory, it was stressed that the Member States are influencing the institutional framework, depending on the nature of their interest – or hence best interest. As the foreign fighters’ phenomenon is a recent development of the terrorist threat, it could be assumed that the stance of Member States regarding this issue could have influenced the European institutional framework, if the national governments were viewing change in the cooperation dynamism as their best interest. Using the concept of state’ best interest and policy window of opportunity, the following hypotheses and expectations can be drafted:

3.7.1 State’ best interest: Fourth hypothesis

In the case of intergovernmentalism, the concept of state’ best interest could be deemed relevant for this research. As it was defined in the literature review, the level of threat in the Member States is a factor that could influence the preference for European cooperation. For this hypothesis, it will be considered that Member States with high level of threat, so high number of foreign fighters, have a preferred position towards European cooperation. It may be emphasized that it would be in the best interest of a member state to push for further integration in the European security domain, as foreign fighters can benefit from characteristics of the single market – such as the freedom of movements for people and goods. It can therefore be expected that Member States with a higher number of their nationals involved in foreign fighting will have a preferable stance towards European anti-terrorism cooperation.

3.7.2 Policy window of opportunity: Fifth hypothesis

From the intergovernmentalist perspective, a phenomenon called the policy window of opportunity can take place. This is the case when, following a crisis or a sudden increase in risks, Member States are suddenly willing to act to resolve a policy issue. In the domain of foreign fighters, it can be emphasized that a domestic attack plotted by foreign fighters or a sudden increase in the threat posed by such individuals would push Member States to reevaluate their preference for European cooperation. In the previous parts, it was show that Member States seem to take decisions, in the European Council, following major terrorist attacks. In

addition, it was described by various sources that returning foreign fighters could have been at the origin of attacks on European soil. Therefore, it may be assumed that following terrorist attacks by returned foreign fighters, the Member States have increased their preference for European anti-terrorism cooperation, and taken integrative actions. In terms of expectations, it can be proposed that countries mostly affected by foreign fighters have taken a favourable approach to more European cooperation, and by the rule of solidarity further integration in that domain should have taken place.

3. 8 Hypotheses Table

To summarize the hypotheses, the following Table can be built:

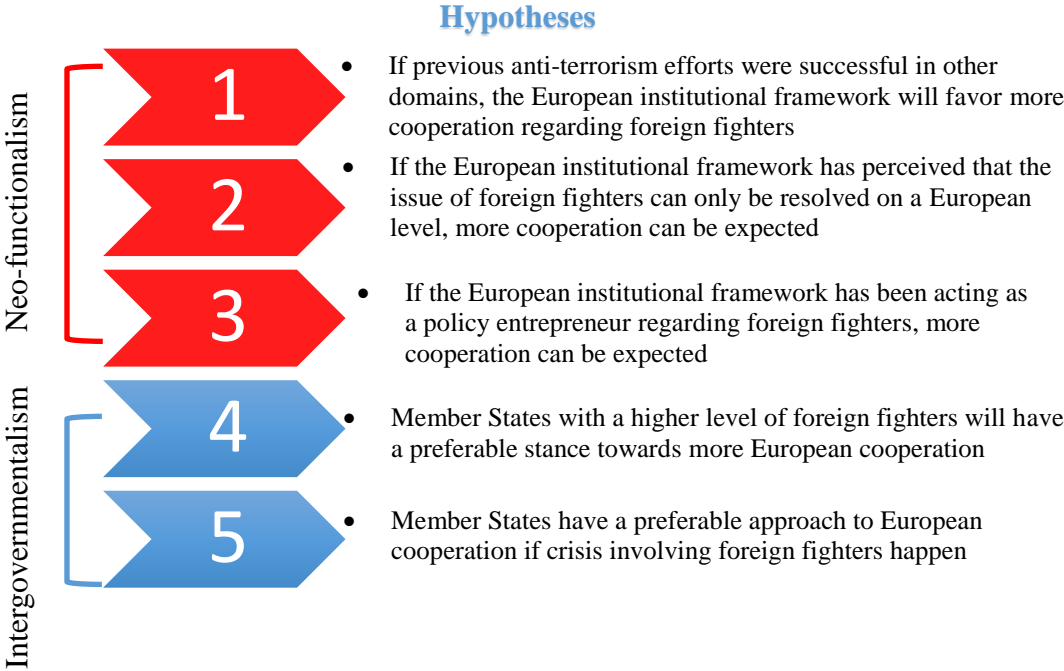


Figure 9: Hypotheses Table

Chapter 4: Research method

4.1 Selecting a research design

To conduct the research, a selection of the research method must be made. In this part, the goal is to justify which type of research design and why it is relevant to the study. By focusing the research on the issue of foreign fighters in the European Union, it can be argued that the large-n approach is not relevant. In fact, for this type of approach, a quantitative method should be used (Miller, 2007: 83) – which in turn requires amounts of data. Such a mass of information is not, for now, available in the field of foreign fighters. Moreover, a large-n approach would “generally seek representativeness” (Leuffen, 2007: 145), which is not the goal here. In this study, the objective is not to quantify the effect of the foreign fighters’ phenomenon on cooperation in the European Union, - but rather to explain how this development may have impacted the classical anti-terrorism response. For this type of study, it can be argued, the small-n model could be more adapted. With this approach, the intention is to “get a better grip of causal processes” (Leuffen, 2007: 148). The qualitative method can provide information and a broader comprehension on a precise phenomenon. Within this approach, a research design must then be selected.

4.2 Congruence analysis

Using the neo-functionalist and intergovernmentalist theory, the goal of the research will be to assess to what extent such approaches can explain the influence of the foreign fighters’ phenomenon on anti-terrorism cooperation in the European Union. In a congruence analysis, the goal is to assess “explanatory power of the theories” (Blatter & Haverland, 2012: 145). With this research method, the intergovernmentalist and neo-functionalist theories would be applied to the foreign fighters’ phenomenon with the intention of knowing which one provides a “better explanation” (Blatter & Haverland, 2012: 145) or exclusive “relevant explanatory insights” (Blatter & Haverland, 2012: 145). In a congruence analysis, two sub approaches can be undertaken, namely the competing theory approach and the complementary theory approach (Blatter & Haverland, 2012: 145). In this research, it can be assumed from the literature review and theoretical framework that the two theories are working at the same time, and not competing against one another. However, using this method, it could be emphasized which of the two theories would explain the impact of foreign fighters on cooperation better or which one provides the best theoretical insight to explain the results.

To conduct such a research, the congruence analysis can be divided in two steps. Firstly, “specific propositions and concrete predictions” (Blatter & Haverland, 2012: 146) can be developed from each of the two theories. This was done in the previous chapter. Then, the propositions and expectation can be tested against empirical observations (Blatter & Haverland, 2012: 146). This will be done in chapter 6 and 7. On the second hand, the two theories’ implications must be weighted, as the goal of a congruence analysis is also to show that one theory has “a higher level of empirical congruence than other theories, that it predicts crucial aspect of the empirical process more correctly than other theories, or that it leads to additional causal implications that are empirically corroborated and useful for theory development” (Blatter & Haverland, 2012: 146). This endeavour will be conducted in chapter 8.

