



Recommendation 916 (1981)¹

Conference on "Defence of Democracy against Terrorism in Europe - Tasks and Problems" (Strasbourg, 12-14 November 1980)

Parliamentary Assembly

The Assembly,

1. Having taken note of the report of its Political Affairs Committee on the Conference on "Defence of Democracy against Terrorism in Europe : Tasks and Problems", held in Strasbourg from 12 to 14 November 1980 ([Doc. 4688](#)) ;
2. Having regard to its [Recommendation 852 \(1979\)](#) on terrorism in Europe ;
3. Considering that the General Assembly of the United Nations recommended in its [Resolution 34/145](#) (paragraph 10), of 17 December 1979, to the appropriate specialised agencies and regional organisations that they consider measures to prevent and combat international terrorism within their respective spheres of responsibility and regions;
4. Considering that the Strasbourg Conference was the first occasion on which the problem of protecting democracy against terrorism had been discussed in such a broad framework ;
5. Noting that it was generally agreed at the conference that in Council of Europe member countries the aim of terrorist movements, whatever their names or origins , is to overthrow and destroy democracy and parliamentary institutions, as well as stifle the free political, economic and social development that only a democratic system permits ;
6. Noting that the participants in the conference emphasised that democracy could react against terrorism in member countries with efficiency and coherence only while respecting democratic principles and fundamental rights and freedoms, and in full respect for the constitutional laws in force in member states, as well as the European Convention on Human Rights and the Statute of the Council of Europe, and on the basis of a broad popular consensus, which is essential for ensuring the confidence of citizens in democratic institutions ;
7. Noting that the conference recognised the courageous contribution of the press to efforts aimed at isolating and condemning terrorists, and at the same time called upon the mass media to be firm in their refusal to act or to appear to act as the instrument of terrorism ;
8. Noting the special attention paid by the conference to the role of culture and education in the achievement of a consensus regarding the suppression of terrorism, particularly through the outlawing of the various forms of violence in society ;
9. Considering that only ten member states have so far ratified the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism, which came into force on 4 August 1978, and that only five of them apply the extradition clauses without reservation ;

1. See [Doc. 4688](#), report of the Political Affairs Committee. Text adopted by the Standing Committee, acting on behalf of the Assembly, on 26 March 1981.



10. Believing that active and continuous co-operation between the police forces of member countries, especially those with a common frontier, is a prerequisite for the establishment of a genuine European judicial area ;
11. Sharing the view expressed by the participants in the conference that the Council of Europe should make a major contribution to the discussion and solution of problems concerning the protection of democracy against terrorism ;
12. Considering that no support, even of a moral nature, can be given to any political organisation which advocates violence as a method of solving political, economic and social problems in member countries,
13. Recommends that the Committee of Ministers :
 - a. hold an exchange of views, possibly with the participation of government-appointed experts, on prospects for rapid ratification of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism by all member states of the Council of Europe ;
 - b. consider the application and effects of the European Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism in actual cases occurring since its entry into force ;
 - c. study the legislative measures that may be regarded as acceptable in a democratic system for dealing with terrorism ;
 - d. promote a uniform legal definition of terrorism as an offence at both national and international level, when appropriate in consultation with the Assembly ;
 - e. have a study made, in the framework of intergovernmental co-operation, of the role of culture and education and of the mass media in preventing and suppressing terrorism, and request the European Youth Centre to pay special attention thereto ;
 - f. invite member states to intensify or, if appropriate, establish frontier co-operation between neighbouring countries on the basis of bilateral agreements ;
 - g. encourage member states to use the intergovernmental machinery of the Council of Europe for the purpose of ensuring co-operation between the judiciary, police and intelligence services of member states in the combating of terrorism ;
 - h. create- in response to the wish widely expressed by the Strasbourg Conference and as a contribution to the measures called for by the General Assembly of the United Nations (see paragraph 3 above)- a study and documentation centre on the causes, prevention and suppression of terrorism, with governmental and parliamentary support, and a contribution from non-governmental organisations ;
 - i. invite the governments of member states to ratify as soon as possible the European Convention on the control of the acquisition and possession of firearms by individuals ;
 - j. expedite the framing of European agreements to harmonise regulations concerning firearms.