

Conference 11th April 2018

Smuggling, Counterfeiting and Terrorism Financing Economic stakeholders' mobilization

Press Release

The issue of financing has become central in the fight to counter terrorism, whether this is at national or international level.

The recommendation made by the European Parliament on March 1st last bears witness to this as it “*calls on the Member States and the Commission to consider cutting the funding sources of terrorist networks as a key priority.*” France, which is one of the most active countries in this battle is, on the request of Emmanuel Macron, organising an international conference on the issue in Paris on 25th and 26th April.

The Robert Schuman Foundation has also been active in this area as it convened a high-level conference, “*Smuggling, Counterfeiting and Terrorism Financing – Motivating economic stakeholders,*” on 11th April at the Egmont Palace in Brussels. This specific insight proved to be all the more vital, since the illegal trafficking of merchandise (arms, oil, drugs, cigarettes, cultural objects, pharmaceutical and luxury goods) has become a major source of financing for terrorist groups.

The conference was marked by the participation of leading personalities: former anti-terrorist judges, Baltasar Garzon and Jean-Louis Bruguière, MEP, Arnaud Danjean, Deputy Secretary of the EEAS, Pedro Serrano, representatives of public anti-laundering authorities (Tracfin, CTIF), the Director General of Europol, the special representative of the European Counter-Terrorism Coordinator, as well as many industrial stakeholders (LVMH, Microsoft, SpiritsEurope).

Lively, diverse debate confirmed that smuggling and the counterfeiting of consumer goods was a lever for the financing of terrorism, notably in the Sahelian region of Africa, Libya and the Middle East.

Beyond an interesting review of the situation, which led to the recognition of the work achieved in mobilising stakeholders at all levels, this conference especially highlighted the need to include the combat against illegal trade and counterfeiting in the counter-terrorist agenda of governments in the Member States of the European Union.

Thanks to the knowledge they have of smuggling and counterfeiting, businesses, the first victims of illegal trade, can provide authorities with precious help in terms of early warning and prevention and must commit to the fight.