



Federal Ministry
of the Interior, Building
and Community

Brief summary 2017 Report on the Protection of the Constitution

Facts and Trends



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the Protection of the

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2017 REPORT ON THE PROTECTION OF THE CONSTITUTION
FACTS AND TRENDS

Politically motivated crime¹

The Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) registered 39,505 offences in the category of politically motivated crime in 2017, a 4.9 per cent drop over 2016 (41,549). This figure includes 13,406 propaganda offences (33.9 per cent; 2016: 13,923 or 33.5 per cent). The number of violent crimes in the category of politically motivated crimes fell from 4,311 in 2016 to 3,754 in 2017. In 29,855 criminal offences (75.6 per cent) an extremist background was found (2016: 30,958 or 74.5 per cent). Of these, 1,901 (2016: 691) could not be assigned to any specific category.

The following aspects should be noted:

- Following a rise in violent right-wing extremist crimes with a xenophobic background in recent years, their number dropped by 35 per cent in 2017; the share of acts of violence against accommodation centres for asylum seekers dropped even more sharply, although it is still higher than in 2014.
- Following a drop in violent left-wing extremist crimes in 2016, their number rose by more than a third in 2017. This increase was essentially due to incidents during the G20 Summit in Hamburg.
- A third of all extremist offences recorded in the category of "politically motivated crime – religious ideology" were classed as membership of or supporting a foreign terrorist organisation (section 129b of the German Criminal Code [Strafgesetzbuch, StGB]).

Details:

In the category of **right-wing politically motivated crime**, 19,467 (2016: 22,471) offences were recorded as having an extremist background. The number of violent crimes with a right-wing extremist background dropped by 34.1 per cent to 1,054 (2016: 1,600). The number of violent xenophobic crimes fell to 774 (2016: 1,190). Acts of violence against actual or supposed left-wing extremists dropped by more than half (2017: 98; 2016: 250). The number of attempted homicides fell from 18 in 2016 to four in the reporting period.

¹ Die Zahlen basieren auf Angaben des BKA.

Offences committed by "**Reichsbürger**" ("citizens of the Reich") or "**Selbstverwalter**" ("sovereigns") were included in the statistical analysis for the first time in 2017. In the current reporting period, 911 politically motivated crimes were recorded, of which 783 were categorised as extremist. A total of 130 of these extremist offences were violent crimes, chiefly blackmail or resistance to law enforcement officers. Coercion and threats made up the majority of the other offences.

In the category of **left-wing politically motivated crime**, 6,393 (2016: 5,230) offences were recorded as having an extremist background, of which 1,648 were violent crimes (2016: 1,201). The number of violent left-wing extremist crimes against the police and security authorities rose by more than 65 per cent (2017: 1,135; 2016: 687) – 832 of them were committed in Hamburg alone. By contrast, acts of violence against actual or supposed right-wing extremists dropped by more than half (2017: 264; 2016: 542). Following a sharp rise in 2016, the number of violent crimes committed in the context of campaigns against restructuring fell to the same level as in 2015 (2017: 49; 2016: 188; 2015: 54). Three attempted homicides motivated by left-wing extremism (2016: 6) were recorded in 2017.

The category formerly referred to as **politically motivated crimes by foreigners** was split into two separate categories: **politically motivated crime – religious ideology** and **politically motivated crime – foreign ideology**. It is therefore no longer possible to directly compare the number of cases registered in 2017 with figures recorded in previous years.

A total of 907 extremist offences were recorded in the category of **politically motivated crime – religious ideology**. The majority (885 cases) had an Islamist/fundamentalist background, including 60 violent crimes, three of which were homicides (two actual and one attempted) and 48 were cases of bodily injury. A total of 112 extremist offences based on religious ideology were categorised as preparations for acts of violence constituting a serious threat to the state and 310 as membership of or supporting a foreign terrorist organisation.

A total of 1,617 offences were recorded in the category of **politically motivated crime – foreign ideology**, of which 233 were violent crimes.

Of this total, 1,187 had an extremist background, mainly breaches of the Act governing Private Associations (Vereinsgesetz, VereinsG) (38.7 per cent) and 182 violent crimes (15.3 per cent). The majority of these violent crimes were cases of bodily injury (82.4 per cent). There were also 71 offences where suspects were accused of supporting or being members of a foreign terrorist organisation.

Right-wing extremism

By the end of 2017, the number of right-wing extremist sympathisers totalled 24,000, after subtracting multiple memberships (2016: 23,100).

Right-wing extremist following¹ - categorised by ideology -		
	2016	2017
Subculture-oriented right-wing extremists	8,500	9,200
Neo-Nazis	5,800	6,000
Political party membership	6,550	6,050
Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD, National-Democratic Party of Germany)	5,000	4,500
DIE RECHTE (The Right)	700	650
Bürgerbewegung pro NRW (pro NRW, Civic Movement for North Rhine-Westphalia)	500	400
Der III. Weg (The Third Way)	350	500
Other right-wing extremist organisations	3,500 ³	4,000 ²
Total	24,350	25,250
after subtracting multiple memberships	23,100	24,000
of which violence-oriented right-wing extremists	12,100	12,700

1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off.
2 In 2017, this group included 900 "Reichsbürger" ("citizens of the Reich") and "Selbstverwalter" ("sovereigns") who are to be classed as right-wing extremists and 500 members of the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IDB, Identitarian Movement Germany) ("suspicious case", see p. 80 f. of the full 2017 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution). There is factual evidence which shows that the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland engages in right-wing extremist activities, which is why the German domestic intelligence service is processing this as a "suspicious case".
3 In 2016, this group included 500 to 600 "Reichsbürger" ("citizens of the Reich") and "Selbstverwalter" ("sovereigns") who are to be classed as right-wing extremists and 300 members of the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland ("suspicious case", see p. 80 f. of the full 2017 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution). There is factual evidence which shows that the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland engages in right-wing extremist activities, which is why it is processed by BfV as a "suspicious case".

The table above categorises right-wing extremists mainly according to substantive ideological criteria. However, the authorities responsible for the protection of the constitution are also specifically interested in establishing the organisational structures within which right-wing extremists engage in their anti-constitutional activities. A second table below

therefore categorises right-wing extremists by their membership of specific organisations. A distinction is drawn between "political party membership", "membership of groups/organisations not affiliated with or independent of political parties" and "no membership of any right-wing extremist grouping/organisation".

