

Council Conclusions: COVID-19 Impact on Terrorism and Violent Extremism

News

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On 8 June 2021, the JHA Council adopted [conclusions on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on terrorism and violent extremism](#). The conclusions follow the initiative of Portugal to assess the prevention and countering of radicalisation in the EU Member States during its Council presidency. They also contribute to the general debate in the Council as regards the consequences of COVID-19 on criminality. Looking at the current situation, the conclusions state:

- The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on authorities responsible for countering terrorism and violent extremism has varied; security intelligence services and most law enforcement agencies were confronted with constraints on some of their activities;
- The role of the online dimension has increased since the beginning of the pandemic both as regards terrorists/extremists who shifted their activities to the Internet and authorities where online working increasingly became part of their daily life (resulting in several challenges, e.g. as to the exchange of classified information);
- Although the COVID-19 pandemic has not resulted in a clear increase in terrorist attacks, in the medium to long term, the pandemic and its socio-economic consequences might have a negative impact on terrorist and extremist threats, contributing to a growth of breeding grounds for radicalisation;
- “Coronavirus denier movements” could contribute to the potential of violence since they attracted extremists from various ideological backgrounds;

Considering this scenario, the conclusions identified the following needs for action:

- Continuously update information that contributes to the understanding and assessment of the online dimension of the terrorist and extremist threats, particularly by providing information to the relevant EU bodies (i.e. INTCEN and Europol);
- Swiftly implement the new Regulation on the dissemination of terrorist content online;
- Continue efforts to prevent all types of illegal extremist and terrorist propaganda, the incitement of violence and the illegal financing of hate speech and violent extremism;
- Develop standard technical solutions through the EU Innovation Hub, so that the opportunities resulting from new technologies for terrorist and extremist activities can be detected and curbed;
- Enhance the development of secure channels for the exchange of classified information.

The conclusions are connected with the conclusions on the impact of COVID-19 on internal security which were also [adopted](#) at the JHA Council meeting in June 2021. (→ [related link](#)).

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