

SPUNIK NEWS SERVICE, SPUNIK. EXCLUSIVES  
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## Italy's Migration Policy to Blame for Terrorist Tracking Failure - Security Expert

\* ITALY \* MIGRATION \*

GENOA, November 16 (Sputnik), Anastasia Levchenko - Lapses in detecting would-be terrorists like the Nice attacker are caused by the flaws in the migration policy and not in the work of the intelligence and security services, Marco Lombardi, director of the Italian Team for Security, Terroristic Issues and Managing Emergencies (ITSTIME), told Sputnik in an interview.

The 21-year-old Tunisian man who stabbed dead three people in the Notre-Dame church in Nice on October 29, Brahim Aoussaoui, arrived from Tunisia on the Italian island of Lampedusa in September along with other migrants. On October 9, he was ordered to leave the country, since he had no right to ask for asylum, but he managed not only to stay in the country but also to move across the whole territory of Italy and reach France.

"When illegal immigration is so high, once it arrives in your country it is too late to contain it; you must contain it outside the national border. Consequently, it is possible that a person like this escapes, and that there are no control centers when he arrives and eventually he goes where he wants. At that point, the information is lost," Lombardi, who is also member of the Governmental Commission on Counter Radicalization and of the Strategic Policy Committee of the Italian foreign ministry, said.

He stressed that the lax control over the movement of migrants into and across Italy is mainly to blame for potential terrorists making their way into the rest of Europe.

"So in this case we cannot speak of intelligence errors, we cannot speak of police errors, we can speak of errors in the management of migration flows into our country, in a sense that we cannot manage immigration in this way, because it will happen again that anyone who decides to escape will be able to escape and get lost in some corner of Europe. The problem is not security agencies, the problem is the inability of Italian governments to govern immigration," he continued.

Tunisia is not considered to be an unsafe country, therefore migrants arriving to the Italian shores from there are not eligible for asylum. Most of the arriving migrants are illegal, Lombardi noted, but given the high number of people, controls are very slow and inefficient. Identification process usually starts on cruise ships, where they are put for quarantine in the current circumstances of the pandemic.

"What happens given such a large number of people is that, if a hundred arrive every day, at least ten run away every day. They escape from the centers where they are placed, they climb over the fences, but there is little to do," Lombardi said.

On November 13, EU home affairs ministers held a video conference to discuss the fight against terrorism and the contentious new pact on migration in Europe — as the

EU officially linked the rise of terrorism with the migration crisis that the bloc has been totally unable to settle since 2015. At the final press conference, German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said the EU should optimize protection at the borders.

Soon after the attack in Nice, multiple shootings took place in Vienna, resulting in the death of four people and 22 injured. The gunman was later identified to be an Austrian citizen of ethnic Albanian descent and a supporter of the Islamic State terrorist organization (IS, Daesh, banned in Russia).

After the attacks in Nice and Vienna, Italy decided to intensify controls at the nation's borders. Italian and French interior ministries agreed that the two countries' police forces would form joint border patrol brigades. However, the level of terrorist alert was not changed.

"I don't think that after Paris, Nice and Vienna, the situation has changed for Italy. For years we have had a real threat that is brought by those called 'lone wolves.' This type of threat has been present for some years and it is very difficult to intercept, because when an organization is missing, you lack the signals that you can detect and understand, like those that an organization leaves before making an attack. An organized structure always gives signals of what it is about to do," Lombardi said.

The expert said the shift in terrorism from organized groups to lone wolves arose after the defeat of IS in the Middle East.

"We have no longer have an organized structure for years, but we have terrorists who tend to act alone. It does not mean that the threat is less; the organizational dimension has changed. Lone wolves are as dangerous as Daesh was. In some ways they are more dangerous because it is more difficult to intercept them. But this is the situation we have been in for three or four years. Since 2017, Islamist terrorism has become more linked to lone wolves than to the organizational structures and therefore nothing has changed as a threat level to Italy," he continued.

According to the researcher, what happened in France and Austria was linked to a certain extent to geopolitical interests in which both France and Austria are more involved than Italy. Those attacks can be seen as part of a hybrid warfare, in which France, Austria and Turkey are involved.