Right-wing extremist following¹ - categorised by organisational form -		
	2016	2017
Political party membership	6,550	6,050
Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD, National-Democratic Party of Germany)	5,000	4,500
DIE RECHTE (The Right)	700	650
Bürgerbewegung pro NRW (pro NRW, Civic Movement for North Rhine-Westphalia)	500	400
Der III. Weg (The Third Way)	350	500
Membership of groups/organisations not affiliated with or independent of political parties	-	6,300 ²
No membership of any right-wing extremist grouping/ organisation	-	12,900
Total	24,350	25,250
after subtracting multiple memberships	23,100	24,000
of which violence-oriented right-wing extremists	12,100	12,700
<p>1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off. 2 In 2017, this group included 900 Reichsbürger ("citizens of the Reich") and "Selbstverwalter" ("sovereigns") who are to be classed as right-wing extremists and 500 members of the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland (IDB, Identitarian Movement Germany) ("suspicious case", see p. 80 f. of the full 2017 Annual Report on the Protection of the Constitution). There is factual evidence which shows that the Identitäre Bewegung Deutschland engages in right-wing extremist activities, which is why the German domestic intelligence service is processing this as a "suspicious case".</p>		

In 2017, 286 offences motivated by right-wing extremism (2016: 907) were linked to accommodation centres for asylum seekers. These included 42 violent crimes (2016: 153), 16 of them arson attacks (2016: 65). One reason why the number of acts of violence motivated by right-wing extremism against accommodation centres for asylum seekers dropped is

presumably the consistent practice adopted by many courts of partly imposing long prison sentences against perpetrators. The authorities must continue to be aware of the risk that right-wing extremists will commit serious violent crimes against accommodation centres for asylum seekers and that in doing so they are willing to risk people being injured.

The significance of the anti-asylum debate within the right-wing extremist scene declined in 2017. That is also why the number of right-wing extremist demonstrations again dropped in the reporting period. Back in 2016 there were a total of 466 right-wing extremist rallies, which were attended by 43,321 people. However, the number dropped in 2017 to only 202, with attendance falling by 62 per cent to 16,398.

Big music events dominated right-wing extremist activities in 2017. Unlike in previous years, when a number of small events with few participants were registered, attendance at events in the current reporting year was in the four-digit range. The biggest event, attended by 6,000 people, was held in Themar in Thuringia on 15 July 2017. Right-wing extremist music and music events continue to be of outstanding significance within the right-wing extremist scene. They serve to draw in adolescents and young adults, introducing them to and ultimately getting them to join the right-wing extremist scene. Such events also help to establish networks right across the right-wing extremist spectrum and foster cohesion within the scene.

Various convictions and pending court proceedings are proof of the focused attention which the intelligence services, police, law enforcement authorities and courts paid to attempts to form **right-wing terrorist groups** in 2017, such as the Oldschool Society (OSS), the Gruppe Freital or the Nauener Gruppe. As soon as new evidence of right-wing extremist activities and structures become known, these are immediately and rigorously investigated and prosecuted by the law enforcement authorities.

Right-wing extremists across Europe have been stepping up their **international contacts** and exchanges, quite significantly in some cases. The big concert in Themar, for example, was attended by people from Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Switzerland and Slovakia. Some German right-wing extremists maintain contacts with like-minded individuals

across Europe and took part in key right-wing extremist demonstrations such as the "Imia March" in Athens, Greece, the "Day of Honour" in Budapest, Hungary and the "Lukov March" in Sofia, Bulgaria. Due to its nominally large following and high levels of activity, the right-wing extremist scene in Germany exerts significant influence on like-minded individuals across Europe.

The **Internet** has become the most important propaganda tool in the right-wing extremist scene. As soon as right-wing extremist organisations begin planning large-scale public actions or launch campaigns, they almost without exception use the Internet to spread the news. Designated websites, social media profiles, online flyers, and images, texts and video clips posted on the Internet are key elements of their online campaigns. Since the right-wing extremist scene began using the Internet, its basic methodology has been to openly show its presence and disseminate propaganda on the one hand and to shift its communications and criminal behaviour to protected, non-public areas of the Internet on the other. Intensive use is still being made of all these elements.

Right-wing extremist parties have been faring badly in elections, a trend which continued in the federal general elections held on 24 September 2017. The Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD, National-Democratic Party of Germany) lost its right to receive state party funding on account of not gaining a sufficient share of the second vote, and DIE RECHTE (The Right) fell below the threshold of perception. Der III. Weg (The Third Way) did not even put any candidates up for election.

On 17 January 2017 the Federal Constitutional Court rejected the Bundesrat's application to ban the **NPD**. However, the party was unable to capitalise on this decision to breathe new life into its organisational structures (as had been hoped) and stop the downtrend in the preceding federal state elections. The NPD evidently found it hard to accept the Court's reasons, which included the ruling that although the party pursued anti-constitutional objectives the prospect of those objectives being achieved was too low as to sufficiently justify a ban. The NPD sharply criticised the decision but did not change any of its ideological positions. Instead, it reaffirmed and radicalised its nationalist stance. Along with

publishing several statements which emphasised that the NPD would continue its nationalist course, despite being classed as anti-constitutional by the Federal Constitutional Court, decisions concerning the party leadership revealed that its radical wing was gaining influence. Because the party failed to gain 0.5 per cent of the votes in the general election, the NPD no longer qualifies for state party funding. This will further exacerbate its financial difficulties. Nevertheless, the electoral defeat launched a party-internal debate about the NPD's future course and understanding of itself. The deputy party leader, Thorsten Heise, called on the NPD to define and present itself as a "party of people who share a world view" rather than seeking to address topical political issues. However, the NPD still wants to put candidates up for election and will in 2018 likely first attempt to regain its leadership role within the "national resistance" and right-wing extremist spectrum by showing ideological strength, being open to non-party activists and organising big events with various other groups across the right-wing extremist spectrum.

In 2017, **DIE RECHTE** saw a slight drop in party membership; it currently has 10 regional associations. North Rhine-Westphalia has the largest regional association and is still the party's heartland. **DIE RECHTE** held demonstrations, manned information stalls, distributed flyers and posted content on the Internet to propagate racist, anti-Semitic, Islamophobic and revisionist ideas. The vocabulary employed ranges from terms used in the past by the National Socialists (e.g. Volksgemeinschaft, "ethnic community") to modern slogans ("indigenous youth"). It came as a surprise when, on 28 October 2017, the national party chairman, Christian Worch, who had held the post since the party was founded in May 2012, resigned almost immediately after being re-elected at the national party conference. Shortly after that, the entire executive of the Thuringia regional association also resigned and at the same time announced they would all be leaving the party. This was preceded by various serious party-internal conflicts.

The small right-wing extremist party **Der III. Weg**, founded in 2013, was unable to expand in 2017 and currently has 20 bases (2016: 21). In the reporting period, the party continued to focus its activities on "the refugee crisis" and "the asylum problem". The party used its website to fuel fears

of excessive foreign influence and to post derogatory comments about foreigners in general and the religion of Islam in particular. The distinction between Islam and Islamism is deliberately ignored for the purposes of such agitation. Instead, the existence of Islamic communities is in itself regarded as an aggressive act on the part of a religion which is, it is claimed, primarily spread using non-peaceful means and is inherently violent in nature. Practically on a weekly basis Der III. Weg posts "evidence"-based on speculation and without citing sources – to back up its claims about alleged and actual crimes committed by foreigners in Germany.

Reichsbürger and Selbstverwalter

"Reichsbürger" ("citizens of the Reich") and "Selbstverwalter" ("sovereigns") comprise groups and individuals who for various reasons deny the existence of the Federal Republic of Germany and reject its legal system. They claim that the German Reich survives, for example, they invoke conspiracy theorist arguments or refer to a law of nature of their own definition. They reject the legitimacy of democratically elected representatives and claim that the German legal system does not apply to them, which is why they are often prepared to break the law.

