



**Doc. 14044**

26 April 2016

## Restricting rights to protect national security – how far can States go?

### Motion for a resolution

tabled by Mr Boriss CILEVIČS and other members of the Assembly

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

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Restrictions on certain fundamental rights and freedoms, such as freedom of expression or freedom of assembly, are envisaged by the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Under certain conditions, such restrictions can be legitimate.

To fight against terrorism, several Council of Europe member States resort to exceptional measures. By enacting the state of emergency, or amending existing legislation - in the interest of national security and public safety - they narrow the scope of a number of fundamental freedoms. These restrictions can be problematic and have been considered in reports by the Parliamentary Assembly (on *Secret detentions and illegal transfers of detainees involving Council of Europe member States*, on *Human rights and the fight against terrorism*, etc.). The Assembly has repeatedly stated that terrorism can and must be combated effectively by means that fully respect human rights and the rule of law.

Now attempts to limit fundamental freedoms are made under the pretext of the "hybrid war" - a concept that is not legally defined. In this context, some member States are in the process of criminalising not only actions but also the expression of certain opinions as crimes against the State.

Defending the constitutional order and national security are clearly legitimate aims, but they must be pursued with means that remain within the limits set by the ECHR, as interpreted by the European Court of Human Rights. The Assembly shall examine these issues in light of the Council of Europe's *acquis* to analyse if these restrictions can be justified and if yes, under what conditions; including by making use of the expertise of the Venice Commission.

*Signed (see overleaf)*



*Signed*<sup>1</sup>:

CILEVIČS Boriss, Latvia, SOC  
AMORUSO Francesco Maria, Italy, ALDE  
ANDERSON Donald, United Kingdom, SOC  
ANTIČEVIĆ MARINOVIĆ Ingrid, Croatia, SOC  
BESELIA Eka, Georgia, SOC  
BİLGEHAN Gülsün, Turkey, SOC  
BONET Sílvia Eloísa, Andorra, SOC  
BUTLER Dawn, United Kingdom, SOC  
CEPEDA José, Spain, SOC  
CHRISTOFFERSEN Lise, Norway, SOC  
CORSINI Paolo, Italy, SOC  
DOKLE Namik, Albania, SOC  
FOULKES George, United Kingdom, SOC  
FRIDEZ Pierre-Alain, Switzerland, SOC  
GAMBARO Adele, Italy, ALDE  
GUTIÉRREZ Antonio, Spain, SOC  
JANSSON Eva-Lena, Sweden, SOC  
JAPARIDZE Tedo, Georgia, SOC  
JENSEN Mogens, Denmark, SOC  
KOBAKHIDZE Manana, Georgia, SOC  
LE BORGN' Pierre-Yves, France, SOC  
LESKAJ Valentina, Albania, SOC  
MAELEN Dirk, Van der, Belgium, SOC  
MAGAZINOVIĆ Saša, Bosnia and Herzegovina, SOC  
MASSEY Doreen, United Kingdom, SOC  
MAURY PASQUIER Liliane, Switzerland, SOC  
MEALE Alan, United Kingdom, SOC  
MIKKO Marianne, Estonia, SOC  
NEGUTA Andrei, Republic of Moldova, SOC  
NICOLAIDES Nicos, Cyprus, SOC  
PRESCOTT John, United Kingdom, SOC  
RODRÍGUEZ RAMOS Soraya, Spain, SOC  
RUSTAMYAN Armen, Armenia, SOC  
SCHENNACH Stefan, Austria, SOC  
SHERRIFF Paula, United Kingdom, SOC  
ŠKOBERNE Jan, Slovenia, SOC  
SUTTER Petra, De, Belgium, SOC  
TORNARE Manuel, Switzerland, SOC  
VASILI Petrit, Albania, SOC  
VĚSAITĚ Birutė, Lithuania, SOC  
WURM Gisela, Austria, SOC

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1. ALDE: Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe  
SOC: Socialist Group