

Council Conclusions on Future Priorities to Counter Terrorism

Thomas Wahl

News

On 12 December 2024, the Council approved the first of two sets of [conclusions on strengthening the common effort to counter terrorism](#). These conclusions set out strategic objectives and highlight key areas where increased efforts are needed to improve operational effectiveness. The aim is to shape the EU's counter-terrorism policies and actions over the next five years. The Member States note that worldwide unrest has led to an increased terrorist threat in some Member States, which contributes to increased radicalisation and social polarisation across the Union.

The Council calls on Member States to enhance their preparedness and response capabilities in order to prevent terrorist and violent extremist attacks. The conclusions consider the following three main areas of intervention for strengthening counterterrorism efforts:

- Exchange of information;
- Detection and prevention of the infiltration of persons posing a terrorist threat;
- Fight against terrorism and violent extremism online.

The conclusions make several recommendations to the Member States and the Commission. They, *inter alia*, call on Member States to continue entering alerts into the Schengen Information System based on return decisions and to effectively implement the return of persons posing a security threat. The Commission is called to strictly enforce the Digital Services Act to address the challenges posed by non-compliant online platforms. Looking at horizontal issues, the conclusions propose, among other things, increasing the involvement of counterterrorism authorities in the European Multidisciplinary Platform Against Criminal Threats (EMPACT). The Commission is invited to "develop an effective approach" for the implementation of the recommendations of the High-level Group on Access to Data for Effective Law Enforcement which address the law enforcement authorities' needs to access electronic communications (→related link).

The conclusions of 12 December 2024 were complemented by conclusions of 16 December 2024 that emphasised the EU's future policy to reinforce the links between the common foreign security policy and justice and home affairs action (→ related link).

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