

REPORT OF THE S&D GROUP TASK FORCE
ON COUNTERING TERRORISM

■ Brussels, April 2015 ■

COUNTERING TERRORISM



Group of the Progressive Alliance of
Socialists & Democrats
in the European Parliament

*“With freedom of speech
as our weapon, and in the
best traditions of this chamber,
we will ensure that human
dignity and security win over
fear and hatred.”*

Prime Minister Jens Stoltenber
address in Stortinget, during the memorial for victims
of the Utøya tragedy of 22 July 2011

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INTRODUCTION

The terrorist attacks in Paris, Copenhagen, and Tunis, and a police shootout in Belgium, shook Europe to its core in early 2015. Relations between communities are being put under increasing strain across Europe, as terrorists, racists and extremists spread their hate through violence and fear. Only by Europe's citizens standing up against terror and hatred can real solutions be found. We need to find a sense of togetherness that unites us, based on our values of equality, freedom, democracy, respect and tolerance in order to build a truly pluralistic and tolerant Europe where all citizens have equal opportunities to succeed.

We need to see things as they are: according to Europol's latest report on terrorism in the EU less than 2% of terrorist attacks in the last 5 years were said to be religiously motivated. The vast majority were separatist attacks.

As Socialists and Democrats we emphasize not simply a security response to dealing with terrorism and a social response within Europe, but tackling social questions in third countries too, to tackle some of the root causes which allow terrorism to grow: to combat poverty, promote human rights and pursue the resolution of conflict.

Terrorist acts are first and foremost criminal acts and global terror networks are akin to international organised crime. This must be the key narrative employed to diminish the legitimacy and mystique of terrorist organisations. However, targeted policy responses to different types of terrorism have to be formulated.

Violent extremists and terrorists succeed when people of different religions and backgrounds mistrust each other, building social boundaries and stereotypes. To overcome this, we need to bolster bridges of communication and trust within society in Europe and around the world. Europe has a history of overcoming violence: it should learn from its past and help others to do so.

The states from where the terrorist activities are originating, or those that are used as training places by terrorists, are in reality the most affected. Their population is paying the highest human and economic cost. We need to bear this in mind in building a common agenda for Europe and those countries seeking to

curb the terrorist threat: such an effort can be efficient only if it is coordinated and global. However, it is important to note that there is no common global definition for terrorism. Joint counter-terrorism efforts with third countries should not be a tool to stifle political opposition or target ethnic minorities.

It is a mistake to say all terrorism is inspired by religion, which is often exacerbated by ethnic, regional and political differences. Nevertheless, it is important to emphasize that the first and the most numerous victims of the recent wave of terrorism have been Muslims. As Socialists and Democrats we will always insist that this is not a clash of civilizations, nor a fight between Islam and the West, but a criminal misuse of a religion to perpetrate terrorist attacks in a fight for power. We will remain true to our own values for a multicultural, multi-religious Europe with respect for the freedom of all religion and belief, and inter-faith dialogue to build mutual understanding on our own continent and across the world.

Human rights should be at the core of the counter terrorism strategy and cooperation. Preventing and combating terrorism needs to ensure that security, human rights and law enforcement are not mutually exclusive but complementary.



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1. COUNTERING TERRORISM IN A VALUES-BASED DIVERSE UNION: A holistic approach

Terrorism is a direct attack on some of the core values of the European Union – democracy, the rule of law, respect for fundamental rights and unity in diversity – and a threat to security, the peace, stability and prosperity that European integration has given to citizens.

European socialists and democrats strongly believe that the fight against terrorism can only be successful if measures which are taken by the Member States to combat terrorism comply with their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights standards, refugee and humanitarian law.

WE NEED TO:

- **guarantee security, protect fundamental rights, and uphold the rule of law;**
- **address and tackle the root causes of terrorism; and**
- **ensure that the common European foreign and security policies tackle terrorist threats around the world and their causes.**

The measures we take must neither undermine the very principles they seek to protect nor compromise citizens' rights. We need to fight terrorism within and beyond our borders, counter violent extremism and violent extremist ideologies, work to resolve conflict and build respect for human rights abroad and do our utmost to uphold fundamental rights, tolerance, and social cohesion and justice everywhere.

The initial widespread support of early 2000s for far-reaching counter-terror measures has diminished in many countries as grave human rights violations, such as extrajudicial renditions, unlawful and indefinite detention and torture, mass surveillance of citizens, all committed in the name of security, have come to light. The public, as well as the courts in Europe, the United States and other regions pressed governments to respect fundamental human rights in combating terrorism. Since the Paris attacks, there has been a shift in public opinion towards enhancing security, but substantial fundamental rights concerns remain. We fully support the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms while countering terrorism.

1.1 Ensuring security and justice while protecting fundamental rights

There can be no freedom without security, but security without respect for democratic principles and the rule of law is unacceptable. Our starting point is the basic European principle that no restriction on fundamental rights can be justified unless it is necessary, proportionate, legitimate and capable of delivering the security it is supposed to offer.

1.2 Full use and thorough evaluation of all current EU security and law enforcement policies

In the aftermath of the most recent terrorist attacks in Europe, it has become clear that there are severe problems with sharing of information between Member States on criminal intelligence, sometimes even between different agencies within a Member State. There is a multitude of law enforcement and judicial cooperation measures in place in the EU, but if these measures are not used to their full potential, there is a risk that citizens will be exposed to unnecessary danger.

The EU already has an impressive toolbox at its disposal as far as security and law enforcement measures are concerned. However, the existing instruments are not correctly or fully used by Member States. Besides clear deficiencies in implementation, there is also a lack of information sharing between Member States or else between Member States and EU agencies (in particular Europol and Eurojust). We therefore call for a thorough evaluation to be conducted on all current EU security and law enforcement policies, measures and instruments to identify what works, where the weaknesses are, whether there are gaps or loopholes and whether the measures are implemented and used properly. This evaluation is essential to see where the problem areas are and whether and what types of new measures are needed.

The S&D Group is calling for the Data Protection Package to be adopted without delay, as further law enforcement cooperation is needed to facilitate the security efforts of the Union, by its nature implying the sharing of personal data. We want to see

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further deepening of judicial cooperation at the level of judges and prosecutors, as well as the building of mutual trust and mutual recognition of judicial decisions.

We will support efforts to increase security cooperation in the fight against terrorism within Europe and in conjunction with third countries, but will always fight to ensure full judicial oversight, legal accountability and respect for international law.

1.3 A strategy on European Foreign Fighters and “stay-at-home” supporters of ISIS

We ask for a careful assessment of the root causes of the new phenomenon of “foreign fighters”, which in reality should be called European fighters and where Europe needs to take responsibility for the actions of our citizens. We can tackle the phenomenon effectively, seek to prevent our peoples from wanting to join foreign terrorism in the first place and we also want the impact of the returning citizens to be assessed. As long as the returnees are considered a security risk, the returns need to be monitored. Border controls and the use of the SIS II system on the external borders of the Union play an important role. We also emphasize that the Advanced Passenger Information System (APIS), already in place, gives valuable information on air passengers arriving into the Union. However equal emphasis should be given to both holding individuals to legal account but also helping misguided people to reintegrate into European society and values.

