

Protecting freedom and ensuring security

Resolution adopted by the EPP Political Assembly
23rd January 2015



We reaffirm our unfailing commitment to the freedom of expression, human rights, pluralism, democracy, freedom of religion, tolerance and the rule of law. They form the foundation of our democracies, our political family and the European Union. We have an obligation towards future generations to preserve these values.

We hold freedom to be a central human right.

We strongly condemn the terrorist attacks which took place in Paris and honour the victims of these attacks. European citizens can only be free and live their lives in peace if they are free from the fear of terrorist attacks. There is no freedom without security and security is an important precondition for freedom. We strongly condemn any kind of anti-Semitism.

Our collective European action is indispensable in order to combat the terrorist threat – immediate and urgent EU action is needed, whilst bearing in mind that the fight against terrorism falls primarily within the competence of Member States. The EU Member States need closer cooperation in this domain, making full use of and creating synergies between internal and external tools.

To that end our action must continue to be comprehensive and forceful:

- The EPP supports the development of a renewed internal security strategy in which Europe needs to redefine its perception of threats and readapt its current CSDP (Common Security and Defence Policy) posture; less geographic dispersion and more coordination between EEAS (European External Action Service), CSDP actors and key Directorate Generals of the European Commission is needed to ensure the success of a comprehensive approach against terrorism in general and ISIS/Daesh and other terrorist groups in particular;
- We need to foster anti-terrorism cooperation and intelligence exchange between EUROPOL and its national-level intelligence counterparts in the EU (identification, surveillance, monitoring and neutralisation of radicalised foreign fighters returning to Europe); EUROPOL's reform should therefore be swiftly finalised;
- We have to protect Schengen borders via an increased support for FRONTEX, Europe's agency to coordinate and develop European border management; its budget for 2014 decreased by 4.8 million EUR compared to 2013 and by 20 million EUR over the past five years, which we consider an unacceptable trend; screening of the EU's external borders should be intensified, systematic external EU border controls need to be executed by the Member States, which can be supported by FRONTEX on specific parts of these controls and, therefore, we have to strengthen and increase financing as well as provide better equipment to FRONTEX;
- We have to provide opportunities to Member States to use the Eurodac fingerprint system also for police activity;
- The EU has to adapt to the terrorists' new modus operandi and new threats by controlling EU citizens entering the Schengen zone (EU Entry-Exit System and Registered Traveller Programme) and by harmonising Europe's judicial procedures; there is an urgent need to conclude a single European passenger name record (EUPNR) framework, with the inclusion of appropriate checks and balances (data protection, judicial guarantees against abuses), for which the EPP has continuously called; the European Parliament needs to take seriously its role in protecting the security of EU citizens;
- We furthermore need to make more efficient use of modern technologies in Automated Border Controls and swiftly adopt the EU Smart Border Package;
- We call upon nations to harmonise Europe's judicial framework and methods in the fight against terrorism; the European arrest warrant is especially vital in accelerating the ability of our judiciary to react quickly in addressing sensitive security cases; common definitions should be reached on what constitutes a crime and the intention of committing a crime;

- We consider it important to separate individuals suspected or convicted of terrorism while in detention in order to avoid the spread of radical ideologies; we also call for guiding principles regarding the measures to be taken to fight radicalisation in prisons;
- We have to support EU programmes which fight radicalisation; extreme forms of ideology conveyed through texts, videos or social media can be fought against through various social, educational and economic measures; the creation of an EU Civic Service would go a long way in improving the dialogue between cultural, ethnical and religious communities, helping teenagers to find their future professional callings and promoting Europe as a project;
- We need to improve the integration of migrants from third countries, for example by exchanging best practises between the Member States, fight radicalisation and especially prevent young people from being radicalised; all factors have to be considered in the fight against radicalisation including ways to improve social and economic conditions;
- We support the creation of a European legal framework that will offer the necessary leverage for internet companies for a more efficient fight against terrorism and radicalisation;
- The role of media in general should be highlighted as a medium to defend the values of our liberal democracies, to upkeep ethical standards, unbiased reporting of political developments and a detached commentary of the cultural aspects of society;
- We have to improve cooperation with our partners in transit states for terrorists and, if possible, in destination states for foreign terrorist fighters;
- We have to introduce robust EU return and expulsion policies for third-country radicals;
- A comprehensive approach to solving the crisis involves deeper cooperation between EU institutions and a leading role for the High Representative/Vice President in order to achieve coherence;
- We welcome the work of the European Commission to propose in the 1st semester of 2015 a new European Agenda for Security to deal with the relevant European action. The fight against terrorism should be a major focus of this agenda, taking account of the new and increased threats that have emerged.

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**If you have any question
you would like to ask
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