

Resolution on relations between the EU and the League of Arab States and cooperation in countering terrorism

2015/2573(RSP) - 12/03/2015 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on relations between the EU and the League of Arab States and cooperation in countering terrorism.

The resolution was tabled by the ALDE, Greens/ALE, ECR, S&D, EFDD and EPP groups.

It underlined the fact that terrorism poses a direct threat to all countries and all people regardless of their ethnic background, religion or belief. Only a **global alliance** could address this threat effectively, in full compliance with international law, fundamental values and international human rights standards.

Rule of law and fundamental rights: the report reaffirmed the need to maintain a **balance between freedom and security** in response to the terrorist threats and to consider all measures to be taken from the point of view of the compatibility of these measures with the rule of law and the requirements of fundamental rights. It stated counter-terrorism measures might never be abused to repress legitimate dissent, or to violate people's universal human rights. Members called on the EU to **build clear safeguards into its cooperation with third countries**, to ensure it did not directly or indirectly support or legitimise the repression of legitimate organisations and individuals in the name of countering terrorism.

Furthermore, the authorities of EU and LAS member states must respect the prohibition of torture enshrined in the UN Convention against Torture. Members reiterated that forced confessions under torture were not valid.

Members recalled that on 19 January 2015 the VP/HR, Federica Mogherini, and the Secretary-General of the League of Arab States (LAS), Nabil El Araby, signed a **memorandum of understanding (MoU)** between the European External Action Service (EEAS) and the General Secretariat of the LAS. They asked for the MoU to be published so that its content could be subject to democratic and judicial oversight.

Jihadi extremism: Parliament noted that the present terrorist threat in the EU and the Arab states had among its main causes jihadist extremism, and endorsed the view that a policy aiming at deradicalisation and combating terrorism could not be effective unless it was developed with the **close cooperation of the countries of origin**. However, Members believed that the EU must rethink the prevailing weakness that characterised earlier counter-terrorism cooperation with countries of origin, transit and destination through which foreign fighters and the resources to support them had been channelled, including Member States of the LAS.

In addition, it was crucial to address not only the consequences but also the underlying factors of radicalization. Members stressed the need for a **comprehensive cross-sectoral approach** guaranteeing the involvement of all the policies concerned.

Freedom of religion: Parliament called on the LAS, the EEAS and the member states of both organisations to **protect religious minorities** in the Arab world and fully implement the EU Guidelines on the promotion and protection of freedom of religion or belief. It reiterated that the rights of religious minorities were inextricably linked to respect for the right to liberty, security, equal opportunities between men and women and freedom of expression.

Arms trafficking: lastly, Parliament calls for the EU to develop, in cooperation with the LAS, a **dedicated mechanism** aiming to curb the phenomenon of arms trafficking, in particular targeting the countries where terrorism originates from or where the terrorists are trained.