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Terrorist attacks in Paris: together for a democratic response

Report¹

Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

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Summary

The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy considers that, more than an assault on freedom of expression, aimed at silencing and intimidating critical voices, or yet another act of anti-Semitic violence – which they also were – the terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015 were attacks against the very values of democracy and freedom in general. They were based on hatred which no arguments can justify. There must be no “but”.

Freedom of expression, in particular that of journalists, writers and other artists, must be protected and governments of member States should not interfere with its exercise be it in printed or electronic media, including the social media.

Europe must continue to show that it is not afraid and keep using humour and satire. Not to do so in the name of political correctness would mean that terrorists had won. The principle of the separation of State and religion must also be protected.

The report underlines that any security responses aimed at reinforcing the fight against terrorism and jihadism in full respect of human rights must be accompanied by preventive measures aimed at eradicating the root causes of radicalisation and the rise of religious fanaticism. Therefore, it proposes specific recommendations to the member States of the Council of Europe for these purposes.

1. Reference to committee: Bureau decision, Reference 4104 of 26 January 2015.



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A. Draft resolution²

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is outraged by the barbarian terrorist attacks in Paris on 7, 8 and 9 January 2015, which led to the death of 17 people. Among them were journalists, cartoonists and staff killed in cold blood at the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, policemen and people of the Jewish faith. The Assembly conveys its sympathy to the families of the victims and expresses its solidarity with the French people and authorities.
2. More than an assault on freedom of expression or yet another act of anti-Semitic violence – which they also were – these were attacks against the very values of democracy and freedom in general, against the type of society that our pan-European Organisation has aimed at building since the end of the Second World War.
3. These were terrorist attacks based on hatred, which no arguments can justify and any attempt to find excuses for the actions of the murderers must be firmly rejected. There must be no “but”. As the Assembly put it in its [Resolution 1258 \(2001\)](#) on democracies facing terrorism, “[t]here can be no justification for terrorism”.
4. In addition, the Assembly wishes to emphasise that these terrorist attacks were obviously not the result of an alleged plot to stigmatise Islam or Muslims but a co-ordinated act designed to silence, through crime, journalists and a newspaper that symbolise freedom of expression, and to kill people for the sole reason that they are Jewish or policemen because they embody the defence of institutions and the rule of law.
5. The Assembly recalls that, in line with well-established case law of the European Court of Human Rights, the use of satire, including irreverent satire, and information or ideas that “offend, shock or disturb”, including criticism of religion, are protected as part of freedom of expression under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5). Such are the demands of that pluralism, tolerance and broad-mindedness without which there is no democratic society.
6. Freedom comes with responsibility and it is for the democratic institutions, including the courts, to strike a fair balance between freedom of expression and its authorised limitations, such as hate speech or incitement to violence – which should be laid down in the legislation of all European States – under the ultimate control of the European Court of Human Rights. In this context, the Assembly recalls its [Resolution 1510 \(2006\)](#) where it stated that “freedom of expression as protected under Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights should not be further restricted to meet increasing sensitivities of certain religious groups”.
7. The Assembly notes that the fact that the terrorists claimed to be acting “in the name of Islam”, thus insulting the very religion they claimed to defend, has prompted many Muslim religious leaders, representatives of Islamic associations but also a large number of citizens of Muslim confession to condemn the attacks and warn against the risk of stigmatisation. The Assembly strongly condemns all malicious acts, the number of which is currently on the rise, against citizens of the Muslim faith and their places of worship.
8. The Assembly recalls its constant condemnation of any development of anti-Semitism. It considers that the Israeli-Arab conflict cannot justify any increase in such acts within European democratic societies.
9. At the same time, the fact that the three jihadists were French, born and brought up in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, as well as the fact that many people claiming to be Muslims, especially among the young, took the side of the terrorists in the social media networks, has prompted a twofold debate: on the one hand, on the urgent need for a common, international but also specifically European response to the jihadist threat; on the other, on the need to combat social exclusion, discrimination, violence and segregation, as the breeding ground for terrorism and religious fanaticism.
10. The whole of Europe joined in condemning the attacks and in mourning the innocent victims of 7, 8 and 9 January and the whole of Europe marched alongside France on Sunday 11 January 2015 to express its rejection of terrorism and its stand for the values of democracy and freedom. The whole of Europe must now find, together, a democratic response to the rise of terrorism and radical Islamism. The values on which Europe is founded are not outmoded. Democracy, freedom and human rights are worth fighting for.
11. Europe must continue to show that it is not afraid and keep using humour and satire. Not to do so in the name of political correctness would mean that terrorists had won. Secularism, i.e. the principle of the separation of State and religion, must also be protected.

