



Believe in *People*

EPP Group **Position Paper**

Anti-terrorism pact



EPP Group
in the European Parliament



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Table of Contents

EPP Group anti-terrorism pact	5
1. Preventing radicalisation and intensifying the de-radicalisation process	7
2. Coordinating the immediate response to the growing ‘foreign fighter’ threat	11
3. The EPP Group is the strongest advocate for protection and support of victims of terrorism in Europe and worldwide	13
4. The EPP Group stands behind the EU counter-terrorism measures and tools already identified	15
5. Border controls (internal and external): tightening up existing rules	19
6. Cooperation with third countries, regional and global actors: rethinking the counter-terrorism approach	21
7. Revamping our practices within the European Parliament in the field of internal security	23



EPP Group **anti-terrorism pact**

The EPP Group views terrorism as a global threat that needs to be tackled at the local, national, European, regional and global levels. To strengthen our citizens' security, to defend our fundamental values of freedom, democracy and human rights and to uphold international law, the EPP Group firmly believes in the pressing need to intensify EU anti-terrorist measures in the wake of the Paris attacks. Bearing in mind that the fight against terrorism falls primarily within the competence of Member States, the EPP Group is a strong advocate of an EU approach to defining the precise nature of the terrorist threat, to developing the best methods for combatting this threat and identifying the root causes of terrorism, in full respect of the rule of law and with a robust framework and standards for the protection of fundamental rights.



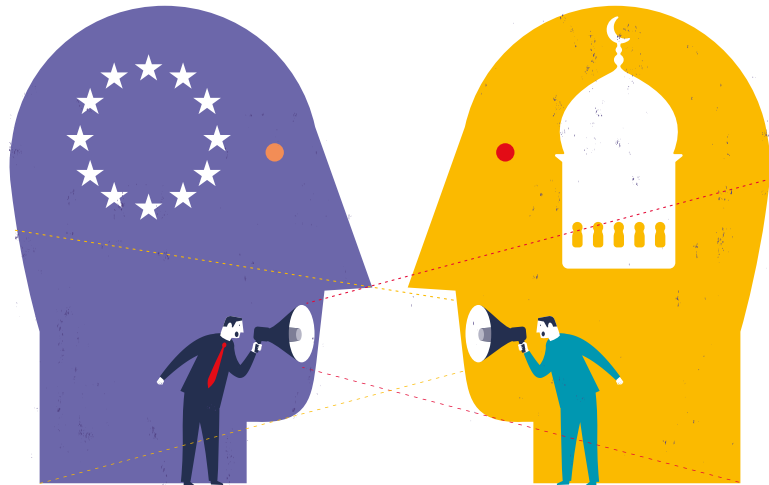


1. Preventing radicalisation and intensifying the **de-radicalisation** process

The question of how to de-radicalise and integrate disaffected persons is one of the key focuses of our strategy. There is a growing awareness of the need for coordinated Internet monitoring as extremists are using this free space to spread their radical propaganda. The EPP Group calls on the Member States and the Commission to strengthen their **cooperation with Internet companies** and social networking platforms (Google, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and others) **to restrict access to terrorist material online** and to **remove online terrorist propaganda**, whilst ensuring respect for fundamental rights, especially privacy and data protection rights. Internet companies must be made aware of their responsibilities in the propagation of content advocating terrorism. Member States should set up legislative frameworks to firmly and closely monitor hate speech, **hate preachers spreading radical propaganda** (including on religious sites) and recruiters of EU individuals. This includes improving the process for

public reporting of extremist content online, through the setting up of websites or hotline contact points for citizens, and EU funding for positive **awareness campaigns** against online and offline radicalisation, as well as for no-hate campaigns.

The EPP Group has also repeatedly pointed out the need to identify and make a clear distinction between **the ideology of Islamist extremism** and the religion of Islam. The EU has a role to play in supporting research and information projects on moderate Islam by intensifying dialogue with Muslim communities to bring together our efforts to counter fundamentalism and terrorism propaganda. The EPP Group will intensify its existing political and structural innovations in promoting interreligious and intercultural dialogue, including by setting up dedicated EU platforms for that purpose. The EU must also support Member States in developing education programmes that cover the civic and historical aspects of



religion. The EU has to urgently intensify specific programmes (social and integration projects) targeting “home-grown terrorists” and existing programmes of de-radicalisation. To this end, the EPP Group calls on Member States to address radicalisation holistically and calls for improved use of the Commission’s Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), which brings together all those involved in the sector. To support Member State action on this matter, the Commission must make full use of the new 2014-2020 Internal Security Fund.

Furthermore, the Paris attacks render the setting out of an **EU action plan against radicalisation in prisons** even more pressing. The EPP Group calls on

Member States to consider working towards the general isolation of radical Islamist inmates in prisons and to improve staff training in prison administrations to make detection of inmates who are involved in terrorist-related activities easier. Reducing communication amongst radical Islamist prisoners has proved to be a good tool for preventing them from structuring and organising their attacks. To this end, the EPP Group encourages Member States to maintain an appropriate budget, in particular for training specialised prison staff to work in these isolated quarters. Furthermore, the EPP Group stresses that religious representatives who are in close contact with detainees must also receive specific training.