While much of the current focus is on the dangers of fighters returning from Iraq or Syria, we need to address the growing threat from radicalised individuals who have never left home.

These “stay-at-home” militants are sometimes frustrated after failing to join the fight in the Middle East. They could also never have had the intention of going to the battlefield but get radicalised at home by the propaganda of groups such as the Islamic State. The would-be jihadists pose a threat as they could act on calls by Islamic State leaders to carry out domestic attacks in response to air strikes on areas under their control. They feel close to a group without belonging to it and could end up committing violent crimes. Their varied profiles make them difficult to identify: they could be highly educated or have left school early, religious or adventurous. The S&D group calls on the Member States’ law enforcement agencies to improve the exchange of information and to overcome mistrust and reluctance to cooperate even more closely.

1.4 For a European PNR in compliance with EU law

We believe that sharing the Passenger Name Records (PNR) of airlines on passengers flying to and from Europe can contribute to disrupting terrorist and serious transnational crime networks. But it is not a “silver bullet” or cure-all. We are therefore open to such collection of PNR when it is done with high data protection safeguards and in compliance with EU primary and most recent case law, in particular the judgement of the Court of Justice on the Data Retention Directive.

1.5 Urgent EU focus on cyber security

As cyber threats and attacks become more common, sophisticated, and potentially damaging, the EU and its Member States have to develop, both at national and European level a cyber-security policy to face this evolving challenge. We

uphold therefore that developing the adequate policies to defend against cyber threats should become an integral part of the anti-terrorism strategy of the EU. We further uphold the importance for businesses and public authorities to dedicate sufficient resources to the protection of their infrastructure.

We urge the EU to become a platform for common cyber security efforts by the Member States. The EU has to assume a much more ambitious role of coordination going beyond the current establishment of minimum standards concerning criminal offences. Facilitating law enforcement cooperation through Europol, including with the newly established European Cybercrime Centre, is welcome, but not sufficient. It is impossible to cope with the threat of cyber-attacks by means of merely 'national' cyber defence policies and strategies, since the cyberspace spans worldwide and attack's origin can even be overseas. We underline the importance of research and expertise, as well as technological innovations, and therefore urge for more substantial EU funding in this field in the years to come.

1.6 Safeguarding the free movement of people, a core value of the Union

As a recent statement from FRONTEX suggests, there is no link between terrorism and migration. Socialists and Democrats reject

viewing issues of conflict and of terrorism solely through the prism of controlling migration, and will always put first priority on combatting violence, saving lives and promoting human rights within the EU and in our relations with other countries.

We invite EU Member States to make full use of the Schengen agreements and to dramatically increase their cooperation in this area, rather than jeopardize free movement, which is one of the Union's most important freedoms. We therefore oppose proposals to suspend the Schengen system, and instead encourage Member States to tighten the existing rules that already include the possibility of temporarily introducing documents checks, and to make better use of the SIS II and VIS systems. The principles and rules set out in the existing Schengen Borders Code to perform targeted checks on individuals as they cross external borders should be correctly implemented where and when necessary.

Finally, we call upon the EU to put on the agenda the question of parental authorisation for minors leaving the territory of their Member State of residence. The principle of parental authorisation is currently applied inconsistently across the Union. A serious public and experts' debate is needed in order to assess whether or not a mandatory permit is necessary at EU level.

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2. BRIDGING EUROPE'S SOCIAL DIVIDE: Prevention and de-radicalisation, social inclusion and education

The motivations of the European youth departing or returning from Syria, Iraq and other war zones is at the forefront of public debate on the issue. The EU needs to ask itself the uncomfortable question: Why is it that so many young people find an ideology that embraces mass beheadings, slave labour and the denial of women's rights more appealing than anything else on offer in Europe?

Although there is not a monolithic population that is the European foreign fighter, there is a definite link between radicalisation and disenfranchisement of young people, which, although not necessarily caused by poverty, has its roots in hopelessness, mistrust of democracy, experiences of discrimination or intolerance and disillusionment. While formulating policies of prevention and de-radicalisation, we have to understand that radicalisation is a complex process which involves at least four aspects: identity, religion, the socio-economic dimension, and the geo-politics. The S&D Group favours a comprehensive, cross-sectorial, approach guaranteeing the involvement of education and training, integration/social inclusion, media, detention institutions, the health sector, and rehabilitation.

2.1 Empowering the parents

Young people face issues of identity and belonging, regardless of their religion. The identity stress common to adolescents makes young generations search for recognition and valorisation, mostly in school, sports, and arts, but often also in delinquency, challenging social norms and religion. In many cases, radicalised youth identify with a counter-culture which has at least profound reservations towards, if not outright rejection of, the 'establishment'.

We advocate a community-oriented approach, which requires working with the primary social environment, the family. Parents are absolutely central to the prevention of radicalisation. In most cases they are the first to notice early symptoms of self-isolation of their children. They have an influence on their children and want to protect them from harm, so empowering parents is essential. Parents have to have access to all the information they need, and be able to turn to the professionals and social workers – not only the police – at any stage. Member States should set up hotlines for parents and also for children and youngsters who are witnessing signs of radicalisation inside of family or among their peers. We call for the introduction of targeted training to empower parents and teachers, as well as counselling at schools for children and parents.

2.2 Women and radicalisation

There is a growing number of young European Muslim women being radicalised and recruited by terrorist groups. Many of the women living in Europe who join these terrorist groups come from difficult family backgrounds and see this as an escape from the cultural pressures. All this leaves young Muslim women vulnerable to radicalisation. The EU and Member States must sever the problem from the roots by supporting widespread programmes that aim to engage young European Muslim women in their endeavours for greater equality, provide support networks and platforms through which they can safely have their voice heard, and ultimately help generate an environment of security and hope for them.

The EU must also support programmes that seek to promote an understanding of Islam's position on women which includes education, public participation and civic contribution, through supporting and working with Islamic groups that have the credibility to bring about change in their communities.

2.3 Giving a voice to families of the victims

Survivors of terrorist attacks and family members of victims who have lost their lives are credible voices to challenge the violent extremists' narratives. By doing so, they contribute to a more tolerant and open society. We want the EU to increase funding for projects and actions for the aid and protection of victims of terrorism.

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2.4 Countering extremist narratives and propaganda on the Internet

New technologies of mass communication are a powerful way to broadcast radical, minority views to a large, global audience. There is an urgent need to address the underlying factors of Internet and recruitment. Between September and December 2014 at least 46,000 Twitter accounts were used by ISIS supporters, although not all were active at the same time. While we must disrupt the dissemination of terrorist propaganda on social media, it will never be possible to remove all of it from the Internet.

Whilst rejecting the notion of a 'propaganda war,' the EU has a duty itself to ensure an alternative narrative to terrorism is presented in all our communications including through social media which - by definition - crosses borders. We also call on those involved in the Internet as an industry, social media platforms and advertising companies to put out alternative, positive messages, which will appeal to the young generation and counter ISIS propaganda. A taskforce should be set up in order to coordinate work on the issue of access, content removal, ensuring a proper balance between protecting freedom of expression and preventing incitement to violence with full respect to the UN Guiding Principles and cooperation with judicial authorities. These measures should not be used to target dissent and criticism.