2. Draft resolution adopted unanimously by the committee on 27 January 2015.

12. Freedom of expression, in particular that of journalists, writers and other artists, must be protected and governments of member States should not interfere with its exercise be it in printed or electronic media, including the social media. In this respect, the Assembly condemns declarations against media freedom made by certain authorities in the aftermath of the attacks on *Charlie Hebdo*.

13. The Assembly firmly believes that democracies have the right, and the obligation, to defend themselves when attacked. It thus finds that the fight against terrorism and jihadism must be reinforced while ensuring respect for human rights, the rule of law and the common values upheld by the Council of Europe.

14. In this respect, the Assembly recalls its [Resolution 1840 \(2011\)](#) on human rights and the fight against terrorism, in which it stated that the concept of “war on terror” was misleading and unhelpful and was a threat to the entire framework of international human rights. Terrorists are criminals, not soldiers and terrorist crimes are not akin to acts of war. It calls in particular on member States to:

14.1. ensure that a fair balance be struck between defending freedom and security and violating those very rights at the same time;

14.2. refrain from indiscriminate mass surveillance which has proven to be ineffective for the prevention of terrorism and therefore is not only dangerous for the respect of human rights but also a waste of resources;

14.3. grant appropriate means to law-enforcement bodies and security and intelligence services and provide training to their members to cope with the rising threats of terrorism, including the jihadist threat;

14.4. ensure that intelligence services from different European countries increase their collaboration. Co-operation with other democracies as well as countries in the Middle East and the Arab world is also important;

14.5. share national records of persons condemned on terrorist charges as well as information on airline passengers posing security threats, subject to appropriate data protection guarantees;

14.6. pay serious attention to the ways into which money and weapons end up in the hands of potential terrorists, in order to dismantle such networks and punish the culprits.

15. With a view to strengthening the legal action against terrorism, the Assembly also:

15.1. calls on Council of Europe member States, and neighbouring countries, which have not yet done so, to sign and ratify, as a matter of priority, the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 196);

15.2. welcomes and fully supports the preparation of an additional protocol on “foreign terrorist fighters” to the Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, an issue which the Assembly itself follows closely;

15.3. supports the demands by several member States of the European Union asking the European Parliament to re-consider its position on the Passenger Name Record (PNR) system, which it has been blocking for almost two years, subject to appropriate data protection guarantees.

16. The Assembly invites newspapers and television channels to consider a code of conduct regarding coverage of terrorist events, striking a balance between the need for freedom of information and the imperatives of police action.

17. The Assembly underlines that security responses must be accompanied by preventive measures aimed at eradicating the root causes of radicalisation and the rise of religious fanaticism, especially among young people. In this respect, the Assembly asks member States in particular to:

17.1. study carefully the situation in prisons and the ways into which prisoners are indoctrinated into terrorism, and in particular jihadism, and take measures to counter this phenomenon;

17.2. closely monitor the Internet and social media with a view, in particular, to fighting hate speech, radicalisation and cyber-jihadism;

17.3. grant appropriate means and resources to schools and teachers to promote education for democratic citizenship and human rights, with special emphasis given to education in marginalised and disadvantaged contexts;

17.4. promote intercultural dialogue and the “living together” model, including in schools;

17.5. take measures to combat marginalisation, social exclusion, discrimination and segregation, especially among young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods;

17.6. support families in their role to educate their children to respect the values of democracy and tolerance;

17.7. protect journalists, writers and other artists from extremist threats and refrain from any interference with the exercise of their freedom of expression, in full compliance with the law, be it in printed or electronic media, including social media;

17.8. support action by the Council of Europe in the above-mentioned fields and allocate appropriate means and resources, in line with the proposals made by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

18. For its part, the Assembly resolves to continue to follow closely and try to tackle, through the work of its committees and the newly launched No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, the main challenges rising from the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, namely: the need to live together; the upsurge of the jihadist threat and the issue of jihadists arriving from Europe to fight in Iraq and Syria; the protection of human rights in the fight against terrorism; the need to combat the root causes of radicalisation and religious fanaticism, such as social exclusion, discrimination or even segregation; the process of radicalisation in prisons; the continuing fight against hate speech, racism and intolerance, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia; and the role of education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural dialogue.

