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Fight against terrorism and reinforcing security at borders

Plenary session of the European Parliament

Strassburg (France), 16.02.2017

Eurofedop will organise a seminar on the subject of “Security” in Tallinn, Estonia, on 21 and 22 March 2017. Measures for increasing security in the Union were adopted at the European Parliament on 16 February 2017.

1. Prevention of terrorism

According to a Europol report of 2016, 5 000 Europeans, called ‘foreign fighters’, have travelled to conflict zones in Syria and Iraq over the last years. If ISIS will be defeated, it may be expected that a significant number of those foreign fighters will return to Europe. According to the European Counter Terrorism Centre of Europol, terrorist attacks from ‘lone wolves or groups’, that is terrorists or terrorist groups acting on their own, are likely to happen.



Rapporteur Monika Hohlmeier (MEP, EPP) declared that what we need to do is to prevent that those attacks are taking place rather than regret afterwards that they have taken place.

The Parliament adopted on 16th February a legislative resolution on the proposal for a new directive on combating terrorism. The new directive will replace the existing regulations and is meant to increase the possibilities of reacting effectively against occurring threats.

Rapporteur Hohlmeier declared that a good balance has been found between the need for improving security and the need for respecting fundamental rights.

Will be considered as criminal acts:

- travelling to conflict zones to join a terrorist group and returning to Europe to carry out a terrorist attack,
- praising terrorism,
- financing terrorism,
- recruiting for terrorism,
- training for terrorism,
- preparing for carrying out a terrorist attack.

The new directive will also include the provision of immediate assistance to the victims of a terrorist attack and their relatives and underlines the importance of deradicalisation and rehabilitation programmes.

The directive will not apply to the UK, Ireland and Denmark.

2. Reinforcing checks at the external borders



Foreign terrorist fighters who return to Europe are a threat to the Union's internal security. Being citizen of the EU, they enjoy the right of free movement under Union law. To stop them from entering the Union has become a necessity. Therefore, the Parliament adopted on 16th February a position aiming at improving the existing regulation concerning the execution of checks at the external borders. All citizens of the European Union and third country nationals will be systematically checked, against relevant databases, not only when entering but also when leaving the European Union.

Relevant databases are for instance lists of stolen or lost documents of Interpol, lists of the Schengen Information System (SIS) and other relevant EU databases.

The checks will be obligatory at all sea, land and air borders.

Nevertheless, to avoid long delays at controls, member states will be allowed to limit their controls to 'targeted checks' if a risk assessment has shown that this will not endanger internal security or public policy. In any case, all travellers should be submitted to the control of their travelling documents, to show that they are valid and establish their identity.

The regulation will not apply to the United Kingdom, Ireland and Denmark.