4.3 Structure of the research

Firstly, data will be operationalized. Through this process, the way in which the hypotheses will be tested can be described. Then, the three hypotheses derived from the neo-functionalist perspective will be tested, to assess the effect of foreign fighters on the European institutional framework- which represent the scope and extent of the European cooperation setting. After, the two hypotheses issued from the intergovernmentalist theory will be researched, to determine the influence of the foreign fighters’ phenomenon on the preference of Member States for cooperation. In addition, the two theories will be weighted, with the goal to understand the global effect of the foreign fighters on European anti-terrorism cooperation. Finally, a conclusion will be produced.

4.4 Operationalization of the neo-functionalist hypotheses

To test the neo-functionalist hypotheses, the prime objective is to detect the several types of spillover. In the literature, previous studies were focused on uncovering spillover, and could therefore give guidelines on how to operationalize this part of the research.

4.5 First hypothesis

In a study conducted by Ramunas Vilpisauskas, on the link between European integration and the Eurozone crisis, a functional spillover was detected. Elements used to conduct the study were, firstly, focused on a discourse analysis of European leaders and policy. In the meetings, the latter were often referring to “incomplete, unfinished projects” (Vilpisauskas, 2013: 364) concerning European harmonization in the economic realm. For this research, it can be emphasized that by conducting a discourse analysis of policy documents, especially reports that

are of utmost importance, it is possible to understand the position of the European institutional framework on whether European anti-terrorism cooperation was working as it was or if modifications were needed to tackle the issue of foreign fighters. In addition, mentions to past successes can provide proofs that a functional spillover is taking place (Vilpisauskas, 2013: 364). In the study, report by the President of the European Council as well as speeches by institutional leaders at conventions or conferences constitute the source supporting a functional spillover. For this hypothesis, the content of similar discourses will be analysed, to find if European institutions expressed the need for a change in the European Counter-Terrorism strategy. In addition, the mentioning of other domain where anti-terrorism cooperation was successful, such as terrorism financing, would mean that the European institutions prefer more cooperation against foreign fighters.

4.6 Second hypothesis

For the second hypothesis, the goal is to detect political spillover. It was assessed that this spillover would take place if the European institutional framework had perceived that the issue of foreign fighters could only be addressed on a European level. By looking at the study previously mentioned, such spillover effect would be detectable if the European institutional framework had adopted common regulations, plans or strategies and was keen to refer to them (Vilpisauskas, 2013: 364) to resolve a given issue. In the case of this research, the position of European institutions towards using a European strategy to counter the issue of foreign fighters. To consolidate or invalidate the idea that a European level is the reference point for anti-terrorism cooperation in that domain, the research can focus on detecting if European institutions mention the European strategy and other anti-terrorism institutions, such as Europol or Eurojust, as of prime importance (in the fight against the threat posed by foreign fighters).

4.7 Third hypothesis

For the third hypothesis, the goal is to detect a cultural spillover. In the theory chapter, it was understood that the manifestation of such phenomenon could take the form of policy entrepreneurship by European institutions. In this case, it can be argued, the latter are likely to take the initiative in designing a strategy, creating a system or building a cooperation framework. In fact, this practice can be detected as policy entrepreneurs are often willing to carry the cost or criticism, and are by their own ways the architect and controllers of the new system or desire for change. In the case of this research, the objective is therefore to assess if

the European institutional framework had been the producer of new legislations, plans or strategies regarding and due to foreign fighters. Additional attention should be put when analysing the policy documents, as what could look as policy entrepreneurship may just be the answer to a Council decision – and therefore be caused by Member States. Such a phenomenon would not be relevant to this hypothesis.

4.8 Operationalization of the intergovernmentalist hypotheses

To test the intergovernmentalist hypotheses, the prime objective is to comprehend how to operationalize the concept of states' best interest and policy window. In the literature, previous studies were focused on uncovering such phenomenon, and could therefore give guidelines on how to operationalize this part of the research.

4.9 Fourth hypothesis

According to the fourth hypothesis, European Member States with a higher level of foreign fighters will have a preferable stance towards more European cooperation. To operationalize this hypothesis, a Table assessing the level of foreign fighters per country can be established – using official policy documents and academic or think tanks' estimates. Then, a case study focusing on the preference for cooperation of a representative sample of these countries can be conducted, using available documents which reflect discussions conducted in European level meetings. Three countries can be selected, respectively reflecting a higher, a middle and a lower count of foreign fighters.

4.10 Fifth hypothesis

In terms of the fifth hypothesis, the Member States are said to have a favourable preference towards more European anti-terrorism cooperation when attacks or crisis involving foreign fighters happen. The states are likely to react to an attempt in another Member States through the principle of solidarity, and push for more cooperation during a policy window. To operationalize such a hypothesis, the goal is to assess a change in the preference of Member States for European cooperation, that would follow major terrorist attacks by foreign fighters. In addition, references to terrorist attacks in policy documents involving European decisions on foreign fighters can serve as a sign that European Member States do legislate following a crisis.

4.11 Hypotheses and operationalization

Now that the research has been operationalized, the Table can be updated:






	Hypotheses	Operationalization
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If previous European anti-terrorism efforts were successful, more cooperation can be expected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is anti-terrorism cooperation described in policy documents as incomplete? Were previous anti-terrorism efforts considered a success?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the European institutional framework has perceived that the issue of foreign fighters can only be resolved on a European level, more cooperation can be expected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is there a common European plan or strategy against foreign fighters? Is the European level considered by the institutional framework as the best option?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the European institutional framework has been acting as a policy entrepreneur, more cooperation can be expected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Was the European institutional framework the initiator of legislation regarding foreign fighters? How were these legislations defended?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States with a higher level of foreign fighters will have a preferable stance towards more European cooperation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are low, middle and high threat countries behaving differently in European level meetings concerning foreign fighters?
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member States have a preferable approach to European cooperation if crisis involving foreign fighters happen 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are Member States referring to attacks in policy documents regarding foreign fighters? Are Member States' preferences shifting in time of crisis?

Figure 10: Hypotheses and operationalization Table

Chapter 5: The influence of the foreign fighters' phenomenon on the European institutional framework

5.1 Result of the research

In the following chapter, the influence of the foreign fighters' phenomenon on the European institutional framework will be assessed, using the neo-functionalist perspective and the three hypotheses developed in chapter 3. An analysis will follow.