Only a small minority in the scene can be classed as right-wing extremists, but it is they in particular who articulate elements of an anti-Semitic ideology and line of argument. Overall, "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" can be classified as subversive and extremist.

Some 16,500 people across Germany were classed as "Reichsbürger" or "Selbstverwalter" in 2017 (2016: 10,000), only 900 of whom were right-wing extremists (2016: 500 to 600). The majority of "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" are male (approx. 74 per cent) and over 40. Many of them have been active in the scene for many years, as a result of which their subversive attitudes have become firmly entrenched over time. However, as the nationwide survey of active members and followers has not yet been completed, it is not possible to provide reliable numbers.

The steep rise in followers of this scene compared to 2016 reflects the particular focus being placed on investigating this phenomenon. It is also down to more information being available to the domestic intelligence services, as well as to the broader range of ideological material obtainable in the scene. Some of the growth in 2017 can be attributed to copy-cat effects, which is why it is not possible to say whether they will have any lasting impact.

"Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" make intensive use of the Internet and social media. However, they have a pronounced tendency to develop and disseminate opinions completely absurd from a legal view in the analogue world, too. The often arrogant and aggressive language used in their publications and letters to government agencies is striking. Staff are threatened with claims for damages or even serious acts of violence.

"Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" engage in other criminal behaviour as well, including insult, coercion, threats against representatives of the state, falsifying documents and illegal possession of weapons. "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" also unlawfully lay claim to sovereign rights and tasks, in particular in their dealings with public authorities and governmental agencies. They issue and sell made up ID cards and passports or modify their car number plates, for instance. Numerous members of the scene make a considerable income organising training courses and giving "legal advice", mainly so-called legal consultants and their trainers. Self-proclaimed "legal counsel" for the alleged victims of the judicial system make targeted attempts to obstruct the course of justice. Others are presumptuous enough to go about as court bailiffs.

Members of the "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" scene go so far as to establish various "governments" and "administrations", or even declare a kingdom or state. Sometimes they also send letters to foreign embassies requesting recognition (under international law) of the community or regional authorities they have allegedly established. Their aim is to cause confusion so as to obstruct or prevent the work of the state executive administration.

As well as being verbally aggressive, "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" also have a great affinity with weapons. Almost 7 per cent have a licence for firearms, a higher proportion than among the general population (approx. 2 per cent). In 2017, some 1,100 "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" held a gun licence. The security authorities are paying close attention to these groups because they pose a risk to others. The public authorities have revoked many licences, although the holders have often filed legal remedies against these measures. Most of the cases are still pending. Numerous weapons were found and seized during diverse executive measures taken against "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter", testament to their love of weapons. On account of the great importance which those in the scene attach to owning weapons, it is to be expected that after having their gun licences revoked followers will increasingly resort to owning weapons illegally. It should also be noted that the overarching objective of establishing own public authorities of necessity presupposes that "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" will have to own weapons and set up "police" and "military" units.

"Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" are prepared to use their weapons to commit the most serious of violent offences. In October 2017 Nuremberg-Fürth Regional Court sentenced a 50-year-old man from Georgensgmünd in Bavaria to life imprisonment for one count of murder under aggravated circumstances of a police officer, three counts of attempted murder under aggravated circumstances and two counts of grievous bodily harm. Wearing a bullet-proof vest, the accused "Reichsbürger" had fired a total of 11 shots at police officers who were in the process of seizing 31 hunting and sports weapons he had in his possession. Four police officers were injured during the incident in October 2016, one of whom died shortly afterwards as a result of his injuries.

The many criminal offences committed by "Reichsbürger" and "Selbstverwalter" in the course of 2017, the ongoing high levels of not only verbal aggression and the inherent threat potential continue to necessitate close observation by the authorities responsible for the protection of the constitution.

Left-wing extremism

After subtracting multiple memberships, the number of left-wing extremist sympathisers rose by almost four per cent to a total of 29,500 in 2017 (2016: 28,500).

The number of violence-oriented left-wing extremists increased by almost six per cent to 9,000 in total (2016: 8,500). That figure includes 7,000 autonomists (2016: 6,800). Almost 31 per cent of left-wing extremists can thus be regarded as violence-oriented.

Membership of Marxist–Leninist and other left-wing extremist groups rose by almost four per cent to 22,600 (2016: 21,800).

Left-wing extremist following¹			
	2015	2016	2017
Autonomists	6,300	6,800	7,000
Anarchists	800	800	800
Marxist–Leninists and other left-wing extremists	20,300	21,800	22,600
Total	27,400	29,400	30,400
after subtracting multiple memberships	26,700	28,500	29,500
of which violence-oriented, left-wing extremists	7,700	8,500	9,000

1 Some of these figures are estimated and rounded off.

A total of 6,393 left-wing extremist criminal offences and violent crimes were recorded in 2017 (2016: 5,230), of which 1,648 were violent crimes (2016: 1,201). The number of violent left-wing extremist crimes thus increased by 37.2 per cent (447 offences) compared to 2016, that is by more than a third. This increase can primarily be attributed to the G20 Summit in Hamburg. A total of 1,023 of the 1,648 violent crimes, that is well over half (62.1 per cent), were linked to the G20 Summit.

Autonomists make up the largest group of violence-oriented left-wing extremists. As they do not recognise the state's monopoly on the use of force, autonomists generally deny the legality of government action. They regard violence against representatives of the state (e.g. police officers) as legitimate self-defence. Autonomists attempt to escalate demonstrations by means of mass militancy or they launch targeted, clandestine attacks against people or property. Their aim is to force the state to reveal its alleged "fascist nature" which it is supposedly hiding behind a democratic "mask".

Instead of established organisations with hierarchical structures and collective decision-making processes, autonomists only countenance loose alliances. That is why their activities are generally restricted to the "spaces" they have created for themselves. This political self-centeredness makes it difficult for autonomists to establish broad-based networks with other sections of society. Some have been attempting for years to put an end to the ensuing isolation by creating new types of structures and dealing more intensively with the theoretical underpinnings of their movement. These **post-autonomist groups** tend to redefine some of the premises on which autonomist politics is based. In particular, they want to make it easier for larger sections of society to understand their forms of action, including those involving violence, and to join in left-wing extremist protests. Their objective is to radicalise society so as to be able to expand their own means of taking action. The ...ums Ganze! – kommunistisches Bündnis (uG, ...all or nothing! – communist alliance) and the Interventionistische Linke (IL, Interventionalist Left) are currently the most active in this area.

The left-wing extremist scene in Germany once more demonstrated its **ability to engage in campaign work** in 2017. It mobilised supporters against the G20 Summit, which became a nationwide focus of action. In addition, the "Nationalism is No Alternative – Nationwide Campaign against Fortress Europe and Its Fans" (NINA) and "End of the Road" campaigns, both of which had been declared a success in 2016, were continued in 2017.

In comparison to previous large-scale events, the **protests against the G20 Summit** in Hamburg on 7 and 8 July 2017 demonstrated the left-wing

extremist scene's as yet unprecedented ability to mobilise all the various left-wing extremist movements across Germany, leading to the most violent clashes in recent years.

