



Resolution 2113 (2016)¹

After the Brussels attacks, an urgent need to address security failures and step up counter-terrorism co-operation

Parliamentary Assembly

1. The Parliamentary Assembly is horrified by the terrorist attacks at Zaventem Airport and Maelbeek metro station in Brussels on 22 March 2016 in which 32 people were killed and over 300 were injured, 45 of whom remain in hospital with severe injuries. These attacks are the latest in a series of serious terrorist acts, including the ones in Paris, Ankara and Istanbul targeting Council of Europe member States. The Assembly deplores the loss of innocent lives and expresses sympathy and solidarity with the families of victims and all those who suffered in these inhumane attacks.
2. The Assembly reiterates its strongest condemnation of terrorism in all forms, and recalls its previous resolutions relating to terrorism, in particular [Resolution 2090 \(2016\)](#) on combating international terrorism while protecting Council of Europe standards and values and [Resolution 2091 \(2016\)](#) on foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq. In this context, it notes that the barbaric terrorist entity known as “Daesh” has claimed responsibility for the Brussels bombings.
3. Terrorism feeds off hatred and intolerance and aims to destroy our political system and the very foundations of democratic societies. It must be confronted with equal resolve wherever it occurs, whatever reasons are put forward to justify it, and whoever it is directed at. Likewise, our solidarity shall be extended to all victims of terrorist acts, whether they occur in a major European city or elsewhere in Europe or the world.
4. The Assembly urges State leaders not only to make solemn statements after terrorist attacks but also to learn lessons and to take resolute action. The statements are necessary to reaffirm our values but are not enough to protect them and to guarantee security.
5. All Council of Europe member States must urgently draw conclusions from the tragic events in Brussels and in other cities of member States, which were also the result of failures and shortcomings at national, European Union and international levels. Co-ordination in the Brussels Capital Region has not proven sufficiently functional to respond to modern security needs and therefore needs to be profoundly reformed.
6. The Assembly recalls [Resolution 2091 \(2016\)](#) and expresses its concern about the continuing supply of foreign fighters from European countries. It notes that whereas France, Germany and the United Kingdom reportedly supply the highest numbers, Belgium, Denmark and Sweden have the highest per capita figures. It also notes with concern that Belgium has become a hub for jihadist recruiting and that the deteriorating position of Daesh in the Middle East may lead to a surge in jihadist recruiting and terrorist activities on the European continent.
7. As a result of a lack of political guidance to ensure the necessary co-ordination and co-operation among various – and at times competing – security and law-enforcement agencies, certain areas in European towns have become “no-go zones” for the police and breeding grounds for radicalised extremists and terrorists.

1. *Assembly debate* on 21 April 2016 (17th Sitting) (see [Doc. 14031](#), report of the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy, rapporteur: Mr Emanuelis Zingeris). *Text adopted by the Assembly* on 21 April 2016 (17th Sitting).



8. For too long, officials and politicians in Europe have turned a blind eye to the lack of integration and the growing radicalisation among young people, and have ignored or underestimated the scale of the terrorist threat. We must now urgently make a realistic assessment of possible security flaws. Our States are duty-bound to protect the lives of citizens and the fundamental values of democracy. Our societies must be ready to pay a much higher price for security with the highest possible respect for individual freedom, privacy and our democratic values.

9. In the face of ever-growing international terrorist networks, a co-ordinated pan-European response is needed more than ever. As terrorism is an international phenomenon, counter-terrorism efforts must go beyond European boundaries and involve third countries ready to co-operate, in particular in neighbouring regions.

10. In the light of the above, the Assembly calls on the relevant authorities of the Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as those whose parliaments enjoy partnership for democracy and observer status, and other neighbouring States to ensure:

10.1. at national level:

10.1.1. the highest possible level of communication, information sharing, mandatory co-ordination and co-operation between various law-enforcement agencies, special services and, where applicable, regional and municipal police, including the sharing of relevant databases;

10.1.2. the implementation of effective measures to prevent and combat radicalisation; in this respect, the Assembly stresses the importance of inclusive, civic and secular education and refers to the specific measures in this area put forward in [Resolution 2091 \(2016\)](#); it also refers to the Council of Europe Action Plan on the Fight against Violent Extremism and Radicalisation Leading to Terrorism, which provides support to member States in the designing of appropriate measures in the public sector, in particular in schools and prisons, and on the Internet;

10.1.3. the integration of various “closed” communities into their local neighbourhood with a view to ensuring that there are no “no-go zones” or ghettos where common rules are inapplicable;

10.1.4. that appropriate means are granted to law-enforcement bodies and security and intelligence services to prevent and fight inflammatory rhetoric and hate speech;

10.1.5. that insignia and symbols of internationally recognised terrorist organisations are forbidden;

10.1.6. an in-depth study of best practice of countries with extensive counter-terrorism experience, in particular as regards the safety of public buildings and transport infrastructure, as well as cyber-security;

10.2. at international level, enhanced, efficient and timely communication, information sharing, co-ordination and co-operation among the relevant law-enforcement agencies, special services and international mechanisms with a view to controlling and, if appropriate, preventing the travel of individuals suspected of belonging to terrorist networks or of being involved in terrorist activity;

10.3. at both national and international levels, the widest possible information and experience sharing on the causes, the contributing factors, the development, the action by law-enforcement agencies in dealing with, and the post-crisis management of terrorist attacks in Europe;

10.4. facilitation of strengthened international co-operation with an equal level of determination against all terrorist entities in preventing and suppressing their activities, and pursuing and prosecuting all terrorist groups and their members.

11. At European Union level, the Assembly underlines the need for an ambitious European security strategy, including better exchange of information between intelligence services and closer co-operation between police and judicial authorities. In this respect, the Assembly:

11.1. welcomes the recent European Parliament approval of the Passenger Name Record (PNR), which it called for in [Resolution 2031 \(2015\)](#) on terrorist attacks in Paris: together for a democratic response, and invites all those involved to study ways of extending the application of the PNR to countries which are not European Union members;

11.2. calls for a common European counter-terrorism intelligence unit.

12. The Assembly recognises that there is currently a lack of co-operation, co-ordination and sharing of best practice among parliamentarians in the oversight of defence and security policy and urges parliaments of member States to consider ways and means of tackling this problem, including the possibility of re-establishing an interparliamentary body and/or reactivating the ESDA (European Security and Defence Assembly, the former Assembly of the Western European Union (WEU)), to fill the void in this area.

13. In addition, the Assembly refers to the proposals contained in [Resolution 2090 \(2016\)](#) on combating international terrorism while protecting Council of Europe standards and values and [Resolution 2091 \(2016\)](#) on foreign fighters in Syria and Iraq, which remain of utmost relevance, and again calls on the relevant authorities of the Council of Europe member and observer States, as well as those whose parliaments enjoy partnership for democracy and observer status, and other neighbouring States, to implement them as a matter of priority.