We urge the EU to increase funding for programmes (involving NGOs, civil society, and community media organisations) to foster positive identifications, through sports and culture. We need to support grassroots activists who can become partners

of networks and communities and who can bring in alternative 'viral' messages.

2.5 Spotlight on testimonies from disillusioned returnees and former extremists

We need a strategy to deal with returning youngsters who have been disillusioned in their involvement in ISIS.

The Commission and the External Action Service must act urgently to develop an EU strategy on how to deal with returnees from Syria, Iraq and other war zones. Measures such as confiscating passports and removing EU citizenship will not solve the problem. The most dangerous returnees will be those with criminal antecedents.

First-hand accounts from disillusioned returnees are crucial if we are to counter the ISIS narrative. Being able to set out what day-to-day life and future look like under ISIS can be an effective tool. But disillusioned returnees are often exposed to huge risks, including death threats by ISIS. A witness protection programme therefore needs to be put in place. We can build on the experience of Member States that have developed instruments tailored to counter the threat of organised crime and Mafias.

As well as giving proper emphasis to rehabilitation of individuals, communications involving and using them should reflect an understanding of our own responsibility to counter discrimination and offer real inclusion to all communities affected in social and economic life.

2.6 Exposing terrorists' infighting and rivalry

One way to defeat a terrorist organisation is for it to defeat itself, and self-destruct. Rivalry and competition between terrorist groups are in evidence not only in competition for supporters between ISIS or Al-Qaeda, but also on the battlefields of Syria, Iraq and elsewhere. The EU and its Member States can help to diminish the terrorist threat by demonstrating that these groups are not what they say they are. They are not knights under the prophet's banner. They are criminals and murderers fighting among themselves for power.

Member States must highlight increasing reports of infighting and internal conflicts within ISIS. This may include making public some information traditionally regarded as intelligence information. However, ideological divides often appear along ethnic lines. It would be counterproductive to stress ethnic divisions in the fight against terrorism.

We call on the EU to promote a government-media partnership for better and accurate background information on terrorism-related acts. News coverage should include less repetition of horrific scenes, scaremongering and sensationalism, and focus more on providing balanced and neutral information. Journalists have an important responsibility in strengthening democracy and freedom of speech, but should avoid unethical practices and sensationalism.

We should recognize that terrorist groups are not usually monolithic, structured organisations but loose networks of diverse groups with different backgrounds and motivations. In our foreign and security policy, we should seek to actively de-link groups from terrorism and prevent them joining it in the first place.

2.7 De-radicalisation and rehabilitation in prisons

We must develop and monitor anti-radicalisation programmes within prisons. These should include surveillance, investigation and prosecution of offences but also "soft" measures including re-socialisation through counselling, in particular spiritual and religious counselling.

EU Member States should set aside the necessary funding, in particular for the training of specialised prison staff. If prison staff suspect or find signs of recruitment efforts, these need to

be addressed immediately in the most appropriate, lawful way. Prison isolation is a reactive not a preventative solution. Overcrowding and under-staffing can exacerbate the conditions that lend themselves to radicalisation.

De-radicalisation and rehabilitation programmes in prisons must include skills-based training. It is very difficult for ex-extremists and ex-criminals to get gainful employment once they leave prison. Therefore we need to redouble our efforts and create a coherent strategy that will target these individuals with skills-based training, which will enable them to re-enter society as productive and contributing members.

2.8 Religious tolerance and diversity as tool to strengthen integration

We urge Member States to reflect on how all religions are taught.

The revelation that some European foreign fighters prepared for battle by reading copies of "Islam for Dummies" and "The Qur'an for Dummies", demonstrates that the role of religion in radicalisation (and de-radicalisation) is not adequately understood. We need to understand the content of the religious beliefs espoused by extremist groups in order to counter their negative message. This better understanding can develop through empowering teachers, families and the mosques to facilitate religious and inter-cultural dialogues, to educate children and young people in the history of religion and media literacy, to meet the needs of pupils from diverse backgrounds, to impart common fundamental values and to prevent and combat racism and intolerance.

We urge Member States to provide more public funding for training opportunities of scholars and imams within Europe to provide guidance and understanding within the European context.

The EU and its Member States must recognise diversity within the Muslim community itself. The EU should foster debate with and among the different trends and denominations within Islam and build a partnership in countering violent extremism, in particular with the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation.

2.9 Freedom of belief and freedom of expression

We support freedom of belief and do not believe that restrictions should be directed against a particular religion. We must act to counter hate speech and incitement to terrorism, while respecting freedom of expression. But we must ensure that intervention does not lead to alienation or victimization of communities or an erosion of public confidence in, and support for, law enforcement agencies.

There has been a disproportionate emphasis on Muslims, who are already victims of widespread discrimination and Islamophobia. Muslims have been in Europe since the 7th Century. In Dresden, Saxony, the heart of PEGIDA anti-Islam protests, Muslims represent only 0.1% of the population. The Commission must urgently address the mounting trend of intolerance and discrimination in the EU. We have long campaigned for a comprehensive, EU-wide directive against discrimination, including that on the ground of religion.

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2.10 The socio-economic dimension

Prevention must include fighting the root causes of radicalism. Radicalisation and terrorism are not caused directly by socio-economic problems, but there is a correlation between deprivation, social exclusion, gang cultures, increasing inequalities, and discrimination, and radicalism. The lack of prospects and the absence of opportunities relative to expectations and those who suffer from mental health issue may result in a greater likelihood to be attracted to radical ideas.

Austerity measures may have had an influence on radicalisation by increasing inequalities, and unemployment rates, in particular among the young, leading to a feeling of collective frustration. Unemployment rates can reflect discriminations in the labour market. We have to target social exclusion as a potential root cause of radicalisation. Those without responsibility for family, education or job are more likely to be open to radicalisation and a sense of exclusion may create an environment where individuals become more vulnerable to radical ideas.

Socialists and Democrats will seek to ensure the impact of European Social Fund, the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative to Muslim communities is evaluated, and steps taken to improve its 'reach' to these communities - to counter terrorism and in its own right.

We call on the Member States to implement more active programmes of social inclusion and of job placement in order to really fight youth unemployment, long-term unemployment, inequalities and social exclusion.

Many who suffer from mental health issues, due to its stigma, go without seeking counselling, medication or family support; we need to raise awareness of the possibility that these can be targeted by extremists.

2.11 Empowerment and winning community trust

We must understand the link between underrepresentation and the radicalisation process. Opinion formers in the Muslim community are those chosen by the community itself. Many initiatives, such as those on inter-religious dialogue, do contribute to a more tolerant society but when it comes to political issues, these initiatives have so far failed. We need more research and data on the political representation of citizens with backgrounds from a Muslim country. Progressive parties can lead by example and promote diversity when it comes to determining their lists of candidates in European and national elections and offering opportunities and internships, as well as using role models as key persons to encourage participation.

“Europe’s role is vital. Only by cooperation can our regions shut down the sources of terrorist support and defeat their purposes.”

