Findings and recommendations of the Special Committee on Terrorism

2018/2044(INI) - 12/12/2018 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 474 votes to 112 with 755 abstentions a resolution on the findings and recommendations of the Special Committee on Terrorism.

Noting that the threats posed by terrorism require a holistic approach linking internal and external security and ensuring national and European coordination, Parliament considered that the EU and the Member States have made progress in countering these threats, but that this progress has unfortunately been made under pressure of events rather than through pro-active measures. The resolution contains a series of measures that the EU should take to improve its response to the terrorist threat, bearing in mind that the response 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 measures seek to promote more cooperation, better information exchange, intensification of the fight against radicalisation and extended rights for the victims.

The main recommendations are as follows:

Institutional framework: Parliament stressed the importance of deepening cooperation and information exchange between Member States. It 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. It also called for clarification of the status and role of the CounterTerrorism Coordinator, as a bridge between the competent EU institutions and Member States' agencies.

Terrorist threat

Parliament called on Member States and the appropriate EU agencies to monitor all foreign terrorist fighters and to set up appropriate structures to meet the needs of **repatriated children**.

The Commission was 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

Parliament 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 were 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 consistently blacklist on a case-by-case basis any hate preachers; the Commission was asked to introduce an EU watch list so as to better exchange information on extremist chaplains within the scope permissible in accordance with the law;

- increase the offer of higher education opportunities for chaplains in the EU, with transparent scrutiny and only accrediting theological curricula that fully respect the democratic laicism of European countries, and revoking teaching licences in cases of misdemeanour;

- take action against satellite TV channels disseminating violence, hate speech and incitement to terrorism; the Commission is asked to prepare an analysis of possible legislative changes in the Audiovisual Media Services Directive in order to improve the effectiveness of blocking such channels broadcasting from third countries;

- close places of worship and ban associations that incite terrorist offences, hatred, discrimination or violence;

- establish specific procedures and indicators to identify and manage **radicalised prisoners** in prisons in order to prevent the radicalisation of other 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 a future approach to '**information sharing by default'**, when it comes to sharing CT-related information with other Member States and relevant EU agencies.

Parliament 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; (iv) cooperation among all relevant stakeholders with a view to increasing the decryption abilities of the competent authorities; (v) the introduction a biometric matching service enabling querying with biometric data across several EU information systems so as to contribute to the fight against identity fraud and to prevent people from using multiple identities.

Parliament called on the Commission to examine the possibility of a legislative proposal that obliges communication platforms present on the EU market to cooperate when it comes to encrypted communications if there is a judicial decision to that effect.

External borders: Member States are invited to invest in high quality information and communication technology (ICT) **equipment** at all border crossings and the Commission was asked set a benchmark for the technical standards for such ICT equipment, after consultation with eu-LISA.

Parliament called on the co-legislators to consider providing the European Border and Coast Guard Agency (EBCGA) with a specific mandate for processing operational personal data suited to its operational role, including in the prevention and detection of cross-border crime and terrorism at the EU's external borders.

The Commission was asked to prepare an evaluation of a possible legislative proposal making it compulsory for air carriers and port, international bus or high-speed train operators to conduct conformity checks when passengers board, in order to make sure that the identity stated on the ticket matches the ID card or passport in the passenger's possession.

Terrorist financing: Parliament called on the Commission to develop the monitoring of financial flows, 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 was invited to establish an **EU Coordination Centre for victims of terrorism**, which would provide timely and adequate crisis support in cases of attacks in one or more Member States. Parliament also called on the Commission to put forward 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, outlining clear duties and deadlines for insurers.

Lastly, Parliament asked for enhanced promotion of the European Day of Remembrance of Victims of Terrorism (11 March).