Research Report

Leiden Model United Nations 2017
~ fresh ideas, new solutions ~

Forum: *General Assembly Third Committee*
Issue: *Right of assembly in Western Europe*

Position: *Chair*

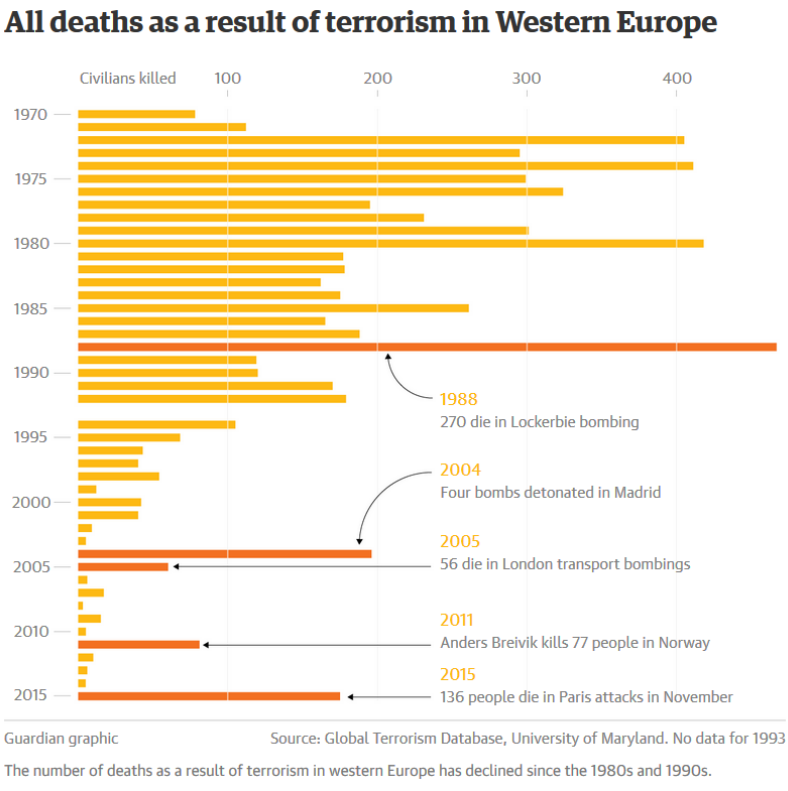
Background of the Assembly of the Western European Union

The Western European Union has made an important contribution to peace and stability in Europe and to the development of the European security and defence architecture, promoting consultations and cooperation in this field, and conducting operations in many theatres. The Assembly of the Western European Union was created by the Treaty on Economic, Social and Cultural Collaboration and Collective Self-Defence signed at Brussels on 17 March 1948 (the Brussels Treaty). Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands signed the Brussels Treaty as an unconditional mutual defence commitment should any of the signatories be the victim of an armed attack on Europe. In September 1948, military cooperation was included in the framework of the Brussels Treaty Organisation and as a result a plan for common defence was adopted, involving the integration of air defences and a joint command organisation. At the time of its self-dissolution, 28 states participated in the work of the WEU: 10 member states (signatory states), 6 associate members (including Poland from 1999), 5 observers and 7 associate partners. The WEU was administered by a council consisting of the

ministers of foreign affairs and of defence of the member countries. The council was responsible for policy formulation and was headed by a secretary-general. Three internal agencies were also involved. The assembly of the WEU, which had several permanent committees (political defence, technological and aerospace, rules of procedure and privileges, and parliamentary and public relations), consisted of the delegates of the member countries to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe; it met at least twice each year (normally in Paris). Headquarters of the WEU were in Brussels. In March 2010, the members decided to finish the WEU's operations, and in June 2011 the organization officially closed. Building on the achievements of the WEU and the principle of European solidarity, the EU has taken on crisis management tasks since 2000 and has now developed a Common Security and Defence Policy.