Well-known forms of left-wing extremist action – demonstrations, spontaneous rallies and small-group militancy – were all successfully deployed. The objective behind the massive riots and causing disruption in diverse ways was to obstruct the course of the summit. Access routes to the summit venues were blocked on the two days of the summit, for instance. Because police officers had to be deployed to deal with these disturbances, this made room for autonomists to commit violent crimes elsewhere; in the early hours of 7 July small groups of militants instigated massive riots in the Hamburg Altona district, creating chaos which was reported widely in the media: a Federal Police station and the local town hall were pelted with stones and Molotov cocktails; more than 30 cars parked along the Elbchaussee, most of them privately owned, went up in flames. The protests caused considerable property damage.

The violent clashes at the G20 Summit in Hamburg – during which more than 200 police officers were injured, some of them seriously – also revealed the extent of violence committed against the police. In response to police search operations for those involved in the clashes, left-wing extremists even targeted politicians and police officers who were not deployed during the G20 Summit. The photographs of 54 officers who were involved in clearing a property claimed by left-wing extremists were included in what were made to look like police information about wanted individuals. These "wanted posters" were posted on the Internet by left-wing extremists.

The **NINA campaign**, which was chiefly initiated by the communist uG alliance in 2016, continued throughout 2017. It was directed mainly against the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD, Alternative for Germany) party and other "isolationist actors". Left-wing extremists were heavily involved in protests during the AfD's two party conferences in Cologne in April 2017 and in Hanover in December 2017. NINA, an "interactive campaign" involving both left-wing extremists and non-extremists, is an example of how the left-wing extremist scene is able to aggressively and

publicly stigmatise its political opponents by drawing in various groups to join in its activities.

The "**End of the Road**" campaign was of strategic importance to left-wing extremists throughout 2017 for getting across their positions on various issues. Left-wing extremists form action alliances in their attempts to take up current political issues (e.g. climate action and environmental protection), to firmly establish them as relevant causes in the scene and to boost acceptance of their movement within the democratic spectrum. Another objective pursued in 2017 was to push ahead with internationalising left-wing extremist protests. The "End of the Road" alliance, which is influenced by left-wing extremism and was named after the campaign of the same name, focused its attention on the Rhenish lignite mining area near Cologne in North Rhine-Westphalia, as well as its operator RWE, which was labelled "Europe's biggest CO2 emitter".

The potential opportunities of the Internet and, in particular, the **use of social media** – like the very popular Facebook and Twitter – have been evolving for years now and continue to be highly relevant to left-wing extremist campaign work and as platforms for debating relevant issues and priorities of their agitation. Left-wing extremists engage in networking on and in various platforms, blogs and forums, where they can quickly share information at national and international level. Instant messaging services like WhatsApp and Telegram in particular enable left-wing extremists (as well) to catch up on what is going on, to mobilise followers and coordinate activities as quickly as possible. In addition, left-wing extremist organisations use their websites to attract interested individuals and sympathisers to join as members.

Left-wing extremists have for years been stepping up their use of Internet platforms to increase their own media presence. Such platforms pool a range of relevant content independently of individual groups and ideological currents within the scene. One example is the **linksunten.indymedia Internet platform**, which for a long time was the most important medium used by violence-oriented left-wing extremists in Germany.

For many years the portal was used as a platform for reporting and propagating criminal offences motivated by left-wing extremism as well as

anti-constitutional content. Most specifically, a large number of self-incriminatory letters written by violence-oriented left-wing extremists were published on linksunten.indymedia. The site also published instructions for building time-delay incendiary devices and explicit calls to commit criminal offences. The platform published calls to commit violence against police officers and political opponents, as well as sabotage of state- and privately-owned infrastructure facilities, among other things.

The organisation responsible for operating the **linksunten.indymedia platform** was **banned** by the Federal Minister of the Interior on 25 August 2017 and subsequently disbanded. According to the banning order, its purpose and activities were in breach of criminal law and were also directed against the constitutional order. The decision banning the group is not yet final.

Left-wing extremist political parties and similar organisations are part of the spectrum of orthodox left-wing extremists. Their ideology and politics are essentially based on the theories of early communist thinkers such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels and Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Their central goal is to establish a socialist system on which to build a "classless" communist society.

In contrast to militant left-wing extremists, orthodox left-wing extremists regard the use of violence as legitimate and essential only in the context of a revolution. Nonetheless, given their policy of forming alliances they do not in principle rule out cooperating with violence-oriented groups as well.

The orthodox-communist Deutsche Kommunistische Partei (DKP, German Communist Party), which has approx. 3,000 members, is still seeking to achieve its goal of establishing a socialist and communist system; its actions are based on adherence to the theories of Marx, Engels and Lenin.

The Marxistisch-Leninistische Partei Deutschlands (MLPD, Marxist-Leninist Party of Germany), which follows Maoist-Stalinist principles, has some 1,800 members. Its objective is still to "overthrow the dictatorship of monopolist capital" and to "establish the dictatorship of the proletariat and socialism as a transitional stage to a classless communist society".

The MLPD has for years been in remarkably good financial shape. It draws income from membership fees and a disproportionately large amount of donated money, which according to the party is in the high six-figure range.

Left-wing extremist parties were unsuccessful at the 2017 general elections.

Islamism/Islamist terrorism

The trend observed in 2016 within the Islamist scene of a shift of forces towards the violence-oriented and/or jihadist sphere continued in 2017. Inter alia the number of terrorist attacks committed or foiled in Germany in 2016 and 2017 is indicative of this trend.

On the one hand, the number of members and adherents of groups not oriented towards violence has been decreasing over the last years. In particular the following of such associations classified as belonging to the Millî Görüş movement has significantly declined compared with 2015. This may be a result of the reform process within the "Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş e.V." (IGMG, Islamic Community Millî Görüş, regd. assoc.), which has adopted a course of moderation causing the organisation's tendency towards extremism to lessen. So the membership of the organisation as a whole is no longer to be included in the extremist following.

On the other hand, there has been another growth in the size of the increasingly violence-oriented and jihadist Salafist scene.

The table below illustrates this development:

Following in the field of Islamist terrorism/Islamism¹		
Organisations	2016	2017
Salafist Efforts	9,700	10,800
Islamic State (IS) Al-Qaeda Core Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQM) Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) Al-Shabab Hai'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS)	no hard numbers	no hard numbers
Hezbollah ²	950	950
Harakat al-Muqawama al-Islamiya (HAMAS) ²	320	320
Turkish Hezbollah (TH)	400	400
Hizb ut-Tahrir (HuT)	320	350

Muslim Brotherhood (MB) / Islamische Gemeinschaft in Deutschland e.V.	1,040	1,040
Tablighi Jama'at (TJ)	650	650
Islamisches Zentrum Hamburg e.V. (IZH)	no hard numbers	no hard numbers
Millî Görüş movement and affiliated associations (IGMG)	10,000	10,000
Others³	1,045	1,300
<p>1 Figures refer to Germany; they are partly estimated and rounded off. 2 Hezbollah and HAMAS are considered terrorist on an international level, but so far Germany has only served as a safe haven to them, i.e. they have not undertaken any terrorist activities here. 3 Other organisations whose membership figures/figures of adherents are to be taken into account as regards the Islamist following.</p>		

Considering nothing but the hard numbers, one can say that the Islamist following comprised a total of 25,810 individuals in 2017.

