

ADDITIONAL PROTOCOL TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S CONVENTION ON THE PREVENTION OF TERRORISM

Key points

- Preventing and combating terrorism, violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism has been one of the Council of Europe's priorities since the 1970s. The Council has continually stepped up its efforts, basing its action on respect for human rights, the rule of law and democracy.
- This Additional Protocol is intended to supplement the provisions of the Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism, opened for signature in Warsaw (Poland) on 16 May 2005. It provides a legal framework for European States in implementing their obligations under United Nations Security Council [Resolution 2178 \(2014\)](#) on "threats to international peace and security caused by terrorist acts", in particular as regards the criminalisation of activities related to the phenomenon of "foreign terrorist fighters".
- The draft was finalised in March 2015 by the Committee on Foreign Terrorist Fighters and Related Issues, operating under the authority of the Council of Europe's Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER).
- The Committee of Ministers adopted the [Additional Protocol](#) on 19 May at its ministerial session in Brussels. It also adopted a [political declaration](#) and a [three-year action plan](#) on the fight against violent extremism and radicalisation leading to terrorism. The action plan sets out a series of Council of Europe-led measures to help tackle radicalisation, including in schools, prisons and on the Internet.
- It is aimed at preventing and limiting the flows of "foreign terrorist fighters" to countries such as Syria and Iraq, by criminalising participation in a terrorist group or travelling abroad for the purpose of terrorism, as well as training, organising or funding travel for that purpose.
- According to the UN's estimations (April 2015), over 25 000 foreigners worldwide have joined the ranks of the Islamic State or Al-Qaeda.

Q&A

What is the scale of the problem?

On our continent, the most serious terrorist attacks have been perpetrated not by enemies from outside but by individuals who live, work and have families in Europe. There is a small minority within society which, for various reasons, falls in with extremist ideologies and an even smaller minority which crosses the line from expressing extremist viewpoints to the indefensible by engaging in terrorist acts.

First and foremost, it is the task of each State to prevent and combat terrorism, but a collective effort by groups of States is also needed to prevent terrorist acts from being carried out and to bring terrorists to justice.

What is the aim of the new Additional Protocol?

The aim of the additional protocol to the Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism (see below) is to criminalise:

- participating in an association or group for the purpose of terrorism;
- receiving training for terrorism;
- travelling abroad for the purpose of terrorism;
- funding travel abroad for the purpose of terrorism;
- organising or otherwise facilitating travel abroad for the purpose of terrorism.

It also provides for measures to boost international cooperation, including the setting up of a 24/7 network of contacts for the rapid exchange of information related to foreign terrorist fighters between countries.

What are the Council of Europe's main instruments for combating terrorism?

The Council of Europe has three major [international treaties](#) for combating terrorism:

The [Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism \(2005\)](#)

The Council of Europe adopted this convention to increase the effectiveness of existing international instruments for combating terrorism. The instrument provides for two main strategies for enhancing member States' efforts to prevent terrorism:

- criminalising certain actions likely to result in the committing of acts of terrorism, notably public incitement and recruitment and the provision of training for terrorism;
- developing cooperation in the sphere of prevention both nationally (national prevention policies) and internationally (revising agreements on extradition and mutual assistance, and other existing machinery).

The Convention includes a provision for the protection and compensation of victims of terrorism and provisions safeguarding human rights and the principles of rule of law in the fight against terrorism.

The [Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism \(2005\)](#)

This Convention is the first international treaty simultaneously covering prevention and financing of terrorism and connected money laundering offences. The text works on the principle that fast access to financial data or information on the assets of criminal organisations, including terrorist groups, is vital for the effective application of prevention and suppression measures and ultimately the best means of curbing their actions.

The [Convention on the Suppression of Terrorism \(1977\)](#)

This Convention is intended to facilitate the extradition of perpetrators of acts of terrorism. To that end, it lists the offences (such as plane hijackings, kidnapping, hostage-taking or the use of bombs, grenades, rockets and firearms, or letter or parcel bombs if this use endangers people) which the signatories undertake not to regard as political offences, such as an offence connected with a political offence or as a politically motivated offence. In addition, the convention signatories may choose not to regard a serious act of violence against the life, physical integrity or liberty of a person as a political offence either.

It is expressly stipulated that none of the Convention's provisions shall be interpreted as imposing an obligation to extradite a person who risks being prosecuted or punished on account of their race, religion, nationality or political opinion.

A [Protocol](#) amending the Convention was adopted in 2003, and the list of offences to be "depoliticised" was made considerably longer, to cover all the offences described in the relevant UN conventions and protocols relating to the fight against terrorism.

[Further information](#)

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