



Passenger Name Record and data protection talks should go hand in hand, MEPs say

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To protect the EU against terrorist attacks and yet safeguard citizens' rights, MEPs advocate de-radicalisation programmes, stepping up checks at Schengen area external borders, and better information exchange among EU member states, in a resolution voted on Wednesday. They urge member states to make faster progress on the Data Protection Package, so that talks could proceed in parallel with those on an EU Passenger Name Record proposal and thus deliver a full set of EU data protection rules.

The joint resolution was approved by 532 votes to 136, with 36 abstentions.

Counter-terrorism measures must not compromise fundamental rights

MEPs pledge to work "towards the finalisation of an EU PNR directive by the end of the year" and encourage member states to make progress on the Data Protection Package, so that negotiations on both proposals can take place in parallel. They aim to ensure that data collection and sharing is based on a coherent data protection framework offering legally-binding personal data protection standards across the EU.

They also urge the Commission to assess the consequences of the EU Court of Justice's annulment of the Data Retention Directive and to seek independent experts' views on the "necessity and proportionality" of the PNR proposal.

Tackling the growing threat posed by "EU foreign fighters"

MEPs call for a "multi-layer" approach to tackle radicalisation, calling on member states to:

- invest in educational and social schemes that address the root causes of radicalisation,
- counterbalance online incitement to perform terrorist acts,
- prevent recruitment and departures to join terrorist organisations,
- disrupt financial support to terrorist organisations and trafficking of firearms, and
- set up "disengagement and de-radicalisation" programmes.

Stepping up checks at external borders

MEPs call on member states to prevent the movement of terrorist suspects by strengthening external border checks. They rule out any proposals to suspend the

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Schengen system, but encourage member states to tighten up existing rules and make better use of the Schengen Information System (SIS) and the Advanced Passenger Information Systems (APIS). They reiterate that certain targeted checks can already be performed on individuals as they cross external borders.

Improving cooperation and information sharing

Member states should improve the exchange of information between law enforcement authorities and EU agencies. In particular, they should ensure that their national units provide Europol with the relevant information, MEPs say. They point out that only 50% of information regarding terrorism and organised crime is currently given by member states to Europol and Eurojust. They also back plans to create a European counter-terrorism platform within Europol so as to maximise its operational, technical and intelligence exchange capabilities.

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