Parliamentary Assembly
Assemblée parlementaire
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COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

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Repeated attacks on police, firefighters and medical staff: a call for urgent action to restore law and order

Motion for a resolution
tabled by Mr Bob De BRABANDERE and other members of the Assembly

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

On 28 December 2022, it was reported that the city of Strasbourg issued a map that contained information on the areas where citizens could safely park their cars on New Year's Eve. The reason behind issuing this list of safe places is that, every year in France, hundreds of cars are being burnt. Despite Covid in France in 2021, 874 cars were reportedly torched during a single night.

This "tradition" of burning cars on New Year's Eve has started in the 1970's with a sharp rise in the 1990's. "*French suburban youths first started burning cars as a way to get the attention of society, the media and politicians*," reported Time Magazine. "*Later, the practice became an ambush tactic to draw law and fire authorities to the scene — where gangs then attack them. Now the act works as a manner of daily protest against alienation, discrimination and the indifference of more affluent French society*."

Over decades this practice has spread all over France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Austria, Sweden, etc. Any occasion, like a football game, any sort of celebration or a perceived injustice became a pretext for mass riots, arson, vandalism, widespread sexual harassment and looting. Not only against security forces, but since a few years also against firefighters and medical staff, leading to many injuries and even fatal casualties amongst anyone who is being perceived as a representative of the State or public order in general.

The Parliamentary Assembly should therefore examine at its earliest convenience how law and order can be restored, identify who are these groups of repeat offenders, how media should correctly report on these events and how security forces, firefighters, medical staff, (young) women and the general public can be protected against these forms of extreme and repeated violence.

Signed (see overleaf)

Signed:

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