

## France Leads Group of Seven Push to Take on Terror Financiers

Moneylaundering.com

Irene Madongo

29 May 2015

G-7 finance ministers on Friday weighed measures to tackle the financing of terrorism, including steps to streamline asset freezes and clamp down on grassroots donations to extremist groups.

At a press conference that centered on tax evasion and tax avoidance, German Finance Minister Wolfgang Schäuble called for greater cooperation among financial institutions on combating terrorist financing. The statement followed the conclusion of a 2-day meeting in Dresden by the group.

French officials in particular urged attendees to expedite their countermeasures, according to a source in Germany who asked not to be named. In the aftermath of this year's terrorist attacks in France and Denmark, French officials have strengthened national laws and recommended international measures to fight extremism.

In March, Schäuble and his French counterpart Michel Sapin asked the European Commission to streamline data-sharing among EU member-states, better monitor financial flows linked to high-risk jurisdictions and bolster laws on terror-related asset freezes.

Like other European countries, France regards itself as fertile ground for Islamic State's recruitment efforts, according to Michelle Frasher, a consulting scholar with the European Union Center at the University of Illinois.

"Terrorists are very adept at raising funds, and with groups like [Islamic State] raising funds quickly, Western countries like France may feel under pressure to act quicker to cut off those funds too and tackle new methods of raising illicit cash," she said.

When it comes to investigating terrorist financing, speed is of the essence, according to Saskia Rietbroek, president of Miami-based consultancy AML Services International.

"The challenge is that the amounts can be so small compared to traditional money laundering. They realize this, hence the talk of tackling grassroots funding," Rietbroek said.

<http://www.moneylaundering.com/News/Pages/134726.aspx>