5.2 Testing the first hypothesis

In 2012, at the request of the European Council, the EU Counter-terrorism Coordinator was charged with “regular reporting on ongoing activities in the field of combating terrorism in the EU by Member States and supporting EU institutions and the implementation of the EU Action Plan on combating terrorism” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 1). These reports take the form of publicly available files, sent from the EU Counter-terrorism coordinator to the Council, containing an in-depth assessment of European cooperation in the domain of terrorism. Such a document can provide crucial insights on the position of the European institutional framework concerning the issue of foreign fighters, because they include opinions and progress made by Europol, Eurojust or the European parliament in the field of anti-terrorism cooperation. As it was emphasized in the previous chapter, an analysis of the discourse used in the policy document can be conducted here. The goal is to identify if the European Counter-terrorism Coordinator' reports are advocating for further actions in the way anti-terrorism cooperation is done, or to what extent it is being done, because of the rising issue represented by foreign fighters. In other words, the research can focus on whether the European anti-terrorism cooperation is deemed incomplete and needs an extension. In addition, it is important to establish if the coordinator stresses that other counter-terrorism efforts in the Union were successful – such as terrorism financing – as the first hypothesis would consider this to be a sign of functional spillover in favour of more cooperation (due to the issue of foreign fighters). Furthermore, it can be relevant to analyse discourse and press conferences of Julian King, which was appointed in 2016 commissioner for security Union.

5.2.1 Was the cooperation framework incomplete?

In the first report, published in November 2014 and concerning the period from 2012 to 2014, the position of the European institutional framework on foreign fighters is clear. In the very first pages, the transnational threat that foreign fighters represent is exemplified. With such an illustration, the report “demonstrates how the phenomenon of foreign fighters calls for initiatives to counter the resulting terrorist threat” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 4). Already, it could be emphasized that the Counter-Terrorism coordinator is relaying an institutional desire for a change in the anti-terrorism cooperation realm because of foreign fighters, as the report then calls for actions in both the internal and external dimension of the European Union (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 4). In terms of the internal dimension, the coordinator stresses that “use of Europol and various European mechanisms could be further increased to improve the chances of connecting crucial dots more rapidly” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 4), advocating for a reinforcement of European cooperation to successfully tackle foreign fighters. When it comes to the external dimension, a similar tendency is emerging, with the coordinator stating that “the Union should support national authorities by mobilizing all instruments of judicial and police cooperation, with a reinforced coordination role for Europol and Eurojust, including [...] the improvement of cross-border information exchanges, and [...] to address the phenomenon of foreign fighters, including through the effective use of existing instruments for EU-wide alerts and the development of instruments such as the EU Passenger Name Record system” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 5). Globally, this first report demonstrates the position of the European institutional framework during the emergence of foreign fighters as a global threat. Firstly, the report calls for a reinforcement of current networks of cooperation (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 6). Secondly, the coordinator is asking that the European institutional framework takes further actions; in other words, produce a more inclusive and extended anti-terrorism cooperation in the European Union. Such efforts are recommended in the field of prevention of radicalization (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 7), detection of suspicious travel (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 8) or investigation and prosecution (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 10) among others.

In a second report, published in 2015, progress on the implementation of the measures presented by the EU Counter-Terrorism coordinator beforehand were assessed (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2015: 1). The trend is similar to the first report, with the European institutional framework implementing new solutions to increase cooperation in the Union. Europol had, influenced by the issue of foreign fighters, given “proposals for improving information and

intelligence exchange in the area of counter terrorism across the EU” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2015: 6) – underlining the idea that cooperation was incomplete to deal with this new issue. The commission had similarly pushed for more cooperation tools, still influenced by the foreign fighters’ phenomenon (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2015: 6). Other component of the European institutional framework, such as Eurojust, saw cooperation increase through its platforms (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2015: 8), and asked to implement further measures to broader collaboration (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2015: 8). Overall, it can be argued that recommendations of the first reports were followed, cooperation in the Union and between the institutions being reinforced – due to the importance given to the issue of foreign fighters by the European institutional framework. Nevertheless, new efforts were asked by the latter to increase the scope and extent of anti-terrorism cooperation.

In the last report to date, published in 2016, evolutions in the cooperation attitude of the European institutions were analysed. Following the trend of 2014 and 2015, the use of European cooperation framework had increased, with the institutions developing interdependence and common practices (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 5). Once again, the cooperation reality was described as incomplete (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 6) and efforts as unfinished. Through press briefings concerning foreign fighters, the European Commission similarly described the need for a “stronger EU action to better tackle violent radicalization leading to terrorism” (European Commission, 2016: 1). In that matter, it argued that “Member States should increase information sharing and make full use of security cooperation framework” (European Commission, 2016: 2). In addition, the view of the commission is clear: there should be “further steps to support Member States” (European Commission, 2016: 1), and the cooperation framework needs to be updated through the production of “concrete tools” (European Commission, 2016: 2), “a core security approach through measures to counter immediate and longer-term threats” (European Commission, 2016: 2) or exchange platforms to share best practices (European Commission, 2016: 1). Moreover, the speech by Commission First Vice-President Frans Timmermans stated that, in response to the latest developments in foreign fighters, “the EU should help wherever it can” to develop a better response from the Union (European Commission, 2016: 1) – underlining the position that the cooperation framework should be increased. Finally, the newly appointed commissioner for the security Union did describe the cooperation framework regarding foreign fighters as incomplete. In fact, he proposes to extend the cooperation practices in the Union to tackle the phenomenon, by for example “strengthening the mandate of the EU agency that manages EU information systems for security, border and migration management” (King, 2017: 1). To do so, he proposed to

create new systems of cooperation, such as the “Entry/Exit system, the EU travel information and authorization system, as well as the European criminal records information system” (King, 2017: 1), or the reinforcement of existing structures.

5.2.2 Were other cooperation efforts successful?

The 2014 report by the EU Counter-terrorism coordinator underlines the position of the European institutional framework regarding other field of anti-terrorism cooperation. For example, the terrorist finance tracking program (TFTP) is described as “an important and efficient instrument in the fight against terrorism and its financing” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 55). In addition, the EU Counter-terrorism coordinator provides insights on the degree of success of the fight against terrorism financing in a joint report specifically dedicated to this matter (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014b: 1). In the document, the stance of the Commission is clearly in support of the anti-financing efforts (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014b: 5). In such matter, the European commission has enacted successful cooperation, according to the report (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014b: 8). In fact, the actions of the Commission have “resulted in considerably reducing the opportunities for terrorism being financed through known channels” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014b: 2). In other domains of cooperation, such as information sharing and operational cooperation – both specialty of Europol and Eurojust – the policy documents underline considerable success (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 5) in the use of the cooperative framework. When it comes to the issue of foreign fighters, the documents prove the importance of previous successful cooperation efforts. To tackle the threat, Europol and the Commission have pushed for an increase of cooperation, using the past success as examples (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 14). Similarly, Eurojust has seen an increase in legitimacy (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 18); as new developments concerning foreign fighters were taking place, the use of this institution as a cooperation framework was clearly increased. This positive description of previous cooperation practices is, in the terminology of the policy documents, well present. In addition, actions were taken to reinforce successful areas of cooperation, following good practices in other domains such as terrorism financing (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 30). These elements seem to corroborate with the first assumption, giving more credibility for the functional spillover hypothesis. Moreover, other documents from the European Commission consolidate these views. In fact, in terms of previous tools of cooperation, the efforts are often described as positive – with for example the Schengen Information System being tagged as “successfully used in many

occasion against terrorist suspects” (European Commission, 2016b: 3). Furthermore, the commissioner for the security of the Union, Julian King, has described in press briefings the importance of the Schengen information system and other cooperative framework “to the efforts ensuring that police officers, border guards and immigration officers on the ground have the information they need to do their job” (King, 2017: 1). Similar declaration were given when Julian King was holding meetings with officials from Member States. When meeting with the French interior minister, the commissioner supported the idea that other cooperative efforts were successful and consequently more cooperation should be developed on the European level (King, 2017b: 1). Finally, Julian King declared in a statement concerning European cooperation against new forms of terrorism that the “effective information sharing” (King, 2017c: 1) systems have been in the past “a key element of our efforts to prevent terrorism” (King, 2017c: 1) – reinforcing the argument that previous cooperation efforts were successful to tackle terrorist threats.