B. Draft recommendation³

1. The Parliamentary Assembly refers to its Resolution ... (2015) "Terrorist attacks in Paris: together for a democratic response" in which it expressed its outrage at the killing of 17 people, including journalists, cartoonists and staff killed in cold blood at the offices of the satirical magazine *Charlie Hebdo*, policemen exercising their duty and people taken in hostage merely because they were of Jewish confession. The Assembly conveys its sympathy to the families of the victims and expresses its solidarity with the French people and authorities.
2. The Assembly considers that, more than an assault on freedom of expression, aimed at silencing and intimidating critical voices, or yet another act of anti-Semitic violence – which they also were – these were attacks against the very values of democracy and freedom in general. It underlines that any security responses aimed at reinforcing the fight against terrorism and jihadism in full respect of human rights must be accompanied by preventive measures aimed at eradicating the root causes of radicalisation and the rise of religious fanaticism.
3. The Assembly therefore asks the Committee of Ministers to:
 - 3.1. bring to the attention of the governments of the member States the specific recommendations addressed to them in this respect in Resolution ... (2015);
 - 3.2. allocate appropriate means and resources to implement the proposals made by the Secretary General of the Council of Europe for "Immediate Action by the Council of Europe to combat radicalisation leading to terrorism".

3. Draft recommendation adopted unanimously by the committee on 27 January 2015.

C. Explanatory memorandum by Mr Legendre, rapporteur

1. The facts

1. On 7 January 2015, two young Frenchmen entered the offices of the satirical weekly magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and killed 12 people, shouting “*Allahu Akbar*” and saying that they had avenged the Prophet Muhammad. Among the victims were journalists, analysts, cartoonists and staff as well as two policemen exercising their duty. The killers, who managed to escape, were killed by the police two days later. They claimed to be acting in the name of “Al Qaeda in the Yemen”.
2. On 8 January, another Frenchman shot and killed a police woman in cold blood in Paris and, on 9 January, took more than 20 hostages in a kosher supermarket, immediately killing four of them; the perpetrator was killed by the police and the other hostages were freed. The four hostages killed were Jewish. The killer alleged that he was acting in co-ordination with the two other murderers and pledged allegiance to the terrorist organisation known as the “Islamic State”.
3. The French police established that the three murderers had had contacts with each other and with known jihadists, both in prison and elsewhere, and that at least one of them had been to the Yemen, where he had some military training. “Al Qaeda in the Yemen” claimed responsibility for the attacks one week later.
4. The President of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe and the Chairperson-in-office of the Committee of Ministers joined world leaders in condemning the attacks. Many Muslim religious leaders also condemned the attacks.
5. On 11 January, a massive demonstration took place in Paris to express support for freedom of expression and the values of democracy, solidarity with the victims of the attacks and the rejection of violence. Many European – and some non-European – heads of State and government gathered in Paris to show solidarity and support.
6. On 14 January, one week after the attack, *Charlie Hebdo* issued another copy of the magazine, with a drawing supposedly of Prophet Muhammad on the cover page, sparking protest demonstrations in parts of the Muslim world, including Pakistan, Niger and the Chechen Republic of the Russian Federation.
7. On 14 January, the German Government adopted several measures against terrorism, aimed mainly at preventing young Europeans from travelling to Syria and Iraq to fight.
8. On 15 January, the Belgian police dismantled a terrorist network planning attacks against the police. Two jihadists recently returned from Syria were killed in a confrontation with the police.
9. The fact that the three terrorists claimed to be acting “in the name of Islam”, thus insulting the very religion they claimed to defend, has prompted many Muslim religious leaders, representatives of Islamic associations but also a large number of citizens of Muslim confession to warn against the risk of stigmatisation.
10. The French authorities reacted promptly and reaffirmed firmly, at the highest level, their commitment to protect the citizens of Muslim confession and their places of worship, and to combat the phenomena of Islamophobia, which have recently been on the rise.
11. At the same time, the fact that the three jihadists were French, born and brought up in a disadvantaged neighbourhood, as well as the fact that many people claiming to be Muslims, especially among young people, took the side of the terrorists in the social media networks, has prompted a twofold debate: on the one hand, on the urgent need for a common, international but also specifically European response to the jihadist threat and, on the other, on the need to combat social exclusion, discrimination, violence and segregation, which are the breeding grounds for terrorism and religious fanaticism.
12. Many intellectuals, mostly of Muslim confession, have also reacted and have proposed a reflection on the need to revisit the traditional texts of the Islamic faith and confront them with the challenges of the modern world, thus offering a credible liberal alternative to jihadism and other violent interpretations of the sacred texts.
13. As the very essence of the values of democracy and freedom are being attacked in Europe, Europeans must find together the appropriate democratic response in full respect of the values they wish to defend. The events in Paris raise several issues, including the protection of freedom of expression and its relationship with freedom of religion, the fight against terrorism in Europe and the need to prevent radicalisation and combat the causes of jihadism.

