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INTERNAL SECURITY STRATEGY FOR THE EU - Priorities

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European
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Group

"Regional conflicts, increases in home grown terrorism and ISIS, and more diverse and technologically sophisticated and well-funded organised criminal groups mean that the EU's next internal Security Strategy is critical in ensuring the EU's citizens and its infrastructure are protected.

The challenges we face are vast. They include gun, drug and people trafficking, child sexual exploitation online, cybercrime, attacks against critical infrastructure, the movement of criminal individuals across internal borders, organised crime groups operating out of several countries, and political upheaval and conflict on the EU's doorstep. Therefore, never before has it been more crucial for the EU and its Member States to have a coordinated, forward looking, adaptable and communicative Security Strategy.

Speed of response and the timely and accurate exchange of information across EU Member States are essential in preventing terror attacks and organised criminals across the EU. The changing nature and modalities of terrorism, from traditional centralised criminal groupings to mobile, sophisticated and individual cell organisations means that law enforcement agencies need to prioritise resources, expertise, and the speed, efficiency and accuracy of information exchange and communication across borders.

The EU and its Member States have a common responsibility to ensure the safety and freedom of European citizens and to take appropriate measures to ensure this.

Ensuring the security of EU citizens is something which needs to be a priority at local, national, EU, and global level. The EU's Internal Security Strategy needs to reflect the international nature of modern criminality. Therefore, a dynamic internal response is necessary to meet the modern challenges we face.

Importantly, the new EU Internal Security Strategy must be based upon the founding principles of subsidiarity, proportionality, necessity and the respect for the rule of law, democracy, fundamental rights and national criminal legal systems."

Timothy Kirkhope MEP,
ECR coordinator on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs

HOW SECURITY THREATS AND CROSS BORDER CRIME SHOULD BE TACKLED:

1. **The fight against radicalisation:** An anti-terrorism strategy based on a multi-layered approach:
- comprehensively addressing underlying factors such as radicalisation;
- developing social cohesion and inclusiveness, political and religious tolerance;
- analysing and counterbalancing online incitement to perform terrorist acts;
- preventing departures to join terrorist organisations;
- preventing and stemming recruitment and engagement in armed conflicts;
- disrupting financial support to terrorist organisations and individuals aiming to join them;
- ensuring firm legal prosecution where appropriate, and providing law enforcement authorities with the appropriate tools to perform their duties while fully respecting fundamental rights.

The ECR stresses the urgent need to intensify the prevention of radicalisation and foster deradicalisation programmes by empowering and engaging with communities and civil society at national and local level to stop the spread of extremist ideologies. The European Commission should strengthen the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) and establish initiatives to address the issues of radicalisation at grassroots level and encourage community integration, tolerance, education and deradicalisation programmes and social action, working in parallel to law enforcement and judicial action. The phenomenon of radicalisation in prisons is of grave concern to the ECR, and we encourage Member States to exchange best practice on the matter.

2. **Combatting recruitment online:** Terrorist organisations increasingly use internet and communications technology to plan attacks and spread propaganda. Internet and social media companies must work with governments and law enforcement authorities in order to combat this problem, whilst ensuring that the general principles of free speech and privacy are respected.

3. **EU Foreign Fighters:** The EU must face up to a growing threat of home-grown terrorism posed by 'foreign fighters', namely individuals who travel to a state other than their state of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of terrorist acts or providing or receiving terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflicts. It is estimated that between 3 500 and 6 000 people have left the EU to become foreign fighters in Syria, Iraq, and Libya. We are concerned by the rapidly rising number of EU nationals who travel to conflict areas to join terrorist organisations and later return to EU territory, presenting risks to the Union's internal security and the lives of EU citizens.

4. **Cybercrime:** The spread of terrorism is simplified and intensified by the use of the internet and social media, which have made the structure, methods and modes of terrorist networks more complex and more difficult to detect. Cyber-terrorism enables terrorist groups to establish and maintain links without the physical obstacle of borders, thus reducing the need to have bases or sanctuaries in countries. The internet and social networks are increasingly being used by terrorist organisations to recruit, finance and train internet users and incite them to spread terrorism and commit terrorist acts.

5. **Border Controls which work:** Member States must prevent the movement of terrorist individuals by strengthening external border controls, checking travel documents more systematically and effectively, tackling illicit arms trafficking and fraudulent use of identity, and identifying risk areas.

6. **Cutting off criminal and terrorist funding:** European agencies and national law enforcement authorities must combat the main sources of revenue for terrorist organisations, including money laundering, human trafficking, and the illicit arms trade. We demand the full implementation of EU legislation in this area, in order to have an EU-wide coordinated approach.

7. **Adoption of the EU-PNR Directive:** We support the adoption of the EU PNR directive, which would provide a legal framework for the exchange of passenger information whilst ensuring the highest standards of data protection rights and redress and at the same time close gaps in the exchange of data between law enforcement authorities which serious criminals and terrorists exploit.

8. **Adoption of the EU-Canada PNR Agreement:** The ECR wants to see the swift adoption of this important tool for tackling transatlantic terrorism, and regret the delay caused by the decision to seek an ECJ opinion.

9. **Better implementation of existing measures:** The EU should encourage better exchange of information between Member States' law enforcement authorities and EU agencies. We need to improve, intensify and accelerate global law enforcement information sharing and for more effective operational cooperation among Member States through greater use of such valuable existing instruments as Joint Investigation Teams, the Terrorist Financial Tracking Programme and passenger name record (PNR) agreements, as well as more expeditious and efficient sharing of relevant data and information. The sharing of data must be subject to the appropriate data protection and privacy safeguards.

10. **An emphasis on information sharing:** The ECR would invites Member States to make better use of Europol and the European Cybercrime Centre by exchanging relevant information from their national authorities in a more efficient, timely and systematic fashion. We support better communication and cooperation between existing EU agencies, including Europol, SITCEN, and FRONTEX, in order to facilitate information exchange.

11. **Global cooperation:** The EU must actively promote a global partnership against terrorism working closely with regional actors such as the African Union, the Gulf Cooperation Council and the Arab League, and in particular with the countries which are neighbours of Syria and Iraq and countries who have been dramatically impacted by the conflict, such as Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey. The EU must also work with the UN and notably its Counter-Terrorism Committee. We need greater dialogue between development and security experts in both the EU and those countries.

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