France and Turkey have been embroiled in a diplomatic row since late October, when Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan lambasted French leader Emmanuel Macron for the latter's pledge to get tougher on "radical Islam," fight Islamic "separatism" in France and spur the rise of an Islamic "enlightenment" following the October beheading of history teacher Samuel Paty near Paris. Paty, who reportedly showed caricatures depicting the Islamic prophet Mohammad in class, was beheaded by a Muslim man of Chechen origin in mid-October. Erdogan said Macron should check his mental health over his obsession with Muslims and accused the French leader of infringing on the freedom of religion, as well as urged Muslims to boycott French products.

In early November, France outlawed the "Grey Wolves" organization, a far-right militant movement affiliated with the Turkish Nationalist Movement Party. Interior Minister Gerald Darmanin said the Grey Wolves were responsible for inciting hatred and committing violent acts. Turkish foreign ministry said it considered unacceptable for France to ban the movement's symbol, a wolf and an Islamic crescent, and stated the

step hurt freedom of expression.

"Vienna is also important because in June the Austrian government began to close mosques, it closed 6 or 7 mosques linked to the Turkish extremism that praised the Grey Wolves. They intervened very harshly saying that the political Islam that recognizes itself in the Muslim Brotherhood had to be cut off and the mosques that were linked to Turkey were closed. Vienna is a major location for the Grey Wolves," Lombardi said.

However, Italy is not standing in the way of the Turkish national interests, the researcher noted.

"What happened in France and Vienna were terrorist attacks, but this terrorism was pushed by national interests, in particular, by Turkish interests. At this moment I do not think that Turkey has a particular interest in using terrorism to attack Italy," Lombardi said.

To a certain extent, it is even counter-productive for potential terrorists to destabilize Italy, because Italy often serves as a pathway to reach other countries, he noted.

The approaching religious holidays, like Christmas, also do not increase the attack risk, Lombardi believes.

"Over the past years since Daesh was created, we have had declarations by the Islamic State, the threats to make Christmas a bloody day and the New Year a bloody day, but it has never happened. So I expect the threat to be made, but I do not think that the threat corresponds to a necessary increase in the capacity for intervention, I think it all stops at the level of threats," he said.

Moreover, Italian domestic policy in fighting terrorism is quite efficient, the researcher noted. Being used to fighting mafia and organized crime for a long time, Italian security structures have learned how to effectively infiltrate an organized criminal unit.

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## Lack of EU Intelligence Cohesion Exposes Bloc to Risk of Terrorism – Security Expert

\* EU \* ITALY \* TERRORISM \*

GENOA, November 16 (Sputnik), Anastasia Levchenko - Lack of cohesion within the European Union at the level of intelligence increases the bloc's vulnerability in the face of terrorism, Marco Lombardi, director of the Italian Team for Security, Terroristic Issues and Managing Emergencies (ITSTIME), told Sputnik in an interview.

"National security is hardly shared both at the political level and at the practical level when you are in Europe. Everyone tends to do his own thing. This is a problem, because not having cohesion between countries increases the overall vulnerability of the European system. This is a serious vulnerability for dealing with terrorism, which by its nature is transnational. Terrorism does not respect borders, like the pandemic. So

either we work together, or the vulnerability of each country increases," Lombardi, who is also codirector of the National Observatory on Radicalization and Counter Terrorism (ReaCT) and a member of the Governmental Commission on Counter Radicalization and of the Strategic Policy Committee of the Italian foreign ministry, said.

Anti-terrorism cooperation must be based on information sharing, but this is not possible if there is no dedicated governmental unit for it, the researcher noted.

"Information sharing means sharing information because we share the same mission. This is not in place in Europe. What we currently have is the information exchange: I give information to you if you give information to me in return. I don't give information for free, I give it to you only if you give me something in return, because we must be mutually useful. It is a different thing. This works between the operational levels of the police. But what we need is information sharing, but for this we should have European intelligence," Lombardi said.

The expert went on to advocate a pan-European intelligence unit.

"The intelligence of each country is accountable by law to the government of its country, it cannot respond to any supranational entity. Information sharing will only be possible when we have a form of European political governance. For now, we will have to keep on with information exchange. This is certainly not enough to combat a terrorism that is increasingly widespread," he continued.