2. Protection of freedom of expression and its relationship with freedom of religion

14. Critical dispute, artistic freedom and humour are necessary in a free society. Only totalitarian systems are afraid of these. A society which is unable to mock itself is a sick society. Those who pretend that the cartoonists of *Charlie Hebdo* brought it on themselves are trying to justify the unjustifiable.

15. In the aftermath of the attacks at the *Charlie Hebdo* magazine, some newspapers and television channels decided not to publish cartoons in fear of retaliation, should they be perceived as offensive by Muslims. Is it not, however, more offensive to publish the names and pictures of alleged representatives of terrorist organisations and sometimes even let them justify terrorism on television? It would be advisable that newspapers and television stations established a code of conduct regarding the responsible coverage of terrorist events, striking a balance between the need for freedom of information and the imperatives of police action.

16. In Turkey, both the Prime Minister, just after his return from the gathering of European leaders in Paris on 11 January in support of the demonstration, and a Vice-Prime Minister, made public declarations against the freedom of the press. Subsequently, the Turkish daily *Cumhuriyet* was investigated by the police and Internet sites were blocked by order of the prosecutors, under the pretext that they may have offensive content. Among many others, Amnesty International and the President of the European Federation of Journalists have criticised the position of the Turkish Government. The Assembly should add its voice to theirs.

17. The Paris events and subsequent reactions call for a quick reminder of the relevant legal framework on freedom of expression as guaranteed by the European Convention on Human Rights (ETS No. 5, "the Convention").

18. In line with well-established case law of the European Court of Human rights⁴, the use of satire, including irreverent satire, and information or ideas that "offend, shock or disturb", including criticism of religion, are protected as part of freedom of expression under Article 10 of the Convention. "Such are the demands of that pluralism, tolerance and broad-mindedness without which there is no democratic society."

19. Freedom, however, comes with responsibility and it is for the democratic institutions, including the courts, to strike a fair balance between freedom of expression and its authorised restrictions, in line also with the second paragraph of Article 10 of the Convention, for example hate speech or incitement to violence. The final ruling is ultimately given by the European Court of Human Rights.

20. In this context, we should recall Assembly [Resolution 1510 \(2006\)](#) on freedom of expression and respect for religious beliefs, adopted in the wake of the Danish cartoons controversy, which stated that "freedom of expression as protected under Article 10 of the Convention should not be further restricted to meet increasing sensitivities of certain religious groups".

21. Upon a request by the Assembly included in this resolution, the European Commission for Democracy through Law (Venice Commission) published, in 2008, a report on the relationship between freedom of expression and freedom of religion: the issue of regulation and prosecution of blasphemy, religious insult and incitement to religious hatred,⁵ in which it confirmed that freedom of expression, guaranteed by Article 10 of the Convention, constitutes one of the essential foundations of a democratic society and one of the basic conditions for its progress and for each individual's self-fulfilment. The report reiterated the well-established case law of the European Court of Human Rights according to which, subject to paragraph 2 of Article 10, freedom of expression is applicable not only to "information" or "ideas" that are favourably received or regarded as inoffensive or as a matter of indifference, but also to those that offend, shock or disturb.

22. According to the Venice Commission, democracy should not fear debate, even on the most shocking or anti-democratic ideas. It is through open discussion that these ideas should be countered and the supremacy of democratic values demonstrated. Mutual understanding and respect can only be achieved through open debate. Persuasion through open public debate, as opposed to bans or repression, is the most democratic means of preserving fundamental values.