5.2.3 Analysis

According to the first hypothesis, if the European institutional framework described the anti-terrorism effort as incomplete, this could be a sign that actions favouring cooperation are likely to take place. Similarly, the functional spillover is inclined to take place if others mean of cooperation were successful. In the reports by the Counter-terrorism coordinator, which condense the opinions and positions of the European institutional framework, both characteristics are presents. To try and identify if a spillover effect has really taken place, confirming the hypothesis, an assessment of the evolutions of cooperation was made. Overall, it was found that the cooperation framework has been less and less described as incomplete as measures were implemented. In addition, the fight against terrorism financing was repeatedly portrayed as successful, and at the same times measures were taken – illustrating the desire of the European institutional framework to increase the reality of European anti-terrorism cooperation. The issue of foreign fighters has pushed European institutions to, in the first hand, use the mechanism it already had. But the effect of this phenomenon was not limited to this one influence. In fact, policy documents are showing that, based on previous successful efforts, the European institutional framework adopted a preferential stance for more European cooperation, following the functional spillover hypothesis. This took the form of a desire to take concrete actions, such as completing the Passenger Name Record system or reinforce the use of Europol and Eurojust as cooperative platforms – the goal being the formation of uniting “security cooperation frameworks and information exchange tools” (European Commission, 2016b: 3)

into an effective system. Following the hypothesis and the results, it can be argued that the issue of foreign fighters has had a positive influence on preference of the European institutional framework for cooperation, encouraging the latter to position itself in favour of more European collaboration.

5.3 Testing the second hypothesis

Since 2013, the European institutional framework has taken measures to adapt its cooperation realm – due to the emergence of foreign fighters, one can argue. As it was assessed in the literature review, the European institutional framework has since the late 1990’s considered that anti-terrorism efforts in the Union were transnational de facto (Council of the European Union, 1995: annex 3), due to the freedom of movement. The goal here will be to find out if the European institutional framework has, in the first hand, adopted common strategies due to the issue of foreign fighters. In the second hand, the ambition is to analyse if the institutional framework is advocating for a European wide approach to foreign fighters. These two elements would be supportive indications that a political spillover has taken place.

5.3.1 Were there European strategies against foreign fighters?

The issue of foreign fighters became an issue of prime importance in early 2013 for the European institutional framework (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 6). The European counter-terrorism coordinator had, at that time, “proposed 22 measures in priority areas” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 6) to counter the threat posed by foreign fighters, paving the way for a European strategy. Following these proposals, each institution responded differently. The European parliament adopted in 2015 a set of “anti-terrorism measures” (European parliament, 2015b: 1), legislating following the recommendations of the coordinator to tackle “the severe and growing threat posed by the so-called EU foreign fighters” (European parliament, 2015b: 3). In addition, other legislations were pushed by the parliament through the ordinary legislative procedure, regarding solutions to counteract the emergence of foreign fighters (European parliament, 2015a: 1). Furthermore, the Commission had followed the initiative launched by the coordinator, adopting proposals to improve the transnational exchange of information concerning foreign fighters (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 18). Also, the Commission did take position on the matter, recommending in its latest European agenda on security ways to effectively deal with such phenomenon (European commission, 2015: 6). Similarly, Eurojust had established recommendations to update the EU cooperation framework, proposing a new European legal response to successfully tackle the

issue (Eurojust, 2016: 22). Overall, each member of the European institutional framework responded in its own way, advocating for a European strategy against foreign fighters to be undertaken. The institutions had, in their domain of expertise, translated a common call by the European parliament and the Council to tackle the phenomenon. A multitude of answers were given, but without the presence of a unique and comprehensive European response.

5.3.2 Is the European level considered by the institutional framework as the best option?

Throughout policy documents, it can be assessed if the institutional framework has favoured the European level to combat the threat posed by foreign fighters. The European Commission has, overall, considered that the European level of cooperation was the most adequate. In fact, it has considered that “terrorist attacks in Europe – most recently in Paris, Copenhagen, Brussels – have highlighted the need for a strong EU response to terrorism and foreign terrorist fighters” (European Commission, 2015: 12). Also, the European parliament had taken a similar position. From its perspective, foreign fighters would represent a European threat, as it noted “with concern the rapidly rising number of EU nationals who travel to conflict areas to join terrorist organizations and later return to EU territory, presenting risks to the Union’s internal security and the lives of EU citizens” (European parliament, 2015: 3). In fact, the European level is ever present, even in policy documents attached to institutions in charge of the executive measures. Europol had, in its annual European Union terrorism situation and trend report, considered that the terrorist incidents that struck in 2015 were “plotted by returnees” (Europol, 2016: 5), with some being also executed by these former foreign fighters. With this in mind, the position of Europol was clear: the foreign fighters’ phenomenon is to be resolved at the European level, as the aforementioned “carefully planned attacks [had] demonstrated the elevated threat to the EU” (Europol, 2016: 5). In fact, the European Counter-terrorism coordinator had taken a similar position. Regarding the use of Eurojust in the fight against foreign fighters, the coordinator mentioned that the use of the justice cooperative framework was still, despite progress, not in line with the “extent of the threat”, underlining that such a phenomenon would be best tackled by a European response (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a :18).

5.3.3 Analysis

According to the second hypothesis, if the European institutional framework had perceived that the issue of foreign fighters could only be resolved at the European level, this could constitute proof that more cooperation would be expected. Such a stance could be detected by paying

attention to European initiative, as well as the preference of institutions in policy documents for a European solution to the issue. In the first case, it was found that European initiative were legions. The legislative branch, through the parliament, had taken European wide actions to legislate in this regard. Similarly, the Commission had proposed through communication to strengthen the efforts in the Union. In addition, even executive institutions such as Europol or Eurojust adopted strategies at their level. In the second case, it was found that these same organizations had a clear preference for the European level of cooperation. In fact, the level of Member States was mentioned to illustrate the need to elevate the participation to a Union wide level. These elements are clearly in favour of the political spillover hypothesis. Finally, it was seen that new legislation, new practice as well as recommendations were undertaken by the European institutional framework – thereof confirming the explanation power of the second hypothesis.

5.4 Testing the third hypothesis

Since the emergence of foreign fighters in the European Union, it can be argued that part of the European institutional framework may have acted as policy entrepreneurs. From the perspective of the third hypothesis, the goal is to determine if the European institutions have led the way towards more cooperation due to the issue of foreign fighters. In addition, it is important to see if such efforts, in case they would happen, were followed by the institutional framework. In fact, it can be argued that policy entrepreneurship would not be relevant if it is not followed by an update in the legal framework of the Union or by concrete action. The first task is therefore to identify policy entrepreneurship, with the second task being interested in whether these developments were implemented.

