Resolution on the assessment of and prospects for the Union's strategy on terrorism one year after 11 September 2001

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In its resolution on EU strategy on terrorism one year after September 11, the European Parliament condemned all terrorist attacks, including those that occurred recently in Bali, the Philippines and Israel. It stated that the fight against terrorism can never be won unless combined with a broad alliance aimed at eradicating poverty and installing democracy, respect for the rule of law and human rights world-wide. A global strategy must be subject ex ante and ex post to democratic scrutiny by national parliaments and the European Parliament. It must include effective measures to prevent and punish terrorist crimes, but also guarantee respect for fundamental rights and civil liberties, as well as promote democratic dialogue and action to further the attainment of social, economic and political justice. At international level, this calls for the adoption by the United Nations of the World Anti-terrorism Convention and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Terrorism. Parliament supports India's proposal to draw up in the framework of the UN a Comprehensive Convention against International Terrorism. The European Parliament went on to state that it does not believe that a strategy of pre-emptive strikes is the most effective approach in the fight against terrorism, but rather that it diverts attention away from that priority. It is expressed concern at rising unilateralism in US foreign policy, but recognised nevertheless, the need to develop within the transatlantic framework a common approach to security and the risks to security. Such an approach should be established in a balanced way in which both the EU and the USA contribute on an equal footing. Parliament is also concerned by the growing distortion of the transatlantic link. Parliament recognised the reform efforts of NATO, but underlined that the concept of collective security is based primarily on non-military approaches to conflict prevention aimed at taking away the roots of conflict instead of trying to combat the resulting phenomena. Using the instruments of aid, development of democracy, trade and diplomacy, the EU is making conflict prevention the guiding principle of its foreign policy action, thereby tackling not only the symptoms of terrorism, but also its root causes, such as poverty, human rights infringements, oppression and forcible relocation of persons, and lack of education. On internal matters, Parliament went on to express doubts that effective coordination of a European anti-terrorism policy is possible under the present structure of the Union. The new dimensions of the fight against terrorism demand major changes to the Treaties. The Convention on the Future of Europe must explore ways of avoiding the present EU three-pillar division and create the necessary legal basis to allow the EU to freeze assets and cut off funds of persons, groups and entities of the EU involved in terrorist acts and included in the EU list. At the future European level, it is essential to create one single structure for the European Union, including the Charter of Fundamental Rights, and to underline how important it is for civil liberties to be made an intrinsic part of all Community matters.