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Terrorist recruitment: a Commission's Communication addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation

The Communication adopted by the Commission on 'Terrorist Recruitment: addressing the factors contributing to violent radicalisation' constitutes the Commission's contribution, as requested by the Hague Program, to a strategy being developed by the Council of the European Union on the same subject. The document reports on the Commission's ongoing work in the area and proposes possible ways in which work in various fields within its competence could be channelled more effectively into addressing the issue.

Following the attacks in Madrid, the European Council adopted a Declaration on 25 March 2004, on Combating Terrorism which highlights the need to look at the prevention of the potential for terrorist recruitment. Clearly, the London attacks in July this year continued to reinforce the need to address this complex problem with a well-thought approach.

The actions and recommendations presented in the Communication are a combination of various measures and are to be viewed as complementary to, and in support of, current national efforts. The Commission however believes that the EU, with its span of policies in various areas that could be used to address violent radicalisation, is well placed to gather and spread at European level the relevant expertise that is being acquired by the Member States in addressing this problem. Furthermore, the measures being proposed are not to be considered as exhaustive and in the future more measures could be proposed, particularly when research into the problem, some of which will be financed by the Commission, progresses.

In summary, the Communication:

- describes the EU instruments that are already available in the field of **broadcast media and the internet** and whose use could be enhanced to stem further the spreading of terrorist propaganda;
- describes the education, youth engagement and European citizenship programs that are available that can have an indirect effect on preventing violent radicalisation from taking root in youngsters via the promotion of **inter-cultural understanding** and a European identity that nevertheless respects and promotes cultural diversity;
- shows how enhancement of **integration policies**, which are stand-alone policies, could have ancillary effects on the prevention of violent radicalisation and stresses the importance of **interfaith dialogue**, as well as dialogues between the States and religions;
- encourages more cooperation between the law enforcement authorities and security services of the Member States at operational, intelligence and policy levels and suggests **more sharing of best practices and expertise on violence radicalisation** via EU Structures;

- supports more extensive **analysis** of violent radicalisation and foresees the creation of **networks of European experts** in the field and the financing of **studies** on related topics that will be a basis for better policy-making in the future;
- describes how the EU's external relations policy is being enhanced to **reduce** those factors in foreign countries which might contribute to **the emergence of a terrorism 'breeding ground'**;

The Commission considers that the measures being proposed, both in the short and long term, in this Communication are not meant to be exhaustive in nature. In the future other measures could be proposed, particularly in the light of better knowledge acquired on the subject.

Links:

- European Council 25th March 2004 Declaration
- Communication of the Commission *Communication on Prevention, preparedness and response to terrorist attacks*
- The Hague Programme
- Revised Action Plan on Combating Terrorism
- Memorial Report dedicated to victims of terrorism (March 2005)

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