Findings and recommendations of the Special Committee on Terrorism

2018/2044(INI) - 21/11/2018 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Special Commission on Terrorism adopted the report of Monika HOHLMEIER (EPP, DE) and Helga STEVENS (ECR, BE) on the findings and recommendations of the Special Commission on Terrorism.

The terrorist threat has grown and rapidly evolved in recent years. Members believe that the cross-border nature of terrorism requires a **strong and coordinated response** and cooperation within and between Member States, as well as with and between the relevant EU agencies and bodies, and with the third countries concerned. The response to the terrorist threat should always be in full **compliance with the principles recognised by Article 2 Treaty on the European Union** and should observe fundamental rights and freedoms.

The main recommendations are as follows:

Institutional framework: Members believe that European action is essential and that deepening cooperation and information exchange between Member States and with the Union is essential to provide an effective response to terrorist threats. They invited Member States and the European institutions to work towards a **common strategic culture** in this area. They underlined the importance of the exchange of good practice between Member States within the European Union, but also with third countries.

Members called on the next President of the Commission to maintain a self-standing portfolio for the Commissioner responsible for the Security Union and on the Council to extend the powers of the European Public Prosecutor's Office to include the fight against organised crime and terrorism.

Terrorist threat: Members called on the Commission to work with the Member States towards more transparency and a common understanding of threat levels. They called on the Member States to swiftly transmit information on the change of the threat level and the rationale behind it.

The report called on Member States and the appropriate EU agencies to monitor all foreign terrorist fighters and to ensure harmonised security and judicial follow-up of identified and to set up appropriate structures to meet the needs of **repatriated children**.

The Commission is called upon to review and update the **CBRN Action Plan** (chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear substances) and Member States to take appropriate ‘civil defence’ measures to prepare for CBRN attacks.

Preventing and combating radicalisation leading to violent extremism: Members called for the establishment of a European Centre of Excellence for the Prevention of Radicalisation' which would be integrated into the Commission and endowed with sufficient financial and human resources. Member States are invited to:

- adopt **comprehensive national and regional strategies** to prevent and combat radicalisation, which should be provided with adequate financial resources;
- tolerate only religious practices that are in full accordance with democracy, the rule of law, human rights and the laws in force in the Member States;
- carry out prior **screening of chaplains** and systematically place blacklisted hate preachers on a case-by-case basis;
-

- implement the Directive on combating terrorism and the Framework Decision on racism and xenophobia, according to which incitement to commit a terrorist act or hate crime is a criminal offence;
- **close places of worship** and ban associations that incite terrorist offences, hatred, discrimination or violence;
- take swift legal action to ban and remove, as far as possible, within their territories, all printed and **online propaganda** that explicitly incites violent extremism and terrorist acts;
- establish specific procedures and indicators to identify and manage **radicalised prisoners** in prisons in order to prevent the radicalisation of other prisoners; Members considered it essential to set up detention rules that are differentiated according to the level of danger presented by the prisoners.

The Commission is invited to create an online **European platform** that citizens can use in order to flag online terrorist content.

Cooperation and exchange of information: Member States were called on to develop the necessary technical standardisation, improvements in data quality and the legal framework for a future approach to ' **information sharing by default'**, when it comes to sharing CT-related information with other Member States and relevant EU agencies and bodies on the basis of the applicable underlying legal regulations governing each information system, thus exchanging such information as a rule, and refraining from such exchange only in specific cases where circumstances require that it be withheld namely when the sharing of information would jeopardise current investigations or the safety of an individual or would be contrary to the essential interests of the security of the Member State concerned.

Members called for (i) full implementation and systematic checks of relevant databases and information systems, (ii) working towards interoperability and (iii) setting up national 'fusion centres' or coordination units to combat terrorism, as well as coordinated databases, to facilitate the search and exchange of terrorist intelligence held by all relevant national authorities.

External borders: Member States are invited to invest in high quality information and communication technology (ICT) **equipment** at all border crossings in order to allow appropriate controls using all relevant databases. The Commission shall set a benchmark for the technical standards for such ICT equipment, after consultation with eu-LISA.

The co-legislators shall consider giving **Frontex** a specific mandate for the processing of personal operational data appropriate to its operational role, including in the prevention and detection of cross-border crime and terrorism at the Union's external borders.

Terrorist financing: the report called on Member States to fully implement all anti-money laundering directives and European instruments relating to the fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. It called on the Commission to develop, together with Member States and international partners, the monitoring of financial flows in a targeted manner, as well as ways of identifying users of electronic wallets, virtual currencies and prepaid cards, crowdfunding platforms and online and mobile payment systems in police or judicial investigations.

Victims of terrorism: the Commission is invited to establish an **EU Coordination Centre for victims of terrorism** (CCVT), which would provide timely and adequate crisis support in cases of attacks in one or more Member States. It is also invited to submit a legislative proposal on the victims of terrorism that responds effectively to victims' needs in the short and long term, including a common definition of the status of victim of terrorism and of victims' rights, and a standardised form for claiming compensation.

Member States shall ensure that a comprehensive response to the specific needs of victims of terrorism immediately after a terrorist attack and for as long as necessary is provided within the national emergency response infrastructure.