Speech of
His Majesty King Abdullah II bin Al Hussein
European Parliament, Strasbourg on 10 March 2015

3. RESHAPING EU FOREIGN POLICY TO FACE THE TERRORIST CHALLENGE

The fight against terrorism can only be promoted at global level, in the framework of a close cooperation between nations and regional and international bodies dealing with security, human rights and other aspects of foreign relations, including the European Union, NATO, the Council of Europe, the OSCE, the UN Human Rights Council, the UN General Assembly and the High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The EU should mainstream counter-terrorism in its political and human rights dialogue with third countries to promote Europe's own security interests through international cooperation and implementation of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions. A joint approach to tackling radicalisation and fighting terrorism should be on the agenda of international events, conferences and summits, such as the UN Summit on Sustainable Development Goals (September 2015) and the Africa-EU meetings.

However, there is no common global definition for terrorism. Joint counter-terrorism efforts with third countries should not be used to stifle political opposition or target ethnic minorities. Counter-terrorism strategies must respect human rights in order to ensure that implementation does not undermine their purpose, which is to protect and maintain a democratic society. Fundamental rights and freedoms included in UN and European legal agreements are not negotiable. They include the right to a fair trial, the presumption of innocence, the absolute unacceptability of the use of torture on detainees, or of inhuman and degrading conditions of detention.

At the same time, the EU governments should learn from the past mistakes and avoid the temptations of a short-term approach to the terrorist threat. As the experience of the Arab Spring has shown, tolerating human rights abuses for the sake of the domestic and regional stability can in the end exacerbate and not prevent violent chaos and extremism. An in depth dialogue with the ruling regimes in the Arab countries is needed not only about counter-terrorism, but as well over the human rights violations, sectarian and extremist interpretations of the Islam. Any strategic effort to combat terrorism which neglects this reality is doomed to failure. Short-term gains from cooperation with dictatorial regimes should not obscure the risks of a long-term damage to the credibility of the EU in the eyes of the Arab and Muslim populations. In the absence of such a balanced approach, the EU could be seen as cooperating with dictators, this serving as a potent recruitment tool for the extremists both in the Muslim countries and in Europe.

3.1 Cooperation and dialogue

International cooperation in the field of counter-terrorism involves working with different groups of countries. Partners in this endeavour are first the EU and its Member States, long

standing democratic allies, including, but not exclusively, NATO allied countries.

The anti-terror cooperation with the countries of the Arab League and the Gulf Cooperation Council can only be effective for long term if it is based on the respect for human rights and is accompanied by political reforms in these countries. The EU has to confront the ruling regimes in these countries over failures in governance, human rights abuses they commit against their citizens and their role in promoting sectarianism. The anti-terror laws in some of these countries have been criticised as having the effect of silencing opposition, discriminating against religious minorities, and violating civil rights of minorities and women. Whatever short-term gains can be achieved in anti-terror cooperation with these regimes, only risks being offset by a perpetuation of the conditions leading to an increase of terrorism. The EU must have transparent, robust and fully accountable mechanisms to ensure there is no complicity in breaches of human rights in all security cooperation with these countries in the fight against terrorism.

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We welcome the signature of the Memorandum of Understanding between the European External Action Service and the General Secretariat of the League of Arab States that aims to strengthen cooperation on political and security matters in the areas of early warning and crisis response, to combat terrorism, transnational organised crime, and to counter the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. More attention should be given to the necessity of monitoring and countering possible financial assistance for terrorist organisations, such as ISIS, originating from Arab countries; the EU should use stronger foreign policy tools to address this issue.

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Turkey, with its strong ties with the European Union and its strategic position in a heavily affected region, is a potentially crucial partner in countering terrorism. The EU should pursue a strategic foreign policy dialogue with Turkey, including on countering terrorism. Turkey should be strongly encouraged to play a key role in preventing the flow of both Turkish and foreign fighters joining ISIS and Al-Nusra (Al-Qaeda's Syrian affiliate) and fighting sectarian tendencies in the country itself. Europe should recognise that Turkey itself has been a victim of terrorism and the importance of the current peace process with the PKK, as well as the huge contribution played by the country in receiving refugees from Syria.

Iran has played an important role in reversing ISIS' advances in Iraq, by lending support to the government in Baghdad and Kurdish peshmergas in Iraqi Kurdistan. We express our deep hope that the framework agreement with Iran on the nuclear programme will lead to a final, comprehensive deal opening channels which should be used for a dialogue that can help bring an end to sponsorship of terrorist organisations in the region. This would open new possibilities for a dialogue on the regional issues, including addressing Iran's support for the regime of Bashar Assad, Hezbollah, and Hamas. Socialists and Democrats have consistently led the argument in support of a nuclear agreement and for engagement with Iran in pursuit of these and wider goals, and - despite the many difficulties - we are hopeful our aspirations can be realised.

In the context of recent atrocities in Nigeria and Kenya, we encourage the EEAS to pursue its dialogue with the African Union on security policy, focused on counter-terrorism.

The EU should also increase its counter-terrorism cooperation with a range of other countries around the world, including

India, Pakistan, Russia, China, Israel, the Palestinian Authority and ASEAN Member States.

Regional cooperation organisations, such as the OSCE should play a key role in the common effort to fight terrorism. This organisation, with its expertise in conflict prevention, crisis management and early warning, can contribute to world-wide efforts to combat terrorism. Many current counter-terrorism measures, such as police training and border monitoring in zones of conflict, are contributed to by OSCE activity.

Socialists and Democrats will press for counter-terrorism cooperation with third countries to ensure a regular review of counter-terrorism in the context of the human rights dialogue, a specific audit of anti-terrorist laws and their implementation for compliance with international human rights law, and that human rights training is compulsory in any cooperation with security forces who must be subject to explicit human rights monitoring and assessment.

The S&D Group should invite the EU Special Representative for Human Rights to continue his efforts to defend and advocate freedom of expression, freedom of religion or belief and other universal values.

3.2 Countering the extremists' narrative

Re-launch EU accession negotiations with Turkey

Socialists and Democrats emphasize the importance of reinvigorating Turkey's EU accession process. This can only encourage counter-terrorism efforts by the country and demonstrate that a majority Muslim country has a full place in Europe's future.

For counter-terrorism efforts to be effective, the ideological narrative underpinning the actions of the extremist groups should be challenged. These groups thrive on the false dichotomy of Muslims versus the rest. Re-engaging with Turkey on its accession negotiations with the EU, on the basis of a strict, but fair conditionality, would provide a powerful rebuttal to this “clash of civilisations” narrative. It would show that the EU does not see itself as a “Christian club”, but as a values-based political community.

Engage with political Islam

The persistent repression and human rights abuses by many regimes in the Arab world have convinced many of their opponents that legal tools and democratic politics are meaningless, thus pushing them towards rather than away from armed groups. Political Islamists enjoy significant support in the Muslim-majority societies. The history of the Muslim world shows that it's impossible to eradicate political Islam by force and attempts to do so risk reinforcing popular beliefs that Europe is practising double standards in our respect for democracy.