Nowadays

Western Europe is experiencing a higher number of attacks but lower death tolls compared to the 1980s. The scale of violence in western Europe to date 2017's



summer has shocked Europeans and the world alike. Figures from the Global Terrorism Database (GTD) show that since 2012 there has been a dramatic rise in the number of deaths from terrorist attacks across the world. In western Europe, however, the figure has decreased since the early 1990s, because today western Europe is typically experiencing a higher number of attacks with lower death tolls. The graphic shows data till 2015, however the number of terrorism attacks rocketed up in the last few year, especially in 2017.

In practical terms, threats, intimidation and assaults against peaceful assemblies have taken place in several European countries over the last few years.

An incomplete list of examples:

−Copenhagen, Denmark, January 10th, 2009: A pro-Israel demonstration was disrupted by Palestinian groups shouting anti-Semitic slogans referring to mass killing of Jews.

−Bolton, England, March 20th, 2010: A street rally by the English Defence League against radical Islam and Shariah law was attacked by radical leftists from UAF (Unite Against

Fascists). British police made 74 arrests in their effort to protect the demonstration.

−Stuttgart, Germany, June 2nd, 2011: A street event highlighting the plight of persecuted Christians in Africa was attacked and kept from taking place by a crowd of hundreds

carrying a variety of left wing banners. German police did not protect the event effectively.

−Stuttgart, Germany, June 4th, 2011: The Abacco Hotel was attacked with paint and stones as their premises had been rented for an event by the German political party DIE FREIHEIT.

−Tower Hamlets, England, September 3rd, 2011: A planned EDL march was

banned by the authorities due to political pressure. The replacement standing demonstration was harassed by extremists, who also attacked a coach leaving the event. At least 16 were arrested.

−Aarhus, Denmark, March 31st, 2012: A demonstration against Islamic Sharia law was assaulted by Antifa and immigrants group, held at bay only by a massive police effort.

−Solingen, Bonn, Germany, May 1st & 6th 2012: Campaign events held by the political party Pro NRW were assaulted by Muslim groups, but proceed under heavy police protection.

−Nuremberg, Germany, June 16th, 2012: A street event by the political party DIE FREIHEIT got continuously harassed by opponents, aided and abetted by police passivity.

−Munich, Germany, July 14th, 2012: A street event held by DIE FREIHEIT got assaulted by left wing extremists, again aided by permissiveness of the German police.

−Walthamstow, England, September 1st, 2012: UAF left-wing extremists and Islamists attacked a demonstration held by the English Defence League. Police lost control of the situation.

−Munich, Germany, September 11th, 2012: A discussion about Euro-Islam was to be held at a local restaurant, but the owner was forced to cancel due to massive telephone threats.

−Malmö, Sweden, October 27th, 2012: Participants of a public lecture featuring Dutch MP Geert Wilders were assaulted and pelted by eggs by Antifa groups. Swedish police justified their passive attitude with a reference to the attackers also having “Freedom of expression”.

However Western Europe accounted for less than one percent of the 34,676 people

killed in "terror" attacks in 2016, and only two percent of attacks, according to a new report. While Western Europe accounted for only a small proportion of the total bloodshed, the study noted the spike in the use of vehicles as weapons in crowd-ramming attacks (Nice July 2016; London Bridge attack, June 2017; Spain, Cambrils, August 2017) on the continent.

The Western European countries- where these by the UN listed countries can be found Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Monaco, Netherlands, Switzerland – are all highly involved in the international media, in everyday, worldwide decision making and politics and that can be one of them reasons why the Western Europe is a target for terror attacks since it gets a great amount of interest, attention. The WEU has contributed under its active years to make the region a liveable, peaceful place. With the introduction of the Lisbon Treaty, the EU's role in transparency and accountability was greatly increased and the European Parliament, to avoid duplication called for the abolition of the Assembly of WEU. However, it seems like besides the now existing bodies and treaties there is a need for new agreements or even new bodies to make improvements in the Western European Assembly to stabilize the situation.

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