The EPP Group also expresses its serious concerns about the spread of hate and extremist preaching in prayer rooms that are being abused for radicalisation purposes in various Member States and points out the dramatic effects of this on the rise of fundamentalism in our societies. Member States must take the appropriate measures to firmly and closely monitor this and **to address the issue of recruitment and funding of imams from third countries**. The EPP Group is willing to support the Member States, politically and institutionally, on any relevant legal measure they may take to deal with financial and ideological influence on their religious communities from abroad. We strongly believe that a robust EU return and expulsion policy of third-country radicals should be applied.

More broadly, the EPP Group has pointed out over the last years the **tremendous need for improvement of Member State integration policies**, not only for migrants arriving from third countries, but more

specifically for second and third-generation immigrant youths, who are native-born Europeans.

Finally, a comprehensive EU prevention strategy must also make full use of its foreign and development policies to combat poverty, discrimination and marginalisation, to fight corruption, to promote good governance and to prevent and resolve conflicts - all elements that contribute to the marginalisation of certain groups and sectors of society and thus make them more vulnerable to extremist propaganda. The EPP Group considers therefore that part of our cooperation and development aid should be dedicated to the fight against terrorism. Nevertheless, we reject theories that consist of presenting radical Islam as the result of persistent social and economic inequalities and reaffirm that radical Islam goes against the European way of life and values.



2. Coordinating the immediate response to the growing **'foreign fighter'** threat

To effectively tackle this growing threat, the Member States must harmonise their immediate response and approach to foreign fighters. The EPP Group is exploring all the options without taboo, including:

- > **Withdrawing EU passports in cases of double nationality, without prejudice to national constitutions;**
- > **Confiscating passports for a limited period of time;**
- > **Flagging the ID cards of jihadists, entry and exit bans;**
- > **Flagging the stolen or lost passports of EU citizens;**
- > **Specifically calling on the European Commission to introduce a harmonised EU definition of 'foreign fighters', including sanctions and criminal qualifications, based on the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 of 24/09/2014;**
- > **Strengthening judicial prosecutions (for proselytising for terrorist organisations and training in terrorist camps);**
- > **Strengthening surveillance of telecommunications, including encrypted chats and jihadist communications;**
- > **Setting up a black list of European jihadists and jihadist terrorist suspects;**
- > **Re-introducing authorisations to travel for minors.**



3. The EPP Group is the strongest advocate for **protection and support of victims of terrorism** in Europe and worldwide

The EPP Group has continuously fought for specific focus to be given to the **needs of victims of terrorism**, to protect their dignity and security and to help delegitimise and deglamorize terrorism. Structures and organisations for the protection and support of those victims must be available in all 28 Member States. They should work closely together to better help victims and their families to overcome their pain, to protect them from re-victimisation, retaliation and intimidation, to restore their dignity, to preserve the truth and memory through adequate commemoration and to guarantee justice for victims. Any support must be tailored to the victim's needs. In this context, the EPP Group urges Member States to ensure a full implementation of the Victims'

Rights Directive so that victims are provided with financial support as well as psychological help and assistance during legal procedures. We call on the Commission to further consider a new Directive for a more efficient and harmonised justice system to guarantee support for the rights and for protection of victims of terrorism specifically. The EPP Group also stresses that the EU has a particular responsibility in protecting victims in crisis areas in the Middle East, where vulnerable native communities such as the Christians are persecuted by jihadists.





4. The EPP Group stands behind the EU **counter-terrorism** measures and tools already identified

The EPP Group has always advocated for an EU PNR (Passenger Name Record) system as a valuable tool, alongside a comprehensive set of other measures, that can be used to combat terrorist threats to domestic security. The number of radicalised EU citizens returning to Europe after fighting alongside Islamic State, Al Qaeda or other terrorist organisations, throws into sharp focus the need to rethink Europe's approach to sharing air passenger data with security services and law enforcement authorities, including on intra-EU flights - while safeguarding citizens' privacy. The EPP Group consequently reiterates its **call to reinvigorate the EU PNR Directive** that is blocked by the socialists and the liberals in the European Parliament.

Reintroduction of an EU Data Retention Directive: the EU cannot pretend to formulate an effective response to the threat of terrorism without giving its law enforcement authorities the appropriate

tools. In this regard, the EPP Group reiterates the need for the EU Commission to resist pressure from the left wing of the political spectrum and swiftly introduce a new EU Data Retention Directive, taking into due account the recent CJEU (Court of Justice of the EU) ruling, which requires complying with the principles of proportionality, necessity and legality, to set out a legal framework for lawful access to data by law enforcement authorities.