5.4.1 Was the European institutional framework a policy entrepreneur?

When trying to identify policy entrepreneurship, a first task should be to underline major updates in the cooperation framework and see whether they were initiated by the European institutions or by Member States through the Council. Firstly, discussions on the matter of foreign fighters was handled by the European Counter-Terrorism coordinator. In late 2014, corresponding with the rise of the terrorist threat, the latter was charged by the European Council to produce a report on how to deal with the situation effectively (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a :1). The coordinator had, at that time, considered that foreign fighters were a security priority in the Union, leading the way in reducing the threat by proposing concrete measures (Bakowski & Puccio, 2016: 4). However, the European Council had asked for such

strategies, and even “called for their accelerated implementations” (Bakowski & Puccio, 2016: 4), after adding its own recommendations (Bakowski & Puccio, 2016: 4). This detail is of prime importance, because it could invalidate the hypothesis stating that the European institutional framework was a policy entrepreneur. When looking more intensely on the actions undertaken by the European institutions, it can be argued that the latter were tasked by the Council to improve their strategy against foreign fighters. In the case of the commission, it was asked in 2015 to produce reports and implement Council decisions, by for example updating the European Agenda for security (European Commission, 2015: 1), following “a number of the directions identified by Heads of State or Government” (European Commission, 2015: 1). Similarly, the Commission had submitted a list of possible improvements for the anti-terrorism cooperation in the Union, but these efforts were requested by Council decisions (Council of the European Union, 2014: 1). In terms of the European parliament, most of its decisions were taken through the ordinary legislative procedure, therefore requiring the Council to agree on the decisions. After conducting the research, it can be argued that the major updates in the European cooperation framework were conducted with the initiative of the European Council or the Council. For example, the main counter-terrorism strategy against foreign fighters, published in 2015, was drafted by the “Working Party on Terrorism” (Council of the European Union, 2015: 1) – under direct supervision from the Council. The document was a major update of the European Union Counter-terrorism strategy, first adopted in 2005, to tackle this emerging threat. Moreover, the 2017 directive on terrorism was an equally important step towards a European effective strategy against foreign fighters (European Parliament and The Council of the European Union, 2017: 4). It can be argued, therefore, that these updates were not done following recommendations or results of working groups by the Commission, the European Parliament or Europol, but rather directly through the influence of Member States.

In terms of policy entrepreneurship, it can be argued that, despite the majority being taken through Council decisions, a few efforts were undertaken outside of its influence, mainly by Europol and the Commission. Europol had, as the threat of foreign fighters was rising, taken actions such as setting up the Focus point travellers system, a framework to detect suspicious travels of European citizens (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 8), or develop the European information system (also named Europol information system) – a platform for Member States and institutions to share information and intelligence on security issues (Europol, 2017: 1). The commission, had taken a similar approach, creating the Radicalization Awareness Network to “collect data on existing civil society initiative specifically focused on foreign fighters” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 7), with the goal to “generate

ideas for policy makers” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 7). Finally, Eurojust also took the lead concerning foreign fighters, building on “Eurojust experience in coordinating and facilitating the cooperation between national authorities in Foreign Terrorist Fighters cases” (Eurojust, 2016: 4). It began compiling best practices and jurisprudence analysis, in reports concerning “Eurojust’s View on the phenomenon and criminal justice response to Foreign Terrorist Fighters” (Eurojust, 2016: 4), sharing with European institutions an extensive judicial approach to successfully tackle the issue.

5.4.2 Were policy efforts followed?

As it was argued beforehand, parts of the European institutional framework had been acting as a policy entrepreneur. Overall, even if policy entrepreneurship was not a widely spread practice, it can be interesting to see if the efforts identified earlier were followed by other institutions or by Member States. In terms of the initiative of the Commission concerning the Focal point travellers’ system, the follow-ups were limited. In fact, “more than 90% of the contributions by Member States regarding verified foreign terrorist fighters in Focal Point Travelers in 2015 originate from just 5 Member States” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 5), giving limited legitimacy to this policy enterprise from the Commission. In addition, the coordinator stressed that Member States “who do not yet contribute or who contribute relatively little to Focal point travellers and other Europol efforts as well as the European information system are encouraged to increase their contributions” (EU Counter-Terrorism coordinator, 2016: 2). A similar pattern was present for the initiatives of Europol. The European information system, even if its use was increased, had not been widely used to combat foreign fighters – as it “contains only 1473 foreign terrorist fighters despite well-founded estimates that around 5000 EU citizens” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 5) could be classified as foreign fighters. Moreover, the use was mainly focused on other domains of security cooperation (Europol, 2017: 1) but not terrorism or the issue of foreign fighters. In addition, concerning the use of the Eurojust cooperation framework in the fight against foreign fighters, the Member States were “encouraged to increase the use of Eurojust to exchange information and for operational cooperation” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 2), underlining the low follow up on this matter, even as recent developments in the system were mainly designed to tackle foreign fighters (Eurojust, 2016: 3).

5.4.3 Analysis

According to the third hypothesis, if the European institutional framework had been acting as a policy entrepreneur, more cooperation could be expected. Such initiative could be detected by analysing who initiated major update in the cooperation framework of the Union, and if European institutions had taken a lead in developing new systems. In addition, the goal was to find if such systems were used and useful in the fight against foreign fighters. In the first case, it was found that the Council was the one initiating change in the main domain of the European anti-terrorism cooperation due to the emergence of foreign fighters. Policy entrepreneurship was undertaken by Europol, the Commission and Eurojust – but in a relatively limited manner. In addition, it was found that these initiatives were not greatly followed by other institutions or Member States. Therefore, it can be argued that the third hypothesis is not verified. In terms of the influence of foreign fighters on the European institutional framework, the presence of a cultural spillover cannot be confirmed.

5.5 A neo-functional perspective: summarizing the findings

In the case of the first hypothesis, it can be argued that the foreign fighters' phenomenon led to a functional spillover. The European institutional framework has, due to this issue and according to this first perspective, taken a preferable stance towards cooperation. Through a policy analysis, it was found that successful practice in other domain of anti-terrorism cooperation, such as anti-terrorism financing, has led to more cooperation when it comes to dealing with the threat posed by foreign fighters. This was done by looking at how the European institutions were considering cooperation efforts in regards with foreign fighters, and how they consequently implemented new framework based on previous success.

In the case of the second hypothesis, it can be argued that a political spillover had taken place. The issue of foreign fighters was a European issue by the institutions. The latter developed plans and strategies to effectively deal with this matter, and defended the view that only a European level cooperation would produce effective results.

In the case of the third hypothesis, the interest was focused on policy entrepreneurship. Here, the focus was put on who initiated the push for an update in the anti-terrorism practices of the European institutional framework. Globally, even if the institutions drafted plans, as found in the second hypothesis, such efforts were in general required by Member States through the Council or European Council. Even if Europol, Eurojust or the Commission had taken their own actions, little use of these new tools followed. In the literature review, actions against foreign fighters were identified from the whole European institutional framework, but by being

interested on the initiators of such efforts the presence of a cultural spillover cannot be found. It can therefore be argued that this hypothesis is not confirmed.