Last year saw one attack motivated by Islamist terrorism in Germany. On 28 July 2017, a rejected Palestinian asylum seeker stabbed a customer to death at a Hamburg supermarket. He then injured six more people, part of them seriously, before being overpowered by passers-by who held him until the police arrived.

When questioned by the police, the perpetrator said that while he was not a member of "Islamic State" (IS) or any other terrorist organisation, he wanted to have his attack understood in a context of Islamism and as his personal contribution to global jihad.

That single attack appears small compared to the six attacks staged in 2016, but it must not obscure the fact that the risk of attacks continues to be high in Germany. **Germany is a focus of Islamist terrorism.**

The small number of terrorist attacks motivated by Islamism in Germany in 2017 among other things results from the successful intelligence collection efforts made by the security authorities across the country. Thus last year several attack plans were prematurely uncovered, or intentions to carry out attacks foiled, which had already reached a concrete stage of preparation, with BfV being involved in detecting them.

Terrorist incidents may occur in Germany at any time in future. Preventing Islamist terrorist attacks will therefore remain the top priority of the co-operation between BfV, the German security authorities, and our partners abroad.

The security authorities also put special emphasis on the returnees from the conflict zone of Syria and Iraq. Due to the military successes achieved by the coalition and the Assad regime including its allies, a rise in the number of "jihad returnees" coming back to Europe will have to be expected, posing a possibly long-term risk that is difficult to calculate.

Approximately one-third of those who left Germany for Syria/Iraq have returned. The potential threat emanating from them is difficult to assess: Some of them may still be highly radicalised. They often are experienced in the use of arms and explosives and regularly have contacts with other (former) jihadist fighters and with terrorist organisations. The fighters' returning wives and children may also present a threat. IS has extended its propaganda to make jihad a duty for women and children too.

Germany remains a destination for people from the war zones in the Middle East, Africa, and Southern Asia. The war in Syria and in Iraq in particular has caused large numbers of people to migrate to Europe since the summer of 2015. IS makes targeted use of the migratory routes to smuggle its perpetrators to Europe while also trying to recruit refugees in Germany for committing terrorist attacks. Four Islamist attacks staged in Germany in 2016 (Würzburg, Ansbach, Berlin) and in 2017 (Hamburg) were committed by asylum seekers.

It still has to be expected that there will be members, supporters, and sympathisers of extremist and terrorist organisations covertly entering Germany among the migrants.

The security authorities also monitor adherents of extremist organisations and movements in Germany trying to make contact with migrants to win them over to their aims.

In contrast, there also were migrants who (self-)radicalised – which sometimes happened within a very short time – and who joined Islamist groups or organisations in Germany of their own accord.

There is a close national and international co-operation between the se-

curity authorities on the risks emanating from possible clandestine entries to Europe in the context of migration.

Its comprehensive defeats and losses of territory in Syria and in Iraq, among other things, have caused IS to further develop a strategy of terror directed against "soft targets". Not only did Germany, Europe and the USA have to face a large number of terror attacks in the course of 2017, but also other parts of the world did so too, with many of the attacks attributed to IS. Part of those attacks probably were subject to direct control by IS, but some were also planned and staged autonomously. However, often IS also claimed responsibility for the attacks "inspired" by the organisation. This included many knife attacks, but also bomb attacks and attacks with vehicles being steered into a crowd.

Like in the previous year, the jihadist groups of IS and al-Qaeda, which have a global orientation, dominated the **jihadist propaganda** of 2017. Both groups pursue the aim of overcoming – both on a military and on an ideological level – the West including all "infidels", attaching great importance to "online jihad" in this context. German-speaking IS and al-Qaeda activists mostly use the instant messaging service Telegram. The dominant topic of their posts is the conflict in Syria and in Iraq. Like in the official IS propaganda, they call for independently planning and staging attacks on behalf of IS.

The Salafist scene is the main recruiting source for jihad. **Salafism** in Germany enjoys undiminished popularity. In 2017, the number of Salafists in Germany once again increased by 1,000 to a total of 10,800. This makes the adherents of the Salafi ideology the only Islamist group seeing a significant increase in followers. This is particularly problematic when considering that political and jihadist Salafists share a common ideological basis. Despite the fact that political Salafists usually refrain from using violence, focussing on propaganda and recruitment activities they call "proselytising", experience has shown that no clear distinction can be made between the two tendencies. Generally approving violence is an integral part of the Salafist ideology. Analysing the recent attacks carried out in Germany and in Europe has shown that jihadist activities are very often preceded by a Salafist radicalisation.

In 2017, it became apparent that the Salafist scene had increasingly been retiring from the public to focus on private life. One year after the association "Die Wahre Religion" (DWR, The True Religion) including its Koran distribution campaign "LIES!" (READ!) was banned and dissolved, there hardly is any public proselytising activity ("street dawa") any more.

On 14 March 2017, the Ministry of the Interior and Sports of Lower Saxony banned the mosque association "Deutschsprachiger Islamkreis Hildesheim e.V." (German-speaking Islamic Circle of Hildesheim, regd. assoc.) in Hildesheim. As a result of national successes in investigation like this ban, the use of private networks and a fragmentation of the scene in addition to Salafist networks ("hot spots"), which continue to be important, have been increasing.

Anti-Semitism is an essential element of all ideologies within the Islamist spectrum. Religious, territorial, and/or national political motives merge in an anti-Semitic world view that is based on an alleged "worldwide Jewish conspiracy". Jews are accused of being at the origin of a worldwide plot, and they are held accountable for various evils and grievances. But anti-Semitism is also widespread outside an Islamist context in some home countries of Muslim migrants, thus motivating people to join in.

The anti-Semitic incidents with an Islamist background known to BfV suggest that the anti-Semitic ideas spread by Islamist organisations pose a great challenge to peaceful and tolerant coexistence in Germany. This is especially true considering the large number of migrants who have come to Germany. The anti-Semitic riots during a series of demonstrations against the US government acknowledging Jerusalem as the capital of Israel in December 2017 have clearly outlined the problem at hand. If integration fails, the anti-Semitic attitudes conveyed in the migrants' home countries might well present a starting point for Islamist radicalisation.

Extremist efforts of foreigners posing a threat to security (excluding Islamism)

The number of sympathisers of non-Islamist and extremist organisations of foreigners posing a threat to security rose to a total of 30,550 individuals in 2017 due to the increase in followers of the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK).

The largest part, i.e. 18,050 individuals, belong to left-wing extremist groups of foreigners, while 11,000 individuals were affiliated to right-wing extremist groups of foreigners, and 1,500 individuals had to be considered members or adherents of separatist groups of foreigners.