Non-violent Islamist movements should be engaged in a dialogue. As long as they don't engage in violent activities, they should be accepted as political actors in the Muslim world. As conservative Muslims, they might provide an effective antidote to extremist movements as ISIS and Al-Qaeda.

Socialists and Democrats will argue for a major new impetus to promote inter-faith dialogue in individual countries, in regions, between Europe and third countries, and globally.

3.3 Addressing underlying factors

The EU should progress from early warning to developing an early capacity of reaction. The EU's efforts to combat terrorism should also identify and focus on the profound socio-economic and cultural roots of this phenomenon. The EU should take into account the nature of the political system in the countries it cooperates with, in order to safeguard respect for the principles of human rights, the rule of law and democracy.

The root causes of terrorism can often be found in dictatorships, repression, corruption, poor governance, human rights abuses, lack of political freedom and civil liberties, sectarianism and intolerant

religious ideologies. Past interventions in the Muslim world and the Israeli settlements policy are elements which can play a role in the development of a feeling of injustice among many Muslims, both in Europe and in the wider world. Muslim communities in Europe are not indifferent to this either.

The countries that are interested in playing a role in fighting terrorism, particularly those where the phenomenon originates, or that are used as training locations, should be encouraged to take ownership of its prevention and reject “calls to arms” against the “imposition” of Western culture or values. For example in Nigeria, Boko Haram is born from this mistrust – it means “No Books”, that is no Western Books. Citizens of these countries are the first victims of terrorism and they have every interest in cooperating with the international community.

The intervention in Iraq in 2003, the civil wars in Syria and Libya, the unrest in Yemen have contributed to the collapse of a state authority in these countries. This created a fertile ground for terrorist organisations to establish and expand their footholds in vast territories from Libya to Iraq, creating a major threat to regional and global security. This context is used by terrorist recruiters as a call to communities in Europe to join the battlefield in Syria, Iraq and elsewhere.

Socialists and Democrats emphasize how Europe must positively contribute to conflict resolution, to tackle grievances which can never justify terrorism but which can contribute to its support.

3.4 Conflict resolution and prevention

The S&D Group considers that the fight against terrorism should remain one of our top priorities in the political dialogue between the EU and third countries.

Socialists and Democrats recognise that terrorism breeds in fragile and failing states, and Europe has shown itself to be a far more effective actor in our humanitarian response to crises than in conflict prevention and resolution in countries of concern. As Libya and Yemen are perhaps sadly demonstrating, it can be argued that the best way of countering terrorism is preventing countries from failing.

We argue for more active use of Common Security and Defence Policy instruments to counter terrorism and any culture of

violence. Europe must learn the lessons of failure from the past and put much greater efforts towards nation-building in post-conflict and fragile states, to build security and judicial institutions that can command widespread support, enhance security and respect for the rule of law.

3.5 Development aid and capacity building

The EU is globally the biggest donor of development aid, bringing with it the possibility and responsibility to use its soft power against terrorism. The EU should help in the reconstruction process of states affected by the crises of recent decades. States in crisis, such as Libya, Syria, and Mali, constitute ideal territories for terrorist activities and to channel finances.

It is essential to support sectors such as law enforcement, criminal justice, security, crisis infrastructure, crisis and emergency response, border controls, aviation security, and strategic communication. However, Europe must always realise these and related efforts are pursued through its stability instrument and not allow funds to be diverted away from the fight against poverty in official development assistance according to the DAC definition. Such actions would be counter-productive in the long-run.

Providing adequate development and humanitarian aid in conflict zones can contribute to preventing recruitment or the proliferation of terrorist ideology. Such aid must include finances to enable families to stay together and fight isolation and ghettoization, but also aid in-kind, such as appropriate education in conflict zones. This is particularly relevant in the countries neighbouring Syria, where more funding should be directed to civil society and international organisations, reinforcing the education of young refugees in Lebanon, Turkey, and Jordan.

In the long term, the Development and Aid instruments can help prevent radicalisation and terrorism by reinforcing human development and the development of good governance and democratic institutions in fragile and poor countries. The Sahel Region requires special attention since it has become a belt of instability and insecurity, where radicalisation is spreading and terrorism is becoming a tool to impose an ideology.

The EU must prioritise development aid to promote good governance, human rights, fighting economic inequalities and providing education.

Development aid should be the key to contribute to state capacity building. In cases of non-democratic and corrupt regimes, the EU should continue to take special precautions to prevent aid diversion and to strengthen civil society. In countries such as the Central African Republic where CSDP missions are deployed, we want to see more coordination with Development and Aid policy activities.

We highlight the importance of sufficient funding for development policy and remind the Member States of their commitment to contribute 0.7 percent of their GNI to development aid. This is particularly important for 2015 when the new sustainable development goals and their funding are being decided upon internationally.

3.6 Countering radicalisation and violent extremism

Radicalisation, violent extremism, and terrorism have evolved and represent an increasing challenge for the EU. The threat comes not only from large, organised groups, but also from smaller groups and individuals. The use of the Internet for recruitment and for propaganda from outside the EU is increasing. A significant number of Europeans travel abroad to train and to fight in combat zones, becoming more radicalised in the process. This poses a security threat in the conflict zones and on their return to their home countries.

The European Union should, in cooperation with its partners (including the League of Arab States), develop a mechanism aiming to curb arms trafficking targeting in particular the countries where terrorism originates or where terrorists are trained. The EU should closely follow the export of armaments, in particular dual-use technology that could be exploited by terrorists and, obviously, EU countries should refrain from conducting any arms deals with countries known to be supporting terrorist organisation. We will call for investigation of persistent reports at breaches of the EU code of conduct and support any efforts to strengthen it as a result.

The EU should use stronger foreign policy tools to counter the financing of terrorist organisations by certain countries. Cooperation with key partners and countries on countering the financing of terrorism should be enhanced. The EU should engage with the countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council, in

particular with countries such as Saudi Arabia and Qatar, from where financial support for terrorist groups is known to stem. We are also concerned at reports to the European Parliament that oil sales from Iraq to European countries have directly and indirectly funded terrorism. The EU should not hesitate to use restrictive measures against individuals and organisations where there is credible evidence of financing or other complicity with terrorism - even where this is found in so-called 'friendly' countries.

The European Union should strive to improve the instruments of cooperation in collecting intelligence and information and analysis sharing on fighting terrorism, both internally and externally, while fully respecting the rule of law, human rights, and the interests of the Member States and external partners. Such cooperation should contribute to better preventing and pursuing terrorist activities and the criminal acts related to them across the EU and across the international borders of the Union. The role of EU INTCEN as the hub for strategic intelligence assessment at EU level, including on counter-terrorism, should also be strengthened.

Terrorist organisations such as ISIS have proven to be ready to exercise unspeakable violence to Yazidis, Christians, Muslims and others who do not support their extremist ideology. A long term defence strategy is needed, in which we would like to see an increased role for the United Nations and countries from the region in defining and implementing the actions needed.

The EU should support international initiatives on countering radicalisation and terrorism. It should also improve its understanding of the religious motivations of the extremist groups in order to be better able to counter their message,

strategic communication, developing an outreach strategy towards the Arab world, including developing counter-narratives to terrorist propaganda, promoting fundamental rights, and taking into account the increasingly frequent misuse of the Internet in radicalisation, engaging through social media and enhancing communication in Arabic.