Chapter 6: The influence of the foreign fighters' phenomenon on European Member States

6.1 Result of the research

In the following chapter, the influence of the foreign fighters' phenomenon on the European Member States will be assessed, using the intergovernmentalist perspective and the two hypotheses developed in chapter 3. An analysis will follow.

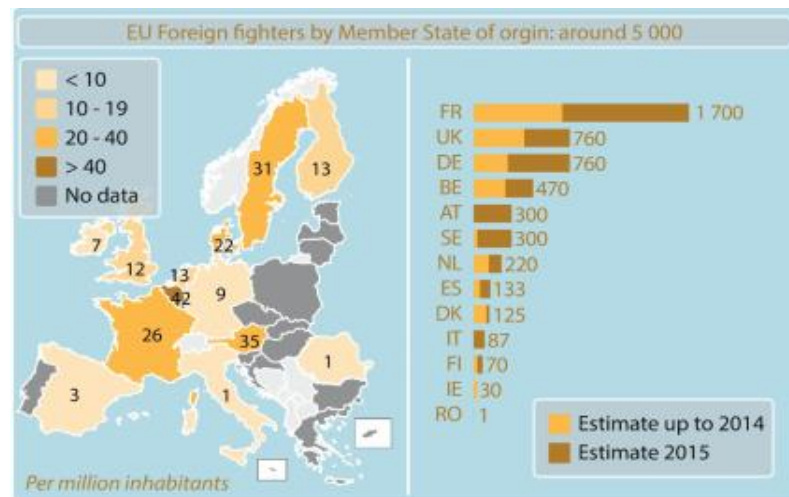
6.2 Testing the fourth hypothesis

Since the emergence of foreign fighters as a security issue in the European Union, it can be argued based on the literature review that Member States have seen disparate development of the phenomenon (The Soufan Group, 2015: 13). In order to test the fourth hypothesis, the goal is to determine if the level of foreign fighters, which was linked to the level of domestic threat in the second chapter, is linked to a difference in the preference of Member States for European anti-terrorism cooperation. A representative sample of countries will be picked. Then, the hypothesis will be tested.

6.2.1 Selecting cases

Solid estimates on the number of foreign fighters per country have been produced by several think tanks. In European policy documents regarding foreign fighters, estimates by The Soufan Group or the international Centre for Counter-terrorism are often used. Using Figure 12, which is based on policy report from the European parliament, the cases can be selected

Figure 11: EU foreign fighters by Member State of origin (Bakowski & Puccio, 2016: 2)



Firstly, the Czech Republic and Malta can serve as a low threat country. In fact, there were next to no foreign fighters originating from these countries, as of the latest studies (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016: 46). In addition, the country has not suffered from any attacks related to foreign fighters or jihadism terrorism overall. Then, the Netherlands can be used as an example of middle threat country. According to research, foreign fighters are parts of the terrorist threat – but no attacks or attempted plots have been identified (Europol, 2016: 28). Finally, France, Belgium, and Germany can be taken as a high threat country (Europol, 2016: 27), as it has importantly contributed to the blend of European foreign fighters in conflict abroad (The Soufan Group, 2015: 13). Moreover, three of them have suffered from devastating attacks, some of them plotted by returnees, according to reports from Europol (Europol, 2016: 5).

6.2.2 Are countries with high, medium or low level of foreign fighters behaving differently regarding European cooperation?

In the European anti-terrorism cooperation framework, it was argued that countries with diverse levels of foreign fighters do adopt different attitudes. From European policy documents, the preference towards anti-terrorism cooperation of the Member States can be analysed. When focusing on policy documents from the European institutional framework, the attitude of Member States can also be emphasized. In the European counter terrorism report of 2014, the proactive attitude of the Netherlands concerning the prevention of radicalization and the emergence of foreign fighters is underlined (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2014a: 7). A very similar attitude was described with France or Germany, this time in the domain of criminal justice response to foreign fighters (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 37). In addition, the leading European nations in terms of the number of foreign fighters (International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, 2016: 25) are among the heaviest users of the Europol Focal Point Travellers database or the European Information System (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 5). Overall, European meetings in the field of anti-terrorism did take place, to exchange best practices of the issue. Often, these efforts were not involving all Member States, but rather those that present a high number of foreign fighters (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 29), according to research – such as France or Germany – as well as countries with a key interest due to middle-level threat, such as the Netherlands. In the case of Belgium, similarly, initiative to reinforce European cooperation were undertaken. For example, the country “requested to discuss the issue of returnees at the JHA Council on 9 November” (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016c: 1). In addition, Belgium initiated and hosted a

reunion of 13 European interior ministers, from the country most affected by the issue, to discuss workable solutions and push for more European cooperation. (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016c: 1). This group of countries soon began to work together on policy solution, and unanimously called the European Council to act on the matter (Council of the European Union, 2016b: 10). Similarly, France and Germany also initiated a call for further cooperation regarding foreign fighters, by sending several letters to the Council Presidency. In these letters, the position of these high-risk countries was clear: more cooperation in the Union is needed (Dr de Maisière & Mr Cazeneuve, 2016: 2). These letters were followed by more actions, as European Council documents suggested that the issue of foreign fighters was “being considered closely by the group of 13 Member States – which are most affected by the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters” (Council of the European Union, 2017: 7) – underlining the difference in attitude among all European Member States. In the case of the low-level countries selected, the attitude is revealing. While the ministers or head of government participated in the meetings concerning foreign fighters (Council of the European Union, 2014b: 8), next to no initiatives were taken. Despite not taking any actions and thereof not being favourable to more European collaboration, it can be emphasized that the low-level countries played a role by not being opposed to resolutions in the Council, as major legal updates and framework decisions regarding the anti-terrorism cooperation were adopted since 2014 (as found in chapter 6).

6.2.3 Analysis

According to the fourth hypothesis, the Member States with higher levels of foreign fighters should have adopted a preference for more European anti-terrorism cooperation. From the research, it can be argued that this is the case. The participation of France, Belgium, Germany or the Netherlands into nearly all European initiatives regarding foreign fighters demonstrate their willingness towards expanding the security cooperation in the Union. At the same time, the complete absence of propositions, declarations or initiatives by the selected low-level countries is surprising. It can be noted that, while not taking the lead to combat the threat posed by foreign fighters through the European framework, the low-level countries did not stop efforts by the high-level countries to further such practices. This can be emphasized by the absence of major setbacks in the implementation of a European strategy against foreign fighters. In terms of the influence of foreign fighters on the preference of Member States for European cooperation, it can therefore be argued that the countries most concerned with the threat were largely influence, creating the desire to increase participation in the security realm of the Union.

6.3 Testing the fifth hypothesis

Returning foreign fighters were, according to policy documents from Europol (Europol, 2016: 5) and the Member States, partly or fully involved in the major terrorist attacks in the Union since 2014. To test the fifth hypothesis, the goal is to determine if terrorist attacks plotted and carried by returning foreign fighters have influence legislation and an extension of European anti-terrorism cooperation.