Following of extremist organisations of foreigners^{1,2} (excluding Islamism)		
	2016	2017
Left-wing extremists	17,550	18,050
including:		
Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK)	14,000	14,500
Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C)	650	650
Turkish Communist Party / Marxists-Leninists (TKP/ML)	1,300	1,300
Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP)	600	600
Others	1,000	1,000
Separatists	1,500	1,500
Right-wing extremists	11,000	11,000
Total	30,050	30,550
<p>1 Figures refer to Germany; they are partly estimated and rounded off. 2 Figures also include the following of groups which have been banned.</p>		

For the very most part, the political agitation of the extremist organisations of foreigners as well as their respective level of militancy depend on the political developments in their home countries. As a rule, the adherents living in Germany are given politico-strategical guidelines by the organisations in their respective home countries, and they are ready to consistently implement them.

Like in the previous years, the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party – Front (DHKP-C) and the Ülkücü movement continue to be of particular relevance to Germany's internal security: PKK because of its violent actions, DHKP-C for its overt commitment to armed struggle in Turkey, and the Ülkücü movement due to its militant denial of the principle of equality.

PKK continues to be the largest extremist organisation of foreigners in Germany in terms of members and efficiency. It is in a position to mobilise individuals far beyond its own circle of followers.

PKK's activity in 2017 was mainly determined by concerns about the prison conditions and health of its founder Abdullah Öcalan. **Numerous demonstrations were held across Germany** in this context, in particular after reports on Öcalan's declining health and even his alleged death were spread on social media in October 2017. The fact that PKK managed to arrange for a large number of protest events within a short time in October 2017 once again underlined the organisation's considerable ability to mobilise people.

The ongoing military conflict between the Turkish security forces and PKK's guerrilla units continues to be another dominant topic within the organisation.

The number and intensity of demonstrations in the year under review were also determined by the **ban on PKK symbols issued by the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI)**. The ban was a major topic of a demonstration held in Düsseldorf on 4 November 2017, which was attended by some 6,000 PKK adherents. The demonstration also saw violent attacks against police officers.

The constitutional referendum held in Turkey on 16 April 2017 was another event that had an influence on PKK demonstrations in Germany. In the run-up to the referendum, PKK adherents tried to persuade voters of Kurdish origin to vote against the amendment of the constitution. PKK disapproved of the amendment because they feared that the repressions against them and the military conflict might intensify if the Turkish president's competences were enhanced.

The PKK youth organisation "Komalên Ciwan"/"Ciwanen Azad" focusses on mobilising people and holding demonstrations whose topics are linked to those of PKK or to the situation in the Kurdish settlement areas. Such events keep giving rise to spontaneous violent clashes conditioned by the situation, often with nationalist/right-wing extremist individuals of Turkish origin. The overall political and military development in Turkey also had an effect on the PKK youth organisation in 2017, which repeatedly called for "resistance" and for taking action.

PKK in Europe has changed its name several times over the past years, with the intention of giving the outward impression of a political and democratic re-orientation. That way, PKK has been trying to get rid of the stigma of a terrorist organisation. Despite numerous announcements to introduce internal democratic structures, the organisation still adheres to its authoritarian leadership style with a cadre system. Democratic signs such as involving the rank and file members in decision-making processes were applied neither on a structural nor on a personnel level in 2017.

According to a judgment pronounced by the Federal Court of Justice (BGH), the PKK structures in Europe, and consequently in Germany too, do not consist of autonomously organised (sub-)associations, nor are they independent of the foreign main organisation of PKK when it comes to making decisions. First, they are seamlessly incorporated in the PKK structure, and second, their political and ideological objectives as well as the latter's implementation are set by PKK's leadership and are binding to its structures abroad. The PKK structures' ability to take autonomous decisions therefore is very limited; decision-making at this level exclusively takes place within the boundaries set by the relevant directives.

Even though peaceful events remain the focal aim in Europe, violence continues to be an option of the PKK ideology. This becomes obvious not least because of people in Germany being recruited for the guerrilla units.

While PKK's defiant and provocative position regarding the ban on symbols alone does not mean that the organisation is giving up its mostly peaceful course in Europe, their attacks against police officers still reveal their continued readiness to use violence in countering executive measures if they affect PKK's vital interests. Such reactions in similar situations will also have to be expected in the future.

While **DHKP-C** continued its terrorist activity in Turkey in 2017, the extent of the activity once again lessened compared with the previous year. The security situation in Turkey, which has been aggravating since the attempted military coup on 15 July 2016, and the comprehensive measures taken by the state in this context have had a direct impact on DHKP-C, which can for example be seen from the arrests of members of the organisation. In addition, it was learned in early 2017 that DHKP-C members had been killed during an air raid carried out by the Turkish military.

On 28 September 2017, the Office of the Federal Public Prosecutor **brought a charge against DHKP-C's suspected Europe leader** before the Senate for State Security at the Hamburg Hanseatic Higher Regional Court. His trial started on 25 January 2018. The defendant is strongly suspected of having been involved in the foreign terrorist organisation DHKP-C as a member.

Out of protest against the arrest of their suspected Europe leader in Hamburg on 2 December 2016, DHKP-C conducted a "long march" in early 2017, holding numerous demonstrations across Germany and in the neighbouring countries.

One of the integral parts of DHKP-C's propaganda activity are the concerts performed by the band "Grup Yorum". Like in 2016, however, DHKP-C did not succeed in renting a hall or a stadium for a large-scale performance.

DHKP-C still considers Germany a safe haven. The commemoration events held in Germany for "martyrs" (attackers having died in Turkey) prove that DHKP-C's adherents living in Germany also support the party line, including the option of terrorism.

The nationalist/racist right-wing extremist *Ülkücü* ideology based on an idealisation of Turkey and Turkishness and simultaneously denigrating other ethnic groups is mainly represented in Germany by the umbrella organisation *Föderation der Türkisch-Demokratischen Idealistenvereine in Deutschland e.V.* (Federation of Associations of Turkish Democratic Idealists in Germany regd. assoc.) and other – non-organised – followers. While the umbrella organisation tries to outwardly appear as law-abiding, non-organised adherents of the *Ülkücü* movement spread their

racist ideas of superiority, in particular via the Internet. Calls for violence and statements glorifying violence are thus posted on social networks, targeting the Ülkücü movement's declared enemies, especially Kurds. The part of the Ülkücü movement that is not organised within an umbrella organisation also comprises rocker-like groups with a clear commitment to Turkish right-wing extremism.

Clashes between rival extremist groups from Turkey, particularly in the context of demonstrations, are a permanent threat to Germany's internal security. Spontaneous violent conflicts triggered by specific situations regularly occur, which inter alia result from the aggressive mood stirred up by the groups themselves. This is particularly true whenever PKK adherents clash with nationalist or right-wing extremist individuals of Turkish origin.

Espionage and other intelligence activities

States which strive to gain a knowledge edge in military (particularly strategic) or economic and technological contexts do not hesitate to procure the necessary information secretly and illegally by violating applicable law. In this context, their governments' political agenda dictates the priority areas of the individual intelligence services' activities.

Germany is of interest in its role as a geopolitical player, as a member of NATO and the EU and on account of its economic strength and innovative businesses. Oppositional groups from foreign intelligence services' home countries in Germany are another target of espionage activities. The consequences for Germany range from a weakening of its negotiating position to high material and economic damage and a potential impairment of its national sovereignty.