Europe must recognise that countering radicalisation in partner countries may be very different to doing so at home, and be prepared to undertake new analysis and adopt fresh ideas and perspectives within and with partner countries. In doing so, we should recognise that it may be essential to engage civil society, to introduce open debate, education and dialogue in countries where there is a previous cultural habit in restricting political debate, freedom of association and of expression. Europe must be prepared to challenge this.

Fighting terrorism and its causes implies efforts not only at the official and diplomatic level: it also channels towards the grassroots of the communities and work with representatives of civil society. Inter-religious dialogue including cooperation with Muslim and other religious leaders should also be a key instrument. It must be stressed that in order to counter radicalisation, the EU must engage directly with moderate leaders of the Muslim community in order to maintain credibility and to avoid being labelled as a scheme to 'dilute' or 'liberalise' Muslim values and lifestyle. Cooperation with Muslim communities in Europe as a bridge to countries of origin is essential. Socialists and Democrats will argue for a major new impetus to promote inter-faith dialogue in individual countries, in regions, between Europe and third countries but also globally.

Socialists and Democrats will argue for a major new impetus to promote inter-faith dialogue in individual countries, in regions, between Europe and third countries but also globally.

4. COUNTERING TERRORISM: 10 core messages

Providing freedom, security and justice for all EU citizens

1

We all agree on the need to ensure the highest possible level of security for our fellow citizens, but before putting forward new schemes, we call for a correct and full implementation and use of existing instruments and a thorough evaluation of all current EU security and law enforcement policies, measures and instruments.

2

Although the sharing of Passenger Name Records (PNR) of airlines on passengers flying to and from the EU is not a “silver bullet”, the S&D group believes that it could contribute to disrupting terrorist and serious transnational crime networks. Any future EU PNR system would have to comply with high data protection and fundamental rights safeguards.

3

Any attempt to modify the Schengen Agreements with unjustified and general controls would run contrary to our values and would involve extremely high costs. Instead of amending the Schengen borders code, all existing options within the Schengen System should be used, including the rules on reintroducing temporary internal border checks when and where they are justified.

Towards a European model of best practice for counter-extremism

4

The S&D Group calls on the Commission to gather and share experience on prevention and de-radicalisation programmes from EU Member States and other countries such as Norway. The Commission’s Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN) is a good basis to build on, but more has to be done to ensure that basic standards in counter-extremism policies are in place across all EU Member States. The standards will still leave space to adjust policies to a particular national and local context. With this degree of cohesiveness and flexibility, the EU could itself become a model of best practice on counter-extremism globally.

5

The Council of Europe must take a proactive role in tackling Islamophobia as it has done with anti-Semitism. It is proposed that the EU should establish an annual Brussels Summit based on the format of the London Summit to tackle anti-Semitism. This will bring together relevant players, and provide a basis for a positive campaign to demonstrate that the EU is tackling action against religious discrimination. It will in turn challenge the extremist narrative that the EU is inherently anti-Muslim.

Promoting equal opportunities and fighting discrimination

6

The S&D Group calls for a further strengthening of European Social Fund, the Youth Guarantee and the Youth Employment Initiative to tackle increasing youth unemployment rates, as well as broader offers of vocational and educational training for young people, especially those not in education, employment or training. We have long supported the adoption of a comprehensive EU-wide directive against discrimination.

Education at the service of the fight against extremism

7

Education must be seen as a public investment. Particularly in the context of the Internet and social media, children and young people need to learn to grasp realities, distinguish fact from opinion, recognise propaganda and resist all forms of indoctrination and hate speech. Education is the cornerstone in the prevention of radicalisation. It should not only provide knowledge, skills and competences, but also help young people, in close cooperation with parents and families, teachers and activities outside of the school, to develop civic, social and human rights values and become active, responsible, open-minded members of the society.

International Dialogue, capacity building and de-radicalisation

8

The fight against terrorism should remain a top priority in the political and the human rights dialogue between the EU and third countries. To defeat the extremists, we need to build bridges and to intensify our engagement with the broader Muslim world, recognizing and learning from past failures in our own foreign policy and to further build on the solid basis like the fundamental values of the rule of law and human rights.

In all counter-terrorism cooperation with third countries, Europe must always seek to ensure full judicial oversight and legal accountability and that Europe upholds our own legal obligation to respect human rights and international humanitarian law.

9

Development aid should contribute to state capacity building by launching further projects and activities with affected countries addressing law enforcement, criminal justice, security reform, crisis infrastructure, crisis and emergency response, border controls and aviation security, and strategic communication.

Europe must positively contribute to conflict resolution, to aid efforts towards more open societies and to significantly improve efforts towards nation-building in fragile and post-conflict states. All of this is necessary to tackle grievances which can never justify terrorism but which can contribute to its support.

10

The EU should improve strategic communication, including developing counter-narratives to terrorist propaganda; it should stimulate interreligious dialogue including cooperation with moderate Muslim leaders; and it should open channels towards the grassroots of communities and work with representatives of civil society in countries where terrorism originates or where terrorists are trained.

New European action is required to prevent the flow of arms to terrorist groups and cut-off sources of finance including through oil sales and other purchases, where our rhetoric is not always matched by action.

GLOSSARY

The **Advance Passenger Information System (APIS)** is an electronic data interchange system established by U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP). APIS governs the provision of a limited number of data elements (identification details from the passport and basic flight information) from commercial airline and vessel operators to the computer system of the destination state. When travelling to or from certain countries, passengers are required to provide advance passenger information (API) before they check in or they will be unable to fly.

The **al-Nusra Front**, or Jabhat al-Nusra (The Support Front for the People of Al-Sham), sometimes called Tanzim Qa'edat Al-Jihad fi Bilad Al-Sham or al-Qaeda in Syria or al-Qaeda in the Levant, is a branch of al-Qaeda operating in Syria and Lebanon. Since then, it has been described as both "the most aggressive and successful" and "one of the most effective rebel forces" in Syria, and has been designated as a terrorist organisation by the United Nations, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Russia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Turkey.

Al-Qaeda (translation: "The Base", "The Foundation" or "The Fundament" and alternatively spelled al-Qaida and sometimes al-Qa'ida) is a global militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden, Abdullah Azzam, and several other militants, at some point between August 1988 and late 1989, with origins traceable to the Soviet war in Afghanistan. It has been designated as a terrorist organization by the United Nations Security Council, the NATO, the European Union, the United States, Russia, India and various other countries. During the Syrian civil war, al-Qaeda factions started fighting each other, as well as the Kurds and the Syrian government.

The **Arab League**, formally, the League of Arab States is a regional organization of Arab countries in and around North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and Southwest Asia. The League's main goal is to "draw closer the relations between member States and co-ordinate collaboration between them, to safeguard their independence and sovereignty, and to consider in a general way the affairs and interests of the Arab countries".

The **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** is a political and economic organization of ten Southeast Asian countries. It was formed on 8 August 1967 by Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and Thailand. Since then, membership has expanded to include Brunei, Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), and Vietnam. Its aims include accelerating economic growth, social progress, and sociocultural evolution among its members, protection of regional peace and stability, and opportunities for member countries to discuss differences peacefully.