Revision of the EU Framework Decision on Counter-Terrorism, that dates back to 2005. Since then new trends and new threats to EU security have developed. The EU cannot afford to lag behind. We need to rethink our strategy, fixing further EU guidelines and principles for fighting terrorism based on the UN Security Council Resolution 2178 of 24 September 2014. The EPP Group would also push for an ambitious renewed EU security strategy on counter-terrorism to be adopted in the



coming weeks. It should include proposals for concrete measures, proper funding and strict monitoring, such as substantial investment in cryptography, cybersecurity and data security to foster a generation of experts at European level, able to defend the EU against cyber-terrorist threats.

Tracing and disrupting terrorism financing is key. The EPP Group has successfully fought for an EU-US Terrorist Finance Tracking Programme (TFTP). Now the EU has to take its own responsibility and seriously envisage the setting up of an EU system for tracking terrorism financing. In this respect, the EPP Group welcomes the recent agreement reached on the Anti-Money Laundering package and hopes

that its adoption will lead to better cooperation between Financial Intelligence Units in the Member States and will facilitate the tracing of funds.

Similarly, the EU needs to evaluate its existing rules on the movement of **illegal firearms** and arms trafficking linked to organised crime. The EU must reinforce its cooperation and exchange of information with countries in the Western Balkans in particular.

Greater coordination between Member States, EUROJUST and EUROPOL: special attention should be paid to operational aspects, mainly the responsibility of Member States. Member States have to

make better use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) and Eurodac, full use of Interpol's database and should strengthen the technical capacities of their law enforcement entities (through the interoperability of technical standards, for example). They should continue to improve the cooperation and exchange of information between their intelligence services for better aggregation and analysis of the information collected. Member States should also make better use of EUROPOL's Focal Point TRAVELLERS and supply the information required. Furthermore, we ask for data and information-sharing between Frontex and EUROPOL to become operational without delay and that any obstacle to their increased cooperation is immediately removed. Further reflection is needed on the setting up of a **counter-terrorism centre** within EUROPOL, facilitating cooperation between Member State law enforcement and intelligence services. The EPP Group will consider a feasibility study on this. We invite Member States to make full

use of ECRIS (the European Criminal Records Information System) and further ask the Commission to study the possibility of its reform as its personal and material scope is currently too restrictive.

Better use of the Security Research Programme: the EPP Group urges Member States to make full use of the potential of this ongoing "Horizon 2020" research programme to fight terrorism. The "Secure Societies" Security Research Programme has a specific mission: fighting crime and terrorism. The topics covered range from cyber-terrorism to understanding and tackling terrorist ideas and beliefs; it aims at the development of new forensic tools and capabilities. The EPP Group is convinced that research results can contribute to avoiding incidents, to containing potential consequences and to adequately analysing the social and psychological dimensions of terrorist networks. We therefore call on the Member States to further promote and support the Security Research Programme.



5. Border controls

(internal and external):
tightening up existing rules

The EPP Group recalls its implacable attachment to free movement within the EU and consequently fundamentally rules out proposals to suspend the Schengen system. We encourage Member States instead to tighten up the implementation of existing rules that already include the option of temporarily introducing document checks, to strengthen the use of biometric documents and facial recognition systems and to make full use of the new Schengen Evaluation Mechanism. At the same time, when it comes to the EU's external borders, we call for the strengthening of border security, with targeted controls.



6. **Cooperation** with third countries, regional and global actors: rethinking the counter-terrorism approach

The EU, USA and Canada (and to a lesser extent Australia and New Zealand) have all observed the worrying trend of home-grown terrorism and violent radicalisation; transatlantic cooperation with these countries is therefore vital. The EPP Group underlines the merits of deploying all the appropriate tools for greater intelligence sharing and inter-agency cooperation (including the PNR agreement and the TFTP) and deeply regrets the recent damaging move from the socialists and liberals to refer the EU-Canada PNR agreement to the CJEU.

Recent events force us to evaluate the prevailing weaknesses that characterised earlier counter-terrorism cooperation with countries such as the **Western Balkans, Turkey** (country of transit to areas of conflict), the **Gulf countries and other Arab States**. We need to join our efforts to fight against radicalisation, to trace terrorist

financing and to develop a new narrative against Islamist fundamentalism. Counter-terrorism cooperation and information sharing should be a key element in EU relations with those countries. It is also essential to strengthen such cooperation with regional organisations such as the Arab League, the African Union and the Gulf Cooperation Council. The EPP Group therefore welcomes the recent Memorandum of Understanding that was signed with the League of Arab States on cooperation in countering terrorism. The EU also needs to pursue and to foster its cooperation with the United Nations, notably with its Counter-Terrorism Committee.





7. Revamping our practices within the European Parliament in the field of **internal security**

While transparency is a guiding principle in the internal functioning of the European Parliament, the EPP Group firmly believes that a stricter application of “**in camera**” meetings or similar mechanisms, whereby Parliamentarians would be allowed to get restricted access to sensitive non-classified and classified information on counter-terrorism, is urgently needed.

We are investigating the option of setting up a sub-committee on intelligence where a limited number of MEPs with security clearances would be able to receive classified briefings and access classified documents. The aim would not be to claim oversight over the Secret Services in Member States.





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