Resolution on the EU Security Union Strategy

2020/2791(RSP) - 17/12/2020 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted by 543 votes to 64, with 82 abstentions, a resolution tabled by the Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs on the EU Security Union Strategy.

Parliament welcomed the publication of the new EU Strategy for Security Union and stressed the need for monitoring of the existing regulatory framework in the form of legislative and non-legislative initiatives where shortcomings have been identified. Any new legislative proposal should be subject to an impact assessment, in particular as regards the impact on fundamental rights and the risks of discrimination.

Fight against terrorism

While calling on the Commission to ensure the full and swift implementation of the EU Counter-Terrorism Directive 2017/541 in all Member States, Members welcomed the new EU Counter-Terrorism Programme presented by the Commission on 9 December 2020 and the new initiatives outlined therein.

Parliament stressed the importance of:

- implementing a comprehensive approach to preventing and combating radicalisation, which should combine security and education policies with social, cultural and anti-discrimination policies and include all relevant stakeholders;

- the rapid identification and complete removal of terrorist content online on the basis of clear legal provisions, including human review and appropriate safeguards to ensure full respect for fundamental rights and constitutional standards; in this regard, Members called for astronger commitment from industry and the establishment of transparent mechanisms for citizens to report such content.

Organised crime

In particular, Parliament recommended:

- strengthening cooperation and exchange of information in the fight against organised crime and to adopt new measures to freeze and confiscate assets, including non-conviction-related assets;

- improving cooperation between administrative, judicial and law enforcement authorities within the EU, in particular the financial intelligence units of the Member States on the prevention of money laundering and terrorist financing; the anti-money laundering directive should be evaluated and, if necessary, revised;

- presenting a legislative proposal to prohibit or regulate residence and citizenship by investment schemes often facilitate corruption and money laundering.

Child sexual abuse

Parliament called for increased efforts at national and EU level to tackle the evolving phenomenon of online and offline sexual abuse of children, including the prevention, detection and reporting of child sexual abuse, the removal of online child pornography, and the improved investigation and prosecution of related offences. These measures should be complemented by a public awareness campaign designed in cooperation with all relevant stakeholders.

Members reminded the Commission of its call for the designation of an EU representative for children's rights, who should serve as a point of reference for all EU matters and policy related to children.

Access to data by law enforcement authorities

The resolution stressed that end-to-end encryption contributes to citizens' privacy and to the security of IT systems, and that it is indispensable for investigative journalists and whistle-blowers.

Members therefore called on Member States and the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training (CEPOL) to provide high quality training in relevant areas to law enforcement authorities. The Commission should assess whether a regulatory solution could be found to enable lawful and targeted law-enforcement access to needed data while complying with fundamental rights.

Other recommendations

Parliament insisted, *inter alia*, on:

- the fight against disinformation as a central pillar of the strategy for the security union, in particular by allocating adequate funding to it;

- closer cooperation between Member States as well as more effective coordination at EU level, between all relevant actors, to combat hybrid threats;

- the drafting of a plan for the development of the European 5G;

- the adoption of measures to improve the prevention, identification, investigation and prosecution of criminal migrant smuggling networks;

- the implementation of actions to prevent firearms trafficking on the dark net;

- protecting the health and safety of citizens against drug-related threats by adopting a new EU Agenda on Drugs for the next five years;

- improving judicial cooperation between Member States and mutual recognition of judicial decisions and judgements.

Parliament called on the Commission to regularly evaluate current security policies and agreements and bring them into line with CJEU case law where necessary. It stated that the passenger name record (PNR) agreements with the USA and Australia must be urgently amended to be compliant with CJEU case law and considered the Commission's refusal to act accordingly a grave omission.