Boko Haram ("Western education is forbidden") is a jihadist group based in northeastern Nigeria, also active in Chad, Niger and northern Cameroon. The group initially had links to al-Qaeda, but in 2014 it expressed support for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant before pledging formal allegiance to it in March 2015.

The **Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf**, known as the **Gulf Cooperation Council** is a regional intergovernmental political and economic union consisting of all Arab states of the Persian Gulf, except for Iraq. Its member states are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

DAC - The Development Assistance Committee is one of the key forums in which the major bilateral donors work together to increase the effectiveness of their common efforts to support sustainable development. The DAC concentrates on how international development co-operation contributes to the capacity of developing countries to participate in the global economy and the capacity of people to overcome poverty and participate fully in their societies.

EU INTCCN - The EU Intelligence Analysis Centre (EU INTCCN) is an intelligence body of the European Union (EU). Since January 2011, the EU INTCCN is part of the European External Action Service (EEAS) under the authority of the EU's High Representative. EU INTCCN's mission is to provide

intelligence analysis, early warning and situational awareness to the High Representative and to the EEAS, to the various EU decision making bodies in the fields of the Common Security and Foreign Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy and Counter-Terrorism, as well as to the EU Member States.

EUROJUST or the **European Union's Judicial Cooperation Unit** is a European Union body established in 2002 to stimulate and improve the co-ordination of investigations and prosecutions among the competent judicial authorities of the European Union Member States when they deal with serious cross-border and organised crime. EUROJUST has its seat in the Hague (The Netherlands).

The **European External Action Service (EEAS or EAS)** is a European Union (EU) department that was established following the entry into force of the Treaty of Lisbon on 1 December 2009. It was formally launched on 1 December 2010 and serves as a foreign ministry and diplomatic corps for the EU, implementing the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy and other areas of the EU's external representation. The EEAS is under the authority of the High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy (HR), a post also created by the Treaty of Lisbon, whom it assists.

The **European Social Fund (ESF)** is Europe's main instrument for supporting jobs, helping people get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens. It works by investing in Europe's human capital – its workers, its young people and all those seeking a job. ESF financing of EUR 10 billion a year is improving job prospects for millions of Europeans, in particular those who find it difficult to get work.

EUROPOL is the **European Union law enforcement agency** that handles the exchange and analysis of criminal intelligence. Its mission is to improve the effectiveness and cooperation between EU law enforcement authorities in preventing and combating serious international crime and terrorism, with the aim of achieving a safer Europe for all EU citizens. Originally

established on the basis of a Convention signed by EU States in 1995, Europol has been in operation since 1999. On 1 January 2010, it was conferred the status of EU agency. Europol is located in The Hague (The Netherlands).

FRONTEX or the **European Agency for the Management of Operational Cooperation at the External Borders** coordinates operational cooperation between Member States in the field of management of external borders. It contributes to the efficient, reinforced and uniform control of persons and surveillance of EU States' external borders. FRONTEX assists EU States in training national border guards, including in establishing common training standards. It also carries out risk analyses, follows up developments in research related to the control and surveillance of external borders, assists EU States in circumstances requiring increased technical and operational assistance at external borders and provides EU States with the necessary support in organising joint return operations. FRONTEX was established in 2004. It is located in Warsaw (Poland).

GNI - The **gross national income** is the total domestic and foreign output claimed by residents of a country, consisting of gross domestic product (GDP) plus factor incomes earned by foreign residents, minus income earned in the domestic economy by non-residents.

Hamas (Islamic Resistance Movement) is a Palestinian Islamic organization, with an associated military wing, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, in the Palestinian territories and elsewhere in the Middle East including Qatar. Hamas is designated as a terrorist organization by Canada, Israel, Japan, and the United States. Australia and the United Kingdom have designated the military wing of Hamas, the Izz ad-Din al-Qassam Brigades, as a terrorist organization. The organization is banned in Jordan. It is not regarded as a terrorist organization by Iran, Russia, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, China, and Qatar.

Hezbollah (literally "Party of Allah" or "Party of God") – also transliterated Hizbullah, Hizballah, etc. – is a Shi'a Islamist

militant group and political party based in Lebanon. Hezbollah's paramilitary wing is the Jihad Council. The United States, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Canada, and Israel have classified Hezbollah as a terrorist organization. The European Union and New Zealand have proscribed Hezbollah's military wing, but do not list Hezbollah as a whole as a terrorist organization. Hezbollah was conceived by Muslim clerics and funded by Iran following the Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982, and was primarily formed to offer resistance to the Israeli occupation.

The **Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)**, also known as the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria or the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (**ISIS**), or simply as the Islamic State, is an Islamic extremist terrorist organization controlling territory in Iraq and Syria, with limited territorial control in Libya and Nigeria. The group also operates or has affiliates in many parts of the world including Southeast Asia. On 29 June 2014, the group proclaimed itself to be a worldwide caliphate, with Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi being named its caliph, and renamed itself "Islamic State".

The **Kurdistan Workers' Party**, commonly referred to by its Kurdish acronym, **PKK (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê)** is a Kurdish nationalist organization based in Turkey and Iraqi Kurdistan. From 1984 to 2013, the PKK waged an armed struggle against the Turkish state for cultural and political rights and self-determination for the Kurds in Turkey, who comprise between 10% and 25% of the population. The group was founded in 1978 in the village of Fis (near Lice) by a group of Kurdish students. Since his capture and imprisonment in 1999, the leader of the PKK, Abdullah Öcalan, has abandoned Marxism-Leninism, leading the party to adopt his new political platform of "Democratic Confederalism" (influenced strongly by the libertarian socialist philosophy of communalism) while ceasing its official calls for the establishment of a fully independent country.

NATO - The North Atlantic Treaty Organization, also called the North Atlantic Alliance, is an intergovernmental military alliance based on the North Atlantic Treaty which was signed on 4 April 1949. The organization constitutes a system of collective defence whereby its member states agree to mutual defence in response to an attack by any external party. NATO's headquarters are in Brussels, Belgium, one of the 28 member states across North America and Europe, the newest of which, Albania and Croatia, joined in April 2009.

OSCE - The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe is the world's largest security-oriented intergovernmental organization. Its mandate includes issues such as arms control and the promotion of human rights, freedom of the press and fair elections. It has its origins in the 1975 Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) held in Helsinki, Finland.

PEGIDA or the **Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the West** is a German far right anti-Islam political organisation founded in Dresden in October 2014. It had been organising demonstrations against what it considers the Islamisation of the Western world, calling for more restrictive immigration rules, particularly for Muslims. It seeks to alter German immigration legislation. Offshoots of PEGIDA were formed in various countries.

Peshmerga (literally "one who confronts death") are the military forces of Iraqi Kurdistan. The overall formal head of the peshmerga is the President of Iraqi Kurdistan. The peshmerga force itself is largely divided and controlled separately by the Democratic Party of Kurdistan and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, although both pledge allegiance to the Kurdistan Regional Government. Efforts are under way to gather the entire force under the Ministry of Peshmerga Affairs. Peshmerga forces are responsible for defending the land, people and institutions of the Kurdistan Region.