On November 13, the home affairs ministers of EU member states held a video conference to discuss the fight against terrorism in the wake of a series of deadly terrorist attacks in France and Austria in October and November. At the final press conference of the video summit, German Interior Minister Horst Seehofer said that the exchange of information between member states or firearms control must be improved.

Europe is seeking to ramp up its fight against radical Islamism and terrorism after several brutal religiously-motivated attacks in France and Austria in October and early November. A 21-year-old man from Tunisia killed three people in a church in France's southern city of Nice, including two by beheading, on October 29. Two weeks before that, a 17-year-old local Muslim teen beheaded a Parisian teacher who showed caricatures of Islamic prophet Muhammad during a freedom of speech lesson. Another terrorist attack took place in Austria on November 2, claiming the lives of four people, excluding the perpetrator, and injuring 17 others.

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## Free Movement in Schengen Zone Should Have Limits in Emergencies - Security Expert

\* SCHENGEN \* EU \*

GENOA, November 16 (Sputnik), Anastasia Levchenko - The principle of free movement within the Schengen area should be re-discussed in order to introduce a restricted mode for emergency situations, like those related to the pandemic or terrorism, Marco Lombardi, the director of the Italian Team for Security Terroristic

Issues and Managing Emergencies (ITSTIME), told Sputnik in an interview.

Following the terrorist attack in Nice in late October, French President Emmanuel Macron stated that the Schengen agreement needed revision in order to strengthen the police presence at the borders and enhance the fight against illegal immigration and trafficking networks that are increasingly linked to terrorist networks.

The 21-year-old Tunisian man who stabbed dead three people in the Notre-Dame church in Nice on October 29, Brahim Aoussaoui, arrived from Tunisia on the Italian island of Lampedusa in September along with other migrants. On October 9, he was ordered to leave the country, since he had no right to refuge. However, he managed to not only stay in the country but also to move across the whole territory of Italy and reach France.

"Finally there is a voice that is raised correctly against the Islamism that is intolerable in this form. I agree that in an emergency situation, like that of the pandemic, for example, the Schengen borders should be re-discussed. Because that is what is happening already. In Italy, we have banned the circulation between the red regions. It can also be done between the European countries, depending on the development of the pandemic," Lombardi, who is also codirector of the National Observatory on Radicalization and Counter Terrorism (ReaCT) and a member of the Governmental Commission on Counter Radicalization and of the Strategic Policy Committee of the Italian foreign ministry, said.

He stressed that such restrictions would be good as an emergency mode that is introduced during certain periods when there is a need for containment.

"However, this can be done in my opinion not as a general principle, but as the way of governing of some emergency which at this particular historical moment requires particular attention in certain geographical areas," he continued.

Last week, Macron organized a summit with German Chancellor Angela Merkel and Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte under the auspices of the European Council focusing on the latest attacks in France and Austria. At the summit, Macron called for the strengthening of the external borders of the European Union and the renewal of governance of this space. He reiterated his previous proposal to create an Internal Security Council. Kurz and Rutte said that the EU needed to efficiently protect its external borders to keep the Schengen system alive.

On November 13, a video conference among the EU internal ministers followed. They agreed that the border controls were not functioning perfectly, therefore the EU should optimize protection at the borders.

"The revision of free movement in Europe as such, if it were an institutional revision, would be the end of Europe. The free movement of people, goods, professions is what constitutes Europe at this time. But if the president intends that it can be reviewed on the basis of the management of specific emergencies, I totally agree, we already do it within countries," Lombardi said.

Europe is seeking to ramp up its fight against radical Islamism and terrorism after several brutal religiously-motivated attacks in France and Austria in October and early November. Two weeks before Aoussaoui carried out the church attack, a 17-year-old

local Muslim teen beheaded a Parisian teacher who had shown caricatures of Islamic prophet Muhammad during a freedom of speech lesson. Another terrorist attack took place in Austria on November 2, claiming the lives of four people, excluding the perpetrator, and injuring 17 others.