6.3.1 Are Member States referring to attacks in policy documents regarding foreign fighters?

As it was argued in the literature review, major decisions of the Council on the European anti-terrorism cooperation have often followed terrorist incidents in the Union. While this fact does not need to be further assessed, it could be relevant to look at such decisions and try to identify if mentions of the attacks were specially drafted in text regarding foreign fighters. Such a presence could show that the attacks involving foreign fighters do cause meetings of the Member States and consequently new legislations. In the last years, the Council of the European Union had responded to, which had involved foreign fighters, with policy propositions. In late 2015, the Member States referred to “the heinous terrorist attacks which took place in Paris on 13 November 2015” (Council of the European Union, 2015d: 3). Similarly, other meeting taking place in 2016 saw the Member States reviewing and adopting new legislations due to “recent terrorist attacks” (Council of the European Union, 2016c: 5). In addition, Member States referred to the shocking terrorist attacks in Brussels (Council of the European Union, 2016d: 1) upon the adoption of further “enforcement capabilities to monitor the threat from foreign fighters” (Council of the European Union, 2016d: 1). After this crisis, a major update in the cooperation framework defended by the Member States was developed to increase cooperation against foreign fighters (Council of the European Union, 2016: 41). Such efforts were conducted keeping in mind “terrorist attacks in Paris and Brussels” (Council of the European Union, 2016: 1) in 2016. Similarly, the biggest update in the European strategy against terrorism, namely the directive on combating terrorism, was conducted to ensure that the fight against foreign fighters could be conducted properly. In the document, mention of attacks on European soil are multiple, and used to exemplify the threat (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2017: 4). In addition, other Council decisions or statement are referred to which were produced following an attack in a Member States are referred to (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2017: 3).

6.3.2 Did Member States' preferences shift due to crisis involving foreign fighters?

In mid-2014, the “recognition of ISIL as a major threat to European security led to the adoption of a specific EU strategy against it” (Bakowski & Puccio, 2016: 4). Following this event, the policy-making mechanism of the Union started to adopt resolutions, showing the importance of preference shift due to new developments. Among these resolutions, the Council of the European Union adopted a counter-terrorism strategy for Syria and Iraq, with a focus on foreign fighters (Council of the European Union, 2015: 1). In the policy document, the shift in preference for more cooperation can clearly be seen overtime, as the Council of the European Union stated that it should now “share best practice developed inside the EU; equally, we should ensure that we are learning and applying lessons from others' experiences in this area.” (Council of the European Union, 2015: 4), whereas in the meeting of the European Council in October 2015, just before the November attacks in Paris, the anti-terrorism agenda occupied a small portion of the agenda. (Council of the European Union, 2015c: 2). The Member States had agreed to make progress on “five priorities” and were briefed on “recent developments” (Council of the European Union, 2015c: 6), but no decisions of utmost importance were taken during this meeting. After the November attacks, the European Council on Justice and Home Affairs portray a totally different stance - the only item on the agenda being counter-terrorism. In addition, the Member States adopted regulations (Council of the European Union, 2015d: 3) and invited the commission to further its implication concerning foreign fighters (Council of the European Union, 2015d: 4). In the beginning of 2016, just before the Brussels terrorist attacks, the Member States had approved in the Justice and Home affairs Council regulations regarding many topic, with a minority being linked to foreign fighters (Council of the European Union, 2016c: 2). Following this major crisis in Brussels in March 2016, the Council had during emergency meetings (EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, 2016a: 37) called for real improvement in the cooperation mechanism in the Union, and pursue several decisions (Council of the European Union, 2016d: 1) – contrasting with the Council held before the attacks. In fact, the Member States' preference shifted once again after this event, as they were now in favour of setting up even greater regulation, such as the PNR directive (Council of the European Union, 2016d: 1). From then, the Council of the European Union acted to implement the decisions, developing “a common approach” (Council of the European Union, 2016: 3) to anti-terrorism efforts in the domain of Justice and Home Affairs. Such developments were unprecedented, and illustrate how these crises provides a change in the preference of Member States for cooperation. Finally, the latest update in the directive on combating terrorism provides further indication that Member States preferences have now shifted due to the

phenomenon, with the text stating that “foreign terrorist fighters have been linked to recent attacks and plots in several Member States” (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2017: 4), and now calling for “a strong coordinated response and cooperation within and between the Member States as well as with and among the competent Union agencies and bodies to counter terrorism, including Eurojust and Europol” (European Parliament and the Council of the European Union, 2017: 5).

6.3.3 Analysis

In policy documents adopted by the Member States, and concerning foreign fighters, reference to attacks conducted by such individuals are present. It can therefore be argued that these events had had an influence on the preference of Member States for European cooperation. In the case of preference shift, it was seen that the crisis involving foreign fighters has had an important effect. Through Council decisions, the Member States are more and more vigorously stating that cooperation at the European level is the effective way to deal with the issue of foreign fighters. Overall, it can be argued that the response is not only symbolic, as the condonation of attacks by the Member States are also followed by actions designed to modify the cooperation framework.

6.4 An intergovernmentalist perspective: summarizing the findings

In the case of the first hypothesis, it was found that the foreign fighters’ phenomenon had influenced the preference of Member States for European cooperation. This effect was proportional to the level of foreign fighters in the Member States themselves, pushing highly risky Member States to prefer intelligence sharing, information exchange and judicial cooperation in the Union. In the case of the second hypothesis, it was found that the realization of attacks had exemplify the reality of the threat posed by foreign fighters. Therefore, Member States were keen to legislate to reinforce anti-terrorism cooperation to tackle this rising issue. In addition, it was shown that the preference of actors did shift in times of crisis. The two hypotheses are therefore confirmed.

Chapter 7: The influence of foreign fighters on European anti-terrorism cooperation

7.1 Discussion

In Chapter 6, the influence of foreign fighters on the European institutional framework was assessed. The functional spillover hypothesis was, by analysing policy documents, identified and confirmed. The issue of foreign fighters had caused European institutions to find in their past experiences successful examples of how to deal with the situation, and solutions to improve the current practice to the new reality - all this leading to more cooperation between the institutions and the creation of new collaboration framework at the level of the Union. This happen, one can argue, because long term anti-terrorism practices were already in place in other domains – so it was easier to just include foreign fighters in a renewed cooperative framework. Secondly, the political spillover hypothesis was, still using the same method, identified and confirmed. Faced with the rising issue of foreign fighters, European institutions such as Europol, Eurojust or the Commission drafted plans and strategies to effectively tackle such risks. In addition, the position of the latter was clear: following the specificity of the free area of movements for people and goods, only anti-terrorism policies at the European level could be relevant. It can be argued that such effect took place due to the very essence of the European Union; it can be logically expected that European institutions would consider their level relevant, in line with the gradual development of European security strategies in all other domains following a trend of integration. Thirdly, the attitude of the European institutional framework was scrutinized to identify policy entrepreneurship regarding the phenomenon. It was found that the institutions did not, by their own efforts, took the lead in the fight against foreign fighters. Small efforts were led by the Commission, with little to no follow ups by the Member States. This, it can be emphasized, happened because Member States turned towards their state' core competencies – security and policing – and were the initiators through the Council of further European efforts. Little was then left for European institutions to work outside of the goals set by the Council in times of unprecedented threat.

