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Protecting and supporting the victims of terrorism

Motion for a resolution
tabled by the Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy

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

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Terrorism is one of the most cruel phenomena and most serious threats to our societies. Over the last few years, hundreds of innocent people were killed and wounded in terrorist attacks in many European countries.

While the loss of life is perhaps the most outrageous and tragic consequence of terrorist acts, the lives of those who survive such attacks and their close families, as well as of those who lose their loved ones, change dramatically and will never be the same again.

The Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy had the opportunity to hear testimonies of survivors, as well as of relatives and friends of those killed, of the bloody attacks on Utøya Island in Norway, at Charlie Hebdo and at the Bataclan in Paris. These traumatic stories should prompt to do more to address the specific problems of victims of terrorism including, in the first instance, the recognition of a special status, compensation and long-term psychological support.

The recent announcement by Secretary General Thorbjørn Jagland that the Council of Europe 2005 Guidelines on the Protection of Victims of Terrorism would be updated is a welcome step aimed at reaffirming the Organisation's leading role in the area of preventing, fighting against, and dealing with the consequences of terrorist attacks.

For its part, the Parliamentary Assembly should carefully study the situation of victims of terrorism: the specific problems which they are faced with; whether they receive, at national and international levels, all the protection and assistance that they need; and what additional efforts could be made to ease their suffering and facilitate recovery. A report should be prepared on this important issue.