



Strasbourg, 22 October 2020

CDCT(2020)04rev1

STEERING COMMITTEE ON COUNTER-TERRORISM (CDCT)

24/7 Network of Contact Points on Foreign Terrorist Fighters

**Information provided by the Secretariat
– Update 7**

Secretariat of the Counter-Terrorism Division
Information Society and Action against Crime Directorate, DG I

www.coe.int/terrorism

The Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 217) provides for the designation of a point of contact available on a 24-hour, seven-days-a-week basis in order to strengthen the timely exchange of relevant police information concerning persons travelling for the purpose of terrorism.

The decision to set up a Network pending the entry into force of the Additional Protocol was taken by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe at its Ministerial Session held in Sofia on 18 May 2016. On 1 December 2016, the Council of Europe 24/7 Network of Contact Points on Foreign Terrorist Fighters (hereinafter “the Network”) was made operational.

The Council of Europe Counter-Terrorism Committee (CDCT), meeting in Strasbourg on 14-15 May 2019, decided, on the proposal of the Bureau and in agreement with the opinion expressed by the Contact Points, to enlarge the 24/7 Network to interested non-member States and relevant international organisations. The CDCT’s decision was then presented at the 1356th meeting of the Ministers’ Deputies held on 9 October 2019 in Strasbourg.

Currently, the Network counts 48 Contact Points, including two organisations, the European Union and INTERPOL, and one non-member State, the United States of America.

Since 2016, the Contact Points have met annually to discuss key matters, including the added value of the Network, modalities of the information exchange, security and confidentiality aspects and means to improve its function.

At their last meeting, held on 17 December 2019, the Contact Points discussed the functioning of the Network, the possibility of carrying out an assessment, and the benefits and challenges linked to its enlargement to other members. Participants confirmed the effectiveness of the Network and underlined the added value of having a system free from a heavy infrastructure. Reiterating the importance of meeting in person and building trust with their counterparts, participants proposed increasing the annual number of the meetings. Participants also agreed to invite representatives of the Organization for American States’ Inter-American Committee for Counterterrorism (OAS/CICTE) to their next meeting. Finally, the Contact Points were informed, in a confidential manner, about the results of the “ping test” run by the Secretariat.

As a follow up to the meeting, the Secretariat submitted a questionnaire which builds upon the main proposals put forward by the participants and aims at moving forward with the practical and technical issues related to the Network, providing further input on how to ensure the most efficient co-operation for disseminating warnings about the movements of FTF and making room for general proposals and ideas. The Secretariat has drafted a summary of the contributions received and transmitted it confidentially to the Contact Points for information.

The outcomes contained in the document mentioned above will form the basis for discussions during the next, fifth, meeting of the Contact Points. In light of the sensitivity of the discussions held during the Network’s meetings, it was also decided that the next meeting of the Contact Points should only take place once the health situation allows participants to meet in person and under the most secure conditions possible.

In the meantime, the Secretariat continues to liaise with the Contact Points and plans to run a new cycle of ping tests by the end of 2020.