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## Private Control of Internet Highly Insecure, May Favor Radicalization Online – Researcher

\* INTERNET \* TERRORISM \*

GENOA, November 16 (Sputnik), Anastasia Levchenko - Renunciation by states of control over the internet creates a highly dangerous situation when it is in the hands of private companies and no guarantees against radicalization online exist, Marco Lombardi, director of the Italian Team for Security Terroristic Issues and Managing Emergencies (ITSTIME) and codirector of the National Observatory on Radicalization and Counter Terrorism (ReaCT), told Sputnik in an interview.

"Digital Jihad has been a big problem and it can become a big problem again. We at ITSTIME have been monitoring digital jihad, digital communication for twenty years. We have hundreds of thousands of original documents that we collect every day from the web. In recent years, we have seen that radicalization has followed online paths, so recruitment took place online, training took place online," Lombardi, who is also a member of the Governmental Commission on Counter Radicalization and of the Strategic Policy Committee of the Italian foreign ministry, said.

He noted that the issue becomes even more topical in the current circumstances of the pandemic, when young people do not attend schools and study at distance, spending most of their time online.

"It means that for obvious reasons the radicalization processes will pass more through the web because if face-to-face relationships cannot be maintained, they remain online. We should pay more attention to this," Lombardi said.

Curtailing channels of online radicalization is always a controversial issue because it is inevitably related to the topic of freedom of expression.

"All states have given up on controlling the internet like they control institutions. So, there are no rules and they have entrusted the control of the Internet to big companies. Today there are Google, Facebook, Twitter, large private companies that shut the mouth of those who, in their opinion, is telling false things, or rather those who disagree with the way of seeing the world that these companies promote," Lombardi said.

According to the researcher, such an absence of state control is almost more dangerous than the risk of radicalization online itself. He does not believe that private actors can guarantee security in terms of radicalization.

"I believe that it is necessary for states to regain their competences and legitimate rights in governing cyberspace, which is not a private space, but a public space, and as such

the only legitimacy of power exercisable in the public space is the power exercised by the state, and it cannot be delegated," Lombardi said.

Last week, French President Emmanuel Macron said that the European Union had to legislate the removal of terrorism-related content from the Internet within one hour next week as a matter of urgency to reinforce the fight against the terrorist threat in member states. He also proposed the development of a shared database.

On November 13, the EU internal ministers held a video conference on the bloc's fight against terrorism. German Interior Horst Seehofer said at the final press conference that the negotiations related to terrorism content on the internet were ongoing with the European Parliament.

Europe is seeking to ramp up its fight against radical Islamism and terrorism following several brutal religiously-motivated attacks in France and Austria in October and early November. A 21-year-old man from Tunisia killed three people in a church in France's southern city of Nice, including two by beheading, on October 29. Two weeks prior, a 17-year-old local Muslim teen beheaded a Parisian teacher who showed caricatures of Islamic prophet Muhammad during a freedom of speech lesson. Another terrorist attack took place in Austria on November 2, claiming the lives of four people, excluding the perpetrator, and injuring 17 others.

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL [https://wire.sputniknews.com/#/search/news/1066640581?match=all&query=lombardi&sid=sid\\_160](https://wire.sputniknews.com/#/search/news/1066640581?match=all&query=lombardi&sid=sid_160). The search results show 387 items found. The top result is an article titled "Private Control of Internet Highly Insecure, May Favor Radicalization Online - Researcher" by SPUTNIK NEWS SERVICE, SPUTNIK. EXCLUSIVES, dated 16 November 2020, 19:07. The article text reads: "GENOA, November 16 (Sputnik), Anastasia Levchenko - Renunciation by states of control over the internet creates a highly dangerous situation when it is in the hands of private companies and no guarantees against radicalization online exist, Marco Lombardi, director of the Italian Team for Security Terroristic Issues and Managing Emergencies (ITSTIME) and codirector of the National Observatory on Radicalization and Counter Terrorism (ReaCT), told Sputnik in an interview. "Digital Jihad has been a big problem and it can become a big problem again. We at ITSTIME have been monitoring digital jihad, digital communication for twenty years. We have hundreds of thousands of original documents that we collect every day from the web. In recent years, we have seen that radicalization..."