

EP Resolution on EU Security Union Strategy

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News

MEPs welcome the new EU Security Union Strategy presented by the European Commission in July 2020 (→ [euclid 2/2020, 71-73](#)), but stress that any new legislative proposal must be accompanied by a thorough and comprehensive impact assessment, especially on fundamental rights and risks of discrimination. With 543 to 64 votes and 82 abstentions, the EP adopted a [non-legislative resolution on 17 December 2020](#) making an important political statement on the EU's future security policy. MEPs call for effective implementation and evaluation of the existing EU legislation related to internal security and stress that the Union's security policy must remain grounded in the values upon which the EU was founded. The resolution refers to a number of current security issues, among them:

- The fight against terrorism and organised crime;
- Child abuse;
- Disinformation and hybrid threats;
- Migrant smuggling;
- Illicit drugs and firearms trafficking;
- The impact of new technologies on security;
- The EPPO's contribution to internal security;
- The reform of Europol, police and judicial cooperation in criminal matters.

As regards the *fight against terrorism*, the resolution welcomes the new Commission counter-terrorism strategy presented on 9 December 2020 (→ separate news item) and stresses that the terrorist threat in the EU remains high. The Commission is urged to ensure full and swift implementation of Directive (EU) 2017/541 on combating terrorism in all Member States.

MEPs demand a holistic approach to *preventing and countering radicalisation*, which should combine security, education, social, cultural, and anti-discrimination policies, and involve all the relevant stakeholders.

In the field of *organised crime*, MEPs advocate the revision of Council Framework Decision 2008/841/JHA of 24 October 2008 on the fight against organised crime and reiterate the need to establish a common definition of organised crime. Further measures should be taken on freezing and confiscating assets, including on non-conviction-based assets.

The resolution reiterates the EP's call on EU institutions and the Member States to resolutely fight systemic *corruption* and to devise effective instruments for preventing, combating, and sanctioning corruption and the fight against fraud. The use of public funds should be regularly monitored. It renews its call on the Commission to resume its annual anti-corruption monitoring and reporting immediately, which should cover all Member States and EU institutions, agencies, and bodies. EU funding under the new multiannual financial

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ISSN: 1862-6947

<https://euclid.eu>



framework and the Recovery Plan must be effectively prevented from being used for corruption and fraud by organised crime groups.

The fight against *child abuse* online and offline must be stepped up. The EP welcomes the Commission's plan to present a legislative proposal in this regard in 2021. It also renewed its call to appoint an EU representative for children's rights, who should serve as a point of reference for all EU matters and policy related to children.

A major part of the resolution deals with *new technologies* and their impact on internal security issues. As regards law enforcement access to encrypted data, MEPs call for a thorough pre-assessment of a regulatory resolution. They stress that end-to-end encryption contributes to citizens' privacy and the security of IT systems and that it is indispensable for investigative journalists and whistle-blowers.

Considering that new and evolving technologies permeate all aspects of security and create novel security challenges and threats, the resolution also highlights that *5G infrastructure* is a strategic component of future European security and a key component of European strategic resilience. The EU needs a plan for building European 5G, including a plan to phase out and replace 5G technology from third countries that do not respect fundamental rights and European values.

As for the proposal to update *Europol's mandate* (→ separate news item), the resolution supports the goal of equipping the agency with all necessary tools for more effective cooperation with its partners; however, it is also emphasized that such changes should be accompanied by enhanced political accountability as well as enhanced judicial control and parliamentary scrutiny.

In the field of *police cooperation*, the resolution takes note of the possible modernisation of the legislative framework of the Prüm decisions. One of the shortcomings identified is the poor data quality provided by Member States. MEPs reiterate, however, that a reform proposal must be accompanied by a thorough impact assessment, covering fundamental rights implications, which should demonstrate whether there would be added value in automatic data exchange and whether any additional categories of biometric data are needed.

Regarding *judicial cooperation*, the resolution acknowledges Eurojust's work in supporting and coordinating investigations/prosecutions of transnational crime but stresses that judicial cooperation in criminal matters is lagging behind in digitalisation. The Commission is called on to carry out an assessment of a potential extension of the EPPO's mandate, in line with Art. 83 TFEU, once the EPPO is fully operational.

Ultimately, the resolution voices concern over several *cross-cutting issues*:

- A systematic lack of full and timely implementation of EU security measures by the Member States requires not only their implementation by keeping to the letter of the law but also in the spirit of the law;
- The effectiveness of the EU's security measures has not yet been proven by publicly available quantitative and qualitative evidence;
- Regular evaluation of current security policies and agreements should include an examination of whether they must be brought in line with CJEU case law (e.g., the PNR agreements with the USA and Australia);
- Outsourcing of a number of activities from law enforcement agencies to the private sector is a matter of concern, particularly since there are deficiencies in oversight over any private-public cooperation in the field of security and in the transparency of EU funding for private companies establishing security systems or parts thereof.

Furthermore, MEPs are deeply concerned by the lack of resources allocated to some EU agencies acting in the field of justice and home affairs (JHA) to comply fully with their mandate. They therefore call for proper funding and staffing of the JHA agencies in order for the EU to deliver on the Security Union Strategy.

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The project is co-financed by the Union Anti-Fraud Programme (UAFP), managed by the European Anti-Fraud Office (OLAF).



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