Explaining EU Decision-Making on Counter-Terrorism

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Abstract

Prior to 11 September 2001, the counter-terrorist responsibilities overseen by the European Union (EU) were relatively unimportant. Since then, however, member states have decided to engage the EU in a larger number of counter-terrorist issues and, in some cases, empower it to undertake substantial tasks. The EU has thus become an important player in counter-terrorism in Europe; notwithstanding the fact that the major actor remains the member states themselves. However, this increase in EU engagement on counter-terrorist issues has varied enormously from one policy matter to another. This asymmetric increase lies at the centre of my research question: since 11 September 2001, Why, since 11 September 2001, have member states conferred important anti-terrorist responsibilities to the EU in some matters, but have offered it less (or no) significant involvement in others? I address this question by investigating the agenda-setting and decision-making processes of two specific EU decisions in each of my two policy area cases (2001-2007). In each case, one decision constitutes a large increase of EU engagement and the other represents a small or zero increase. The two cases are: Judicial Cooperation (European Arrest Warrant and the European Evidence Warrant) and Police Cooperation (EU ‘Prüm Measure’ and failure of the European Commission’s proposal on the Principle of Availability). In order to explain the research puzzle, I apply a modified version of John Kingdon’s ‘Three Streams Model.’ This enquiry sheds light on the relative influence on decision-making of the occurrence or non-occurrence of a major terrorist attack (i.e. changes in the addressed problem) and the entrepreneurship of the European Commission or of the member state holding the rotating Presidency of the EU Council. The EU member states are the central actors and their preferences are analysed as a means to understand the role played by the logic of consequentialism and the logic of appropriateness, respectively.
Biographical note

On 22 December 2008, Xiana Barros-García defended her PhD thesis. Before coming to the European University Institute, she completed a master’s degree on European Politics and Governance at the London School of Economics and Political Science. Xiana intends to dedicate the remainder of the academic year to her project on the international dimension of EU counter-terrorism, which is funded by the Volkswagen Stiftung, the Compagnia di San Paolo and the Rijksbank Jubileumsfond in the framework of their program on European Foreign and Security Policy Studies. On September 2009, she will begin as AXA Post-Doctoral Fellow at the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies of the European University Institute.