

EU strengthens rules to prevent new forms of terrorism

To respond to the evolving terrorist threat, the EU is updating and extending the tools available to it. New rules adopted by the Council on 7 March 2017 will help prevent terrorist attacks by criminalising acts such as undertaking training or travelling for terrorist purposes, as well as organising or facilitating such travel. They also strengthen the rights of the victims of terrorism.

"With this agreement, the EU is now better equipped to meet the challenge of the evolving terrorist threat. Terrorism knows no borders, but the message is now clear: foreign fighters, whether they travel to, from or within the EU, will be stopped. But security without the respect of fundamental rights is unacceptable. That is why the new rules also strengthen victims' rights and include clear safeguards to individual freedoms."

Owen Bonnici, Minister for Justice, Culture and Local Government of Malta, the country which holds the EU Council Presidency

The new rules, in the form of a Directive, strengthen and widen the scope of the existing legislation (Framework Decision 2002/475/JHA