

Planning terrorist attacks must be made a crime, say civil liberties MEPs

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Travelling abroad for terrorist purposes, training or being trained, incitement to terrorism or financing of terrorist activities must be made a crime in all EU member states, urge Civil Liberties Committee MEPs in a resolution voted on Monday night. Ahead of upcoming talks with the Council on a draft new counter-terrorism directive, MEPs also stressed the need to protect and assist victims, especially across borders.

The amendments, prepared by lead MEP Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, DE), were passed by 41 votes to 4, with 10 abstentions.

"We have managed to strike a fair balance between ensuring security and respecting basic human rights, such as freedom of opinion, to travel and access education", said rapporteur Monika Hohlmeier (EPP, DE) after the vote. "This is the first time that the Parliament has taken decisions in the field of counter-terrorism, after the Lisbon Treaty granted it legislative powers in this area", she noted, stressing that a broad majority backed the common approach.

Watch [here](#) the video recording of the press conference by Monika Hohlmeier.

The draft counter-terrorism directive, presented by the Commission on 2 December 2015 in the wake of the November Paris attacks, is considered a key tool in the joint fight to prevent terrorism by criminalising preparatory acts, such as those listed below.

Travelling abroad for terrorist purposes

Travelling abroad with the purpose of participating in a terrorist group, such as foreign fighters travelling to Syria or other conflict zones. Also travelling with the intention to commission or contribute to a terrorist offence, or, facilitating or helping to organise such travel.

Providing or receiving training

Receiving training or instructions, including by obtaining knowledge, documentation or practical skills, with the intention of making or using explosives, firearms or other weapons or noxious or hazardous substances. Also studying by "lone wolves", on their own initiative, with the ultimate intention of carrying out a terrorist act alone.

Public incitement or praise of terrorism

Public incitement to terrorism such as glorifying or justifying suicide bombers or disseminating messages or images on or off-line as a way to gather support for a terrorist cause or gain publicity for example by disseminating videos of assassinations.

Member states must take the measures to ensure the prompt removal of illegal content hosted on their territory that constitutes public incitement to commit a terrorist offence, MEPs say. Should this not be feasible, member states may take the necessary measures to block access to such content while adhering to transparent procedure, adequate

Press release

safeguards and subject to judicial review, they add.

Financing

Providing or collecting funds by any means with the intention that they be used to commit or to contribute to terrorism. Furthermore, member states should take measures to freeze or seize such funds, MEPs say.

Helping victims of terrorism

Member states should ensure that in the event of a terrorist attack, the victims are assured medical treatment, emotional and psychological support such as trauma support and counselling, advice on relevant legal, practical or financial matters, and support to return to their home countries if they were caught in a terrorist attack while visiting another EU-country. MEPs also stress that victims should have access to long-term support services in their country of residence, even if the terrorist offence took place in another member state.

Cooperation among member states and sharing good practice

Member states should forward to other EU countries any information that could assist in the detection, prevention, investigation or prosecution of terrorist offences, MEPs say. They also urge member states to share good practice on de-radicalisation and preventing recruitment of citizens by terrorist organisations.

Next steps

The committee also gave the rapporteur a mandate to open up negotiations with the Council. The three way talks between Parliament, Council and Commission are expected to begin before the summer recess.

Further information

- Video recording of press conference 05.07.2016: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/other-events/video?event=20160705-0930-SPECIAL>
- Catch up on debate in committee via Video on Demand (VOD) 04.07.2016: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/ep-live/en/committees/video?event=20160704-1900-COMMITTEE-LIBE>
- Committee on Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/committees/en/libe/home.html>

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