PNR or the **Passenger Name Record** is information provided by passengers during the reservation and booking of tickets and when checking in on flights, as well as collected by air carriers for their own commercial purposes. It contains several different types of information, such as travel dates, travel itinerary, ticket information, contact details, travel agent through which the flight was booked, means of payment used, seat number and baggage information. The data is stored in the airlines' reservation and departure control databases. Many states access PNR data for the purpose of fighting serious crime and terrorism.

The **Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN)** is an umbrella network established to connect communities and local actors involved in countering radicalisation and violent extremism. It is a unique tool authorising practitioners' groups from different EU States to meet, each in their area of expertise, in order to exchange best practices, experiences and results in countering radicalisation and violent extremism. The outcomes of RAN are reported back to policy makers both at the EU and EU State level.

The **Schengen Border Code** is a single set of rules for external border checks on person. It governs the crossing of the external border, facilitating access for those who have a legitimate interest to enter into the EU. A special Local Border Traffic Regime has also been established to facilitate entry for non-EU border residents who frequently need to cross the EU external border. A common visa policy further facilitates the entry of legal visitors into the EU.

SIS or the **Schengen Information System** is a highly efficient large-scale information system that supports external border control and law enforcement cooperation in the Schengen States. The SIS enables competent authorities, such as police and border guards, to enter and consult alerts on certain categories of wanted or missing persons and objects. An SIS alert not only contains information about a particular person or object but also clear instructions on what to do when the person or object has been found. Specialised national SIRENE Bureaux serve as single points of contact for any supplementary information exchange and coordination of activities related to SIS alerts.

SIS II is a more advanced version of the **Schengen Information System (SIS)**. It was launched in April 2013 with enhanced functionalities, such as the possibility to use biometrics, new types of alerts, the possibility to link different alerts (such as an alert on a person and a vehicle) and a facility for direct queries on the system. SIS II also contains copies of European Arrest Warrants (EAW), which are recognised as having the same legal value as the originals, making it easier and quicker for the competent authorities to ensure the necessary follow-up.

VIS or the **Visa Information System** allows Schengen States to exchange visa data. It consists of a central IT system and of a communication infrastructure that links this central system to national systems. VIS connects consulates in non-EU countries and all external border crossing points of Schengen States. It processes data and decisions relating to applications for short-stay visas to visit, or to transit through, the Schengen Area. The system can perform biometric matching, primarily of fingerprints, for identification and verification purposes.

The **Yazidis** are an ethno-religious group whose syncretic but ancient religion Yazidism is linked to Zoroastrianism and ancient Mesopotamian religions. They live primarily in the Nineveh Province of Iraq. Additional communities in Armenia, Georgia, and Syria have been in decline since the 1990s as a

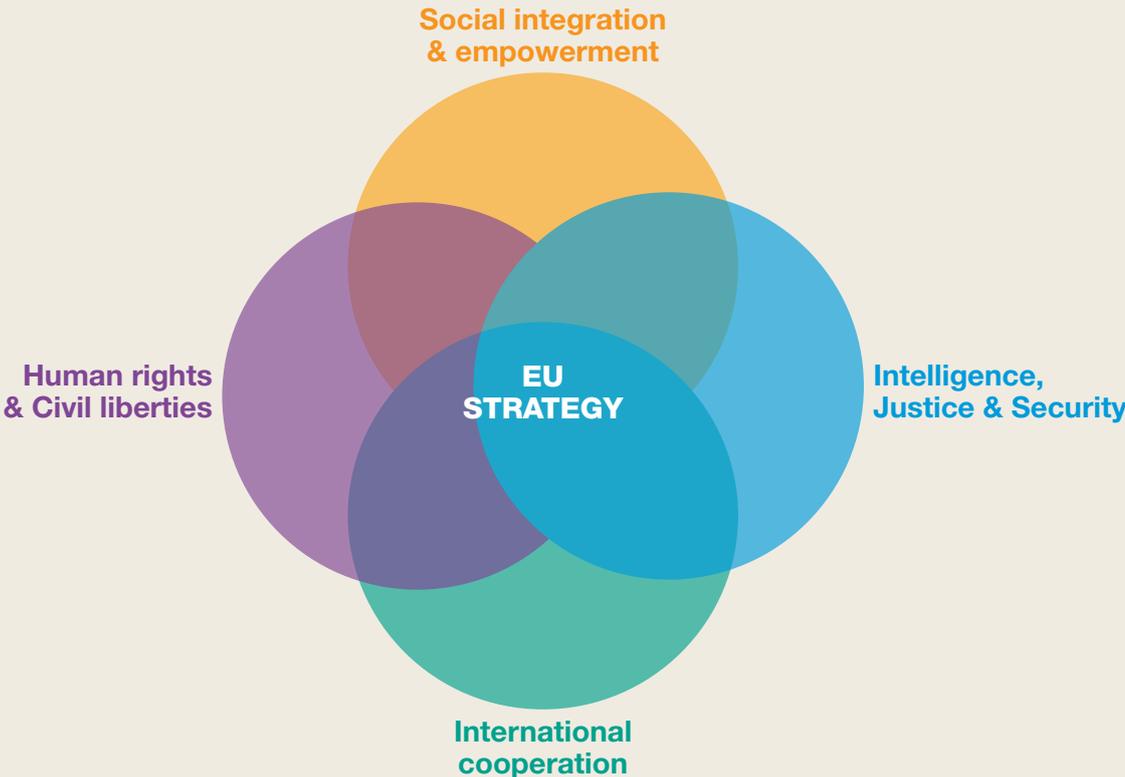
result of significant migration to Europe, especially to Germany. In Armenia, the Yazidis are recognized as a national group. In August 2014 the Yazidis were targeted by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant in its campaign to “purify” Iraq and neighbouring countries of non-Islamic influences.

The **Youth Guarantee** is a new approach to tackling youth unemployment which ensures that all young people under 25 – whether registered with employment services or not – get a good-quality, concrete offer within 4 months of them leaving formal education or becoming unemployed. The good-quality offer should be for a job, apprenticeship, traineeship, or continued education and be adapted to each individual need and situation. EU countries endorsed the principle of the Youth Guarantee in April 2013.

The **Youth Employment Initiative** supports young people not in education, employment or training, with particular focus on regions with high youth unemployment. It was proposed by the 7-8 February 2013 European Council with a budget of €6 billion for the period 2014-20. The money under the Youth Employment Initiative will be used to reinforce and accelerate measures outlined in the December 2012 Youth Employment Package.

Sources: <http://europa.eu>
<https://en.wikipedia.org>

COUNTERING TERRORISM



ABOUT THE S&D GROUP

The Group of the Progressive Alliance of Socialists and Democrats (the S&D Group) is the second largest political group in the European Parliament with 191 members from all 28 EU Member States.

We stand for an inclusive European society based on principles of solidarity, equality, diversity, freedom and fairness. We campaign for social justice, jobs and growth, consumer rights, sustainable development, financial market reforms and human rights to create a stronger and more democratic Europe and a better future for all citizens.

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