



CSS EVENT REPORT

“EUROPEAN COUNTER TERRORISM”

Speaker: Prof. (Dr.) Christian Kaunert, Professor of International Security,
Dublin City University, Ireland

On 26th October 2023, Center for Security Studies (CSS) was honored to host Prof. (Dr.) Christian Kaunert at O.P. Jindal Global University for a special event. Professor Kaunert has been an expert panel for European Institute for Public Administration, the Counter Terrorism Committee of European Parliament, and the European Union Institute for Security Studies. During the sessions, he discussed the efforts undertaken by the European Union to counter international and domestic terrorism.

The session began with a welcoming address by the Centre Coordinator, Mehak Johari. Following this, introductory remarks were presented by Dr. Pankaj Jha, the Director of the Centre for Security Studies (CSS). Dr. Jha emphasized that the Indian perspective on terrorism primarily focuses on cross-border terrorism originating from Pakistan. However, he underscored the importance of considering the European Union Counter Terrorism efforts to comprehend the diverse forms of terrorism affecting the world and how to effectively address them. He also raised a significant concern about the potential emergence of a fifth wave of terrorism due to the escalating terrorist activities. Professor Jha highlighted that this development could be worrisome, especially given the perceived leniency of the European response to the growing radicalism.

Finally, he handed over the platform to Professor Kaunert, raising inquiries about the fundamental measures that Europe has undertaken regarding terrorism. Additionally, he inquired whether there are plans in place for a responsive mechanism. Dr. Jha's last query pertained to how the European Union intends to address the recent developments concerning the conflicts involving Russia and Ukraine, and more notably, the Israel-Palestine conflict.

Prof. Dr. Kaunert initiated his presentation by introducing his recent book, which delves into the evolution of EU institutions in the context of counter-terrorism efforts post the 9/11 attacks in the United States. He outlined the book's structure, consisting of three main sections. The first section explores the conceptual framework, emphasizing how collective securitization can effectively combat terrorism, with the European Union playing a central role. The second

section delves into the practical implications of collective securitization and the European Union's role as a global actor. The final section examines how the institutional framework addresses these issues through three case studies: EU-US cooperation post-9/11, the EU's response to terrorism in Afghanistan and against the Taliban, and the EU's counter-terrorism efforts in Iraq and Siberia following the Iraq war.

Following the introduction, Dr. Kaunert updated the audience on recent developments in the Israel-Palestine conflict. He expressed the view that the atrocities committed by Hamas in Israel surpassed the severity of the 9/11 attacks, and, based on statements from the victims, the level of brutality in the terror attack exceeded that of even the worst offenders like ISIS.

Additionally, Professor Kaunert highlighted that the European Union's Counterterrorism (EUCT) efforts were notably passive prior to the 9/11 attacks. At that time, the EU had only designated one group, Al-Qaeda, as a terrorist organization, and just five countries had criminalized terrorism. He underscored that the events of 9/11 had a transformative impact on the EU's approach to terrorism.

To grasp this transformation, he delved into the connection between policy issues and security, particularly examining how collective institutions like the EU grapple with framing issues collectively amidst the divergent interests of individual states. His response emphasized that effective policy framing can bolster the institution's ability to take action against security vulnerabilities. Improving policies directly enhances the institution's capacity and fosters a more consistent and effective approach, yielding better outcomes.

Furthermore, he stressed the pivotal role of diplomatic relationships between the EU and state actors involved in security actions. These ties are a decisive factor, as positive relations facilitate state action, whereas strained relations can hinder it.

Dr. Kaunert pointed out that the EU has been a long-standing target of terrorism, with the presence of non-EU actors on European soil contributing to the spread of terror activities. He acknowledged that the EU's weak response system has been a significant factor in this. He cited ongoing events, such as the riots in Paris related to the Israel-Hamas conflict and targeted attacks on the Jewish community, as contemporary examples of this issue. The problem is becoming increasingly intertwined with European affairs, and the situation may worsen over time.

Dr. Kaunert highlighted that the initial efforts from the Council of Europe went largely unnoticed due to complexities, such as voluntary cooperation with no binding provisions. However, concrete progress was observed when similar efforts were adopted and implemented by the European Union.

In his concluding remarks, Dr. Kaunert postulated that the 9/11 attacks instigated a significant shift in the European Union's anti-terrorism strategy. The EU revised its definition of terrorism, prioritizing prevention over response and distinguishing it from murder. Notably, he further discussed, the EU stands out as one of the few international bodies with a clear terrorism definition, while the United Nations grapples with a comprehensive one. Consequently, all EU member states have enacted anti-terrorism measures. Dr. Kaunert explored how, previously, some nations provided sanctuary to foreign terrorists. However, the EU's revamped approach streamlined the extradition process, transforming it from a diplomatic procedure into an inter-judiciary one, expediting cases like the 2005 London terror attacks, where suspects who fled to Italy were extradited to Britain within 28 days, a stark contrast to the previous cumbersome process. Additionally, the EU implemented mechanisms such as the European Arrest Warrant to enhance cooperation and criminalized acts related to terrorism, including traveling to Syria for combat. Nonetheless, disparities persist in handling such cases, with some EU leaders encouraging support for Ukraine as a patriotic duty for EU citizens.

Dr. Kaunert's remarks on "European Counter Terrorism" were very well-received by the audience as it provided a unique opportunity to gain valuable insights into the working of one of the most important institutional establishments to curtail terrorism. His remarks were followed by a curious set of questions from the audience to which he replied eloquently. The session ended with Professor Kaunert receiving a token of appreciation from Dr. Pankaj Jha, the Director and Professor Gitanjali Roy Sinha, the Assistant Director of the Centre.