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Preventing the radicalisation of children by fighting the root causes

Motion for a resolution

tabled by the Committee on Social Affairs, Health and Sustainable Development

This motion has not been discussed in the Assembly and commits only those who have signed it

In its Resolution 2031 (2015) on “Terrorist attacks in Paris: together for a democratic response” adopted in January 2015, the Parliamentary Assembly called upon member States to take “preventive measures aimed at eradicating the root causes of radicalisation among young people” and “measures to combat marginalisation, social exclusion, discrimination and segregation among young people in disadvantaged neighbourhoods”.

Indeed, certain groups of young people, often minors from disadvantaged urban neighbourhoods, are increasingly at risk of being drawn into radical movements of all kinds (Islamist, neo-Nazi, extreme nationalist etc.) for various reasons. Children’s rights experts with substantial experience on the ground have identified two main causes explaining the particular vulnerability of these children: a feeling of profound injustice, often due to exclusion from “mainstream” society and discrimination experienced by themselves or others, for example in accessing higher education or the labour market, and a sense of not having a social purpose and utility.

These feelings lead to an increased interest in any social action proposed to them, including by radical leaders who are often skilful in approaching minors in different contexts (internet, communities, associations, detention centres). Furthermore, minors who have been drawn into radical movements at some stage often find themselves stigmatised later and have difficulties reintegrating into “mainstream” society.

Building on previous texts, the Assembly should elaborate more specific recommendations for policies against the radicalisation of minors, involving their local communities and families and promoting measures aimed at rehabilitation after radical experiences, programmes for education on democratic citizenship and further action to facilitate young people’s social and economic inclusion from an early age onwards.