In chapter 7, the influence of foreign fighters on the preference of Member States for European cooperation was assessed. The fourth hypothesis, linking the domestic level of foreign fighters to a desire for more European cooperation, was confirmed. It was seen that the Member States most involved with the phenomenon did use the European framework to cooperate more. This probably happened as new practices were developed by domestic authorities most in contact

with the phenomenon, along with the realization that border crossing had happened in plots organized by returning foreign fighters. The fifth hypothesis, linking crisis involving foreign fighters with legislations in favour of more cooperation, was also confirmed. It can be argued that this happened due to a sudden policy window of opportunity at the European level and the shared solidarity among Member States – coupled with a desire to break the status quo and do more together.

Overall, it can be emphasized that the issue of foreign fighters had a reinforcing influence on European anti-terrorism cooperation. As it was described in the theoretical framework, the cooperation system in the case of terrorism is two-fold: the European institutions on one part and the Member States on the other, influencing each other – influence on which theories of European integration provide explanatory power. In this case, it was assessed that the issue of foreign fighters caused a response from both elements, which was required if any change to the cooperation framework was to be expected. Influenced by the intensity of the threat and its potential for devastation, both the Member States and the European institutions reacted to the issue of foreign fighters by increasing the scope of anti-terrorism cooperation.

As it was assessed earlier on in the theoretical framework, and confirmed by the research, the two theories of European integration do provide explanatory power concerning the results. Considering the findings, it can be argued that the intergovernmentalist perspective provides important explanation concerning the influence of foreign fighters on European anti-terrorism cooperation. The absence of cultural spillover, also understood here as policy entrepreneurship of European institutions, identified a key characteristic of the European Union which seems to be present in questions linked to security cooperation, being the utmost importance of the Council' approval in developing new frameworks. Even if institutions developed new practices, and drafted European strategies, the Member States could be seen as the architect of the increase in European cooperation regarding anti-terrorism. It is their actions, translated into Council decisions and influenced by the foreign fighters' phenomenon, that really fuelled the update in the framework identified through the research. In addition, the theoretical tools used in this research can be used to other domain than the issue of foreign fighters. In fact, if a phenomenon has a proven influence on the Member States – or a sizable proportion of them – and on the European Institutional framework, the implications of the neo-functionalist and intergovernmentalist theories should still be valid. Such view can be defended because the assumptions were built regardless of the matter discussed, so it could be expected that a generalization would make sense.

In terms of the theory, the research findings reinforce the importance of a pluralist view on European integration. In fact, the neo-institutional theory provides valid insights to grasp the influence of an external phenomenon on the process of European cooperation, but a sound research must keep in mind the importance of Member States – and therefore the intergovernmentalist perspective – in the decision-making process. As the latter are the last deciders, the individual influence of external phenomenon on national preference towards European cooperation is of prime importance. In this case, both theories have provided an explanation on how the foreign fighters' phenomenon influenced the cooperation framework, but the mechanism they underline have been working at the same time – therefore reinforcing the scope of the European response to this latest development of the terrorism threat. It could easily be argued that without the spillover effects from the European institutional framework or the active participation of member states, the European anti-terrorism framework would not have evolved to consider the development of foreign fighters as a major threat.

7.2 Limitations and conclusion

Throughout the research, methodological limitations did appear. In the case of the European institutional framework, a range of information was not available to the public. In fact, it was seen that the cooperation framework had been extended due to the foreign fighters' phenomenon. But to really make sure that the intensity of exchange between Member States also increased, data regarding the number of files or the quantity of information exchanged through the European framework could have reinforced the findings. When the preference of Member States towards European cooperation was analysed, a lack of transparency regarding discussions in Council meetings limited the relevance of the findings. It could be argued that, behind closed doors, heads of ministry and state were defending very different preferences for anti-terrorism cooperation at the Union' level – reducing the scope of the results. Finally, the same issue of transparency could have diminished the perceived effect of European institutions, as they could have adopted a pro-cooperation attitude to influence Member States without taking a public stance – therefore potentially rig the assessment of the intergovernmentalist approach.

The issue of foreign fighters was nothing new, but the phenomenon has been developing at an unprecedented pace. Devastating attacks in France, Belgium, Germany and the United Kingdom were linked to returning or aspiring foreign fighters, underlining the utmost importance of sound public policies to successfully eliminate the threat such individual causes. It can be argued that the reinforcement of European cooperation will lead, if followed by all

parties, to a better outcome for the Union and its citizens. As the time of the writing, major terrorist attacks have already taken place, threatening the stability of European and national societies. One can only wish that the future will see a decrease of the threat posed by foreign fighters through effective anti-terrorism cooperation in and outside the European Union. But if efforts are not sustained, the facts do not support an optimistic outcome: if the number of European citizens leaving is decreasing, the potential number of returnees will continue to increase, and with it the immense risk to sustain a continuous flow of attacks. At the same time, one can question if the past efforts were sufficient, and if the worse is not ahead of us. In terms of policy recommendations, it could be deemed relevant to unite the anti-terrorism efforts regarding foreign fighters into the work of a common European agency. So far, the Commission, the European Parliament, a selected club of Member States, as well as Europol and Eurojust have all in their own way contributed to reducing the threat posed by these individuals – yet coordination, or a global strategic plan, is lacking. But evaluating policy efficiency and drawing predictions regarding foreign fighters should be the subject of further research.

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Appendix I:

1.1 ISIS Fighters estimates compared to foreign fighters estimates

	ICCT estimates	Data retrieved from press release by TASS, Russian News Agency, quoting the FSB deputy Chief Yevgeny Sysoyev, estimating total number of ISIS militants in Syria and Iraq to 80 000 with about 30 000 foreign fighters among them (TASS News Agency, 2015).
	80000	
Foreign fighters	30000	
% of foreign fighters	37,5%	

	FSB estimates	Data retrieved from the ICCT Policy Brief by A.P. Schmid, quoting United States and United Nations documents, estimating total number of foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq to around 30 000 (Schmid, 2015: 1). In the similar documents, safe estimates establish total number of ISIS militants to 70 000
Total ISIS fighters	70000	
Foreign fighters	30000	
% of foreign fighters	42,8%	

(Schmid, 2015: 14).

1.2 Foreign fighters by Region data`

Data retrieved from “Foreign fighters: An Updated Assessment of the Flow of Foreign Fighters into Syria and Iraq” by the Soufan Group (2015: 5):

Western Europe	5000
Former Soviet Republics	4700
North America	280
The Balkans	875
The Maghreb	8000
The Middle East	8240
Southeast Asia	900

1.3 Number of suspects arrested and convicted for Jihadism terrorism in the EU

Data retrieved from Europol TE SAT 2016 page 19 and 46

Years	2013	2014	2015
Court proceedings	313	444	514

Years	2013	2014	2015
Suspect arrested	216	395	687