The Russian Federation, the People's Republic of China and the Islamic Republic of Iran are the major players behind espionage activities that are directed against Germany. Apart from that, other countries (including western countries) also play a role.

The **Russian intelligence services** invest a lot of organisational and financial effort to engage in espionage activities against Germany. With the use of cyberspace the extent of espionage has increased many times over. It is targeted at all areas of politics, economy, research and technology, with a focus on the political position of the Federal Government vis-à-vis the Russian Federation. The efforts of the Russian intelligence services focus in particular on those policy areas where decisions with a potential impact on Russian interests are taken. These policy areas include the alliance policy within NATO and the EU and Germany's foreign policy.

The tense relationship between the EU and Turkey and the resulting potential impact on the accession negotiations and the future of the EU – in particular after the so-called BREXIT vote – and the orientation of the Common Foreign and Security policy have been of particular interest to the Russian intelligence services.

Owing not least to the dwindling public interest, the Ukraine crisis which was very much in the fore in 2014 and 2015, has been overshadowed by other areas of tension such as the conflict in Syria. Nevertheless the question

as to whether the political and economic sanctions which were imposed on Russia in the course of the Ukraine crisis in 2014, are going to be lifted or extended continues to be of high interest to the Russian intelligence services.

As regards German home affairs policy, the services tried to gather information on party-political structures and developments, on the views of individual political parties and on the potential impact of electoral outcomes.

Apart from their espionage interests the Russian services strive to influence the political and public opinion in Germany. As in previous years, pro-Russian propaganda was disseminated in numerous ways. Important tools include social networks, the microblogging service Twitter, government-funded and private institutes (such as think tanks) and Russian state media. TV, radio and Internet channels which broadcast around the world run targeted propaganda and disinformation campaigns. Such disinformation and propaganda campaigns are aimed at destabilising the Federal Republic of Germany and at weakening its position as an advocate for an extension of the EU-sanctions imposed on Russia. The situation in Russia, by contrast, is being glossed over while the sole responsibility for the economic and social hardships is attributed to the western governments.

The focus of **Chinese intelligence activities** is shifting towards political espionage. They are now making great efforts to obtain information about supranational entities such as the EU and about international conferences such as the G20 Summit. Moreover, the country is very interested in policy positions on China, e.g. recognition as a market economy or territorial disputes in the region of the South China Sea.

In Germany, Chinese intelligence services continue to focus on industry, research, technology and the armed forces (in particular information on the structure, armament and training of the Bundeswehr and on modern weapons technology) as well as on policies which – from the Chinese perspective – threaten national unity and the Communist Party's monopoly on power ("Five Poisons")².

2 The movements which Chinese authorities call the "Five Poisons" include the ethnic minorities of the Uygurs and Tibetans seeking independence, the anti-regime Falun Gong movement, the democracy movement and proponents of sovereignty for the island of Taiwan.

The slow-down in the economic growth of China's domestic market and the Chinese state leadership's policy to improve the competitive position of Chinese companies also through the takeover of foreign companies have resulted in an increasing number of acquisitions of German medium-sized high-tech businesses. With these investments China aims to close technological gaps in order to achieve its ambitious high-tech program "Made in China 2015". Through investment licenses, stringent capital transaction controls, a selective lending policy, close coordination between state-owned enterprises and the government and through the Communist party cells that are embedded in Chinese companies (to exert influence on the management) the Chinese government influences and controls these investments. The intelligence services are also involved in this way. The drain of know-how can harm the German economy in the long run. Also, it cannot be ruled out that China, by acquiring security-relevant German businesses, might obtain sensitive data and information which it could use to the detriment of German security interests.

In July 2017, the Chinese People's Congress adopted the new National Intelligence Service Act. This provides the security authorities with numerous formally codified special powers enabling them to carry out their intelligence activities at home and abroad almost without any restrictions. The National Intelligence Service Act provides among other things that individuals, businesses, government structures and other organisations at home and abroad shall be enlisted to cooperate with the services.

Now as before, the activities of the **Iranian intelligence services** are focused on spying out and suppressing opposition movements at home and abroad. In addition, the services gather political, industrial and scientific intelligence in Western countries.

Iran sees itself as a regional power which is intent on shaping politics beyond its own borders, including with a pronounced anti-Western and anti-Israeli thrust. As a result, the Iranian government is interested in information on the future policy of the West – for example Germany's foreign and security policy.

The state of Israel, its representatives and supporters as well as members of the Jewish religious community are among the declared enemies of

Iran. Even the agreement made between Iran and the Western world to settle the nuclear conflict has not changed this attitude. Therefore, Iranian intelligence-related organisations continue to spy on (pro-)Jewish and (pro-)Israeli targets in Germany.

Compared to the previous year, BfV found even less evidence of Iranian attempts to acquire proliferation-sensitive material for its nuclear programme.

Such evidence emerges whenever the methodical approach to the procurement of goods that are also suitable for use in the context of a nuclear program and/or available intelligence on the final recipient or the inquiring organisation suggest that there is a potentially proliferation-relevant background to the procurement. As far as BfV was able to verify such evidence, it did not reveal any violation of the restrictions under the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPoA). BfV continues to monitor whether this trend continues and whether Iran consistently complies with the agreement that was concluded in July 2015.

Germany's reconnaissance and counter-intelligence efforts are directed against all illegal intelligence activities and not targeted at any specific country or group of countries. Since 2014, the counter-intelligence resources targeted at **miscellaneous other countries** have been continuously increased and new methods to ensure a 360° view have been developed. In the framework of this "360° processing" it may occur that western intelligence services come in the focus; this may even include services with which BfV entertains a trusting co-operation based on partnership in other contexts. However, even in such cases it cannot be tolerated that foreign intelligence services use telecommunications surveillance or human sources to engage in espionage in or against Germany.

The **Turkish intelligence service** Millî İstihbarat Teşkilâtı (MIT) for example is also active in Germany and spies on members of the opposition. In recent years, the focus in Germany was on the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front (DHKP-C) and the Marxist Leninist Communist Party (MLKP). Currently, the gathering of intelligence on the movement of the Islamic preacher Fethullah Gülen is a top priority for the MIT. The Turkish government calls this

organisation a "Fethullahist Terrorist Organisation (FETO)" or a "Parallel State Structure (PDY)" and considers it to be responsible for the coup attempt in July 2016.

In its efforts to gather information on alleged terrorists, the Turkish government relies increasingly on Turkish diaspora organisations in Germany. Imams who are or were active in mosques of the "Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs" (DITIB) have been tasked by the Turkish state agency for religion Diyanet via the Turkish consulates general to provide information on Gülen members. Also, the Turkish diaspora organisation "Union of European-Turkish Democrats (UETD)" which has its headquarters in Cologne, is an unofficial organisation of the Turkish government party AKP abroad and represents the views of the Turkish government. The Turkish government is therefore able to directly influence the opinions and behaviour of the Turkish diaspora. Indirectly it is thus also possible for the Turkish government to influence political decision-making processes in Germany.

