Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
https://pace.coe.int

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Doc. 14151
06 October 2016

The intelligence failures around suicide bomber Ibrahim El Bakraoui

Reply to Written question[1]: Written question No. 705 (Doc. 14059)
Committee of Ministers

1. The Committee of Ministers would emphasise the overriding importance it attaches to the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. It is convinced of the need for a proper exchange of information between police forces to succeed in combating the scourge of terrorism effectively.

2. It points out that, at its 125th Session (Brussels, 19 May 2015), it adopted an Action Plan on "The fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism" and the Additional Protocol to the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (CETS No. 196). The main aim of the Protocol is in fact to prevent and combat the problem of "foreign terrorist fighters", particularly by making it a criminal offence to "travel abroad for the purpose of terrorism". This is the first international instrument in the world to provide legal and practical means to curb this phenomenon. To date, only one country (Albania) has ratified it. The Committee of Ministers sincerely hopes that other ratifications will follow shortly so that the Protocol can rapidly come into force.

3. At its 126th Session (Sofia, 18 May 2016), the Committee of Ministers reviewed the implementation of the aforementioned Action Plan. On this occasion, it called for the expeditious designation of the 24/7 contact points and the establishment of a network of these contact points to facilitate the timely exchange of police information on foreign terrorist fighters, as provided for by the Protocol. To follow up on this decision, the Secretary General sent a letter to all the Permanent Representatives to the Council of Europe inviting them to ask their authorities to designate their contact points for the Council of Europe network on foreign terrorist fighters as quickly as possible. A meeting of these contact points is scheduled for 17 October 2016 to discuss the best way of setting up the network efficiently.

4. The Committee of Ministers has also been informed of the establishment in Belgium of a parliamentary committee of inquiry tasked with examining the events in Brussels on 22 March 2016, which it strongly condemned in a statement. This committee will look in particular at questions linked to Mr El Bakraoui's deportation in 2015.

1. Adopted at the 1266th meeting of the Ministers' Deputies (28 September 2016).