4. See *Handyside v. the United Kingdom*, Application No. 5493/72, judgment of 7 December 1976 and more recently: *Eon v. France*, Application No. 26118/10, judgment of 14 March 2013; *Vereinigung Bildender Künstler v. Austria*, Application No. 8354/01, judgment of 25 January 2007; *Alves da Silva v. Portugal*, Application No. 41665/07, judgment of 20 October 2009; and, *mutatis mutandis*, *Tuşalp v. Turkey*, Applications Nos. 32131/08 and 41617/08, judgment of 21 February 2012.

5. See document CDL-AD(2008)026.

23. In the Venice Commission's view, in a true democracy, imposing limitations on freedom of expression should not be used as a means of preserving society from dissenting views, even if they are extreme.
24. The purpose of any restriction on freedom of expression must be to protect individuals holding specific beliefs or opinions, rather than to protect belief systems from criticism. The right to freedom of expression implies that it should be allowed to scrutinise, openly debate and criticise, even harshly and unreasonably, belief systems, opinions, and institutions, as long as this does not amount to advocating hatred against an individual or groups.
25. What is likely to cause substantial offence to persons of a particular religious persuasion will vary significantly from time to time and from place to place.
26. The Venice Commission agreed with the Parliamentary Assembly that "in view of the greater diversity of religious beliefs in Europe and the democratic principle of the separation of State and religion, blasphemy laws should be reviewed by member States and parliaments" and that "blasphemy, as an insult to a religion, should not be deemed a criminal offence".
27. The Venice Commission did not consider it necessary or desirable to create an offence of religious insult (that is, insult to religious feelings) without the element of incitement to hatred as an essential component. If a statement or work of art does not qualify as incitement to hatred, then it should not be the object of criminal sanctions.
28. However, the Venice Commission does not support absolute liberalism. While there is no doubt that in a democracy all ideas, even shocking or disturbing ones, should in principle be protected, it is equally true that not all ideas deserve to be circulated. Since the exercise of freedom of expression carries duties and responsibilities, it is legitimate to expect from every member of a democratic society that they avoid, as far as possible, expressions that express scorn or are gratuitously offensive to others.
29. It must be stressed, however, that democratic societies must not become hostage to these sensitivities and freedom of expression must not indiscriminately retreat when faced with violent reactions. The threshold of sensitivity of certain individuals may be too low in certain specific circumstances, and incidents may even happen in places other than, and far away from, those where the original issue arose, and this should not become of itself a reason to prevent any form of discussion on religious matters involving that particular religion: the right to freedom of expression in a democratic society would otherwise be jeopardised. It is the responsibility of everyone to bear in mind that the respect for his freedom of expression also requires the respect for the beliefs of others.

3. The fight against terrorism in Europe

30. The Paris attacks call for measures to strengthen the fight against terrorism and jihadism, but not to the detriment of human rights, the rule of law and the defence of our common values. In this context, the Assembly recalls its [Resolution 1840 \(2011\)](#) on human rights and the fight against terrorism, in which it stated that "the concept of 'war on terror' is misleading and unhelpful and is a threat to the entire framework of international human rights. Terrorists are criminals, not soldiers, and terrorist crimes do not amount to acts of war".
31. It is estimated that some 5 000 young Europeans have left to fight in Syria and in Iraq and many of them are coming back to Europe having acquired fighting skills. These people pose a considerable security threat within Europe and must be closely monitored. In its [Resolution 2016 \(2014\)](#) dealing with the threats against humanity posed by the terrorist group known as "IS", the Assembly already urged the member States of the Council of Europe to increase efforts to identify Europeans fighting for the "IS", as well as to identify and dismantle recruitment channels, to prosecute those responsible and to exchange information and co-ordinate their response to returning jihadists. The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy is currently preparing a report on foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq.
32. Proposals have been made to deprive returning jihadists of their European passports, should they have another nationality.
33. Law-enforcement, security and intelligence services should be granted the appropriate means to cope with the situation and services from different European countries should increase their collaboration. Indiscriminate mass surveillance, however, has been proved to be ineffective for the prevention of terrorism and is therefore not only dangerous for the respect of human rights but is also a waste of resources.

34. National records of persons condemned on terrorist charges should be shared, as should operational information regarding actions or movements of terrorists or terrorist networks, including foreign terrorist fighters, in accordance with United Nations Security Council Resolution 2178 (2014). In this respect, the European Parliament has been asked to re-consider its position on the Passenger Name Record (PNR) system, subject to appropriate data protection guarantees.

35. Serious attention should be paid to the ways into which money and weapons end up in the hands of potential terrorists, in order to dismantle such networks and punish the culprits.

4. The need to prevent radicalisation and combat the root causes of jihadism

36. In its [Resolution 1258 \(2001\)](#) on democracies facing terrorism, the Assembly stated that “long-term prevention of terrorism must include a proper understanding of its social, economic, political and religious roots and of the individual’s capacity for hatred. If these issues are properly addressed, it will be possible to seriously undermine the grass roots support for terrorists and their recruitment networks”.

37. In its [Resolution 1754 \(2010\)](#) “Fight against extremism: achievements, deficiencies and failures”, the Assembly stated that: “The European public and governments have become increasingly aware of the extent of the threat posed by Islamic fundamentalism, an ideology which, although remaining marginal in Europe, exerts a growing attraction among young Muslims, finding fertile ground in their frustration caused by racism, discrimination, social exclusion and unemployment, which tend to affect them more than the rest of the population. This form of extremism has led to a number of deadly terrorist attacks.”

38. The three French jihadists who killed 17 people in Paris had met radical Islamists in prison and elsewhere. Two of them had served prison sentences for operating a scheme to send young Europeans to fight in Syria and in Iraq. One of them had received military training in the Yemen.

39. We should pay more attention to the ways into which young people are indoctrinated into terrorism, for instance in prisons and, yes, in certain mosques too. The Internet and social media should be more closely monitored with a view to fighting hate speech, radicalisation and cyber-jihadism.

40. The Council of Europe could perhaps launch a public debate on the compatibility of the different world views, including Islam, with the functioning of a democratic State, where all human rights, such as defined in the European Convention on Human Rights, are effectively protected.

41. Again we reiterate the statement our Assembly made in its [Resolution 1754 \(2010\)](#), the Assembly underlining that “[r]esolute action against discrimination, emphasis on civic education and intercultural and inter-religious dialogue, involvement of civil society and non-governmental organisations – especially those representing segments of society which are excluded *de jure* or *de facto* from ordinary channels of participation – in consultation or decision-making processes are key instruments to reduce the potential attraction of extremist groups and movements”, including jihadists.

42. Thus the Assembly called on Council of Europe member States “to deal with this threat effectively while avoiding the stigmatisation of Islam as a religion. More efforts should be made to fight against Islamophobia and to combat the negative stereotyping of Islam and Muslims in society”.

43. The fact that the three Paris terrorists had gone through the French national education system is an indication that our European education systems should be re-assessed. Some years ago the Council of Europe launched initiatives in the field of education for democratic citizenship; it is probably worth re-launching some of those activities. Special attention should be given to education in marginalised and disadvantaged contexts.

5. Conclusions

44. More than an assault on freedom of expression, aimed at silencing and intimidating critical voices, or yet another act of anti-Semitic violence – which they also were – the Paris terrorist attacks were also attacks against the very values of democracy and freedom in general, against the type of society that our pan-European Organisation has aimed at building since the end of the Second World War.

45. In the draft resolution, I have tried to summarise the main Council of Europe principles and standards that are at stake and in particular those concerning freedom of expression. I have also addressed a number of recommendations to the Council of Europe member States to take into account in their fight against terrorism and the jihadist threat and tried to list the main challenges European democracies should face if they want to prevent radicalisation and combat the root causes of religious fanaticism.

46. Many of these proposals and challenges are in line with the immediate actions the Secretary General of the Council of Europe proposed “to combat radicalisation leading to extremism”, which could be taken by the Organisation ahead of the Ministerial Session in Brussels in May 2015.⁶

47. For its part, I believe that the Assembly should continue to follow closely and try to tackle, through the work of its committees and the newly launched No Hate Parliamentary Alliance, the main challenges rising from the recent terrorist attacks in Paris, namely: the upsurge of the jihadist threat and the issue of foreign terrorist fighters; the protection of human rights in the fight against terrorism; the need to combat the root causes of radicalisation and religious fanaticism, such as social exclusion, discrimination or even segregation; the process of radicalisation in prisons; the continuing fight against hate speech, racism and intolerance, including anti-Semitism and Islamophobia; and the role of education for democratic citizenship and intercultural dialogue.

6. See document SG/Inf(2015)4.