In recent years, **espionage by means of cyberattacks** has become a standard tool of numerous intelligence services which involves a high threat for potential and actual victims. The rapid development of information and communications technology offers numerous opportunities to those who are out to acquire data illegally for the purposes of espionage and political disinformation, to manipulate data and to sabotage computer systems. In recent years, cyberattacks that are carried out by means of and against IT infrastructures have become an important tool of foreign intelligence services. They serve to spy out sensitive information and strategies. Cyberattacks can, however, also be aimed at sabotage for example against critical infrastructures.

Russia and China in particular have been repeatedly identified by BfV as perpetrators of such attacks. Meanwhile, however, the intelligence services of other countries also have the necessary resources and capabilities to carry out cyberattacks. There have been, for example, cyberattacks against targets in Germany which can be attributed to presumed government agencies in Iran.

The frequency and targets of the attacks clearly prove the attempt to strategically spy out policy-makers and the federal administration. Information-gathering campaigns initiated and controlled by intelligence services also severely threaten the business and development opportunities of German companies. Due to their innovative potential and competitiveness in the global markets, German companies are exposed to manifold threats. Foreign countries and their intelligence services also try to gather information and know-how in manifold ways in order to achieve advantages for their own economies.

Protecting businesses from such threat scenarios and in particular from **economic espionage, sabotage and industrial espionage** is a joint responsibility of government and industry. Since the launch of the Economic Security Initiative (Initiative Wirtschaftsschutz) in April 2016, various co-operation formats involving the security authorities and industry have been established under the coordination of the Federal Ministry of the Interior (BMI).

Security of classified information and counter-sabotage

Under section 3 (2), first sentence, nos 1, 2 and 4 of the Federal Act on the Protection of the Constitution (Bundesverfassungsschutzgesetz, BVerfSchG) in conjunction with section 3 (2) of the Security Clearance Check Act (Sicherheitsüberprüfungsgesetz, SÜG), the German domestic intelligence service (BfV) is legally required to cooperate in security clearance checks of people at the federal level. As a result, BfV is responsible for implementing the requisite measures in connection with security checks on behalf of the competent bodies (e.g. public authorities, other federal public agencies or political parties under Article 21 of the Basic Law [Grundgesetz, GG]). In 2017, 4,570 baseline security vettings, 18,289 enhanced security vettings and 1,985 developed security vettings including background investigations were carried out in connection with the security of classified information. Another 8,477 vettings were done in regard to counter-sabotage.

Personnel security controls who is authorised to handle such confidential information. Classified material must not be allowed to fall into the hands of unauthorised individuals or institutions – either due to carelessness or deliberate disclosure. Classified material is defined as sensitive facts, objects or intelligence which must be kept secret in the public interest, in particular to protect the welfare of the country as a whole or one of the federal states. Personnel security therefore involves assessing a person's general reliability and preparedness to defend the free democratic order. Another aspect is whether there is a risk that the individual in question is likely to pass on classified material to foreign intelligence services or to criminal, extremist or terrorist organisations when under duress or for personal reasons.

Those who perform tasks of a sensitive nature within facilities vital to civilian or military needs (e.g. postal or telecommunications services or an agency within the remit of the Federal Ministry of Defence) are also classed as being entrusted with tasks of a sensitive nature. **Preventive personnel-related counter-sabotage** measures are also taken to prevent, in particular, potential terrorist saboteurs from gaining access to sensitive areas in such facilities.

BfV assesses whether the outcome of each security vetting is security-relevant. A security risk is deemed to exist where there is factual evidence which raises doubts as to the concerned person's reliability in the performance of tasks of a sensitive nature; whether they pose a specific risk, especially fears as to their susceptibility to blackmail if they were to be approached by agent spotters or foreign intelligence recruiters, organisations as defined in sections 129 to 129b of the German Criminal Code (Strafgesetzbuch, StGB) or extremist organisations; as well as doubts as to their loyalty to the free democratic order as defined in the Basic Law or their willingness to defend that order at all times. The competent agency is informed of the outcome of the security vetting, based on which the agency is then responsible for deciding whether that person is to be entrusted with the envisaged tasks of a sensitive nature.

The Security Clearance Check Act was **thoroughly revised** in 2017 to meet current security needs. The revised Act entered into force on 21 June 2017. An additional standard measure was included, namely a request for the disclosure of information from the Zentrales Staatsanwaltschaftliches Verfahrensregister (ZStV, Register of Public Prosecution Office Proceedings). A request can now also be made for the disclosure of information from the Ausländerzentralregister (AZR, Central Register of Foreigners). A clear statutory regulation was hereby created so as to be able to compare information about the person subject to a security vetting with that in the AZR. Further, account can now be taken of information about illegal entries and illegal stays or concerns about a specific individual entering the country.

Under the revised Act and subject to their separate consent, foreign security authorities can now be explicitly involved in measures taken as part of a security vetting and the legal basis has been created to enable Internet searches to be carried out. To ensure a sufficient level of protection, the revised Act now also sets out general principles regarding the physical protection of classified material. For example, federal authorities and other public federal agencies are obliged to take physical security measures (organisational and technical measures to protect classified material) to guarantee that classified material remains confidential permanently.

Whoever has authorised access to classified material is obliged to maintain secrecy and to ensure that no one takes unauthorised cognisance of it.

BfV continues to organise **training courses for security and counter-sabotage officers**, thereby helping to ensure as harmonised a security structure as possible.

The Scientology Organisation (SO)

In 2017, the Scientology Organisation (SO) did not come closer to achieving its objective of establishing a "scientologist society" in Germany. As in previous years, the organisation's membership in Germany continued to stagnate at about 3,500 individuals. The number of high-profile public activities continues to be low. The SO continued, however, to set up information stands in various cities across the Federal Republic of Germany.

The SO adheres to its fundamental ideological orientation and strategy and to its familiar priorities. It continues to be guided by the writings of its founder, L. Ron Hubbard. These writings make clear that a society based on Scientology teachings would not guarantee essential fundamental and human rights.

Scientology aspires to a society without general and fair elections and rejects the democratic legal system. In the long term, the organisation seeks to replace democracy with its own legal code. In its messages to the public, however, it is anxious to present itself as an apolitical religious community that abides by the rules of democracy. For this purpose, it runs several campaigns for alleged social programmes and relief organisations. For example:

- The association Say No to Drugs, Say Yes to Life aims at raising awareness of drug addiction and prevention, in particular among young people.
- NARCONON is a counselling service for drug addicts.
- CRIMINON offers assistance for criminal offenders.
- The Youth for Human Rights initiative aims at teaching young people worldwide about human rights.
- Applied Scholastics is a study programme for school pupils and university students.

The SO uses the Internet as a central platform for its propaganda and advertising. It uses social media to enhance its image and recruit new members. Also, the SO has a host of multimedia offers that are especially targeted at young people. Now as before, it offers increasingly free-of-charge

"Online courses from the Scientology Handbook" to introduce prospective new members to the expensive SO offering. Participants are to be informed about efficient control and performance enhancing mechanisms. With most of these Internet sites, the relation to the SO is deliberately concealed.

In the year under review, the organisation also used "headhunters" to contact young athletes via the Internet promising them a language scholarship at the "Clearwater Academy International" in Florida. Here again, the SO background of the "headhunter" and the Florida academy was concealed from the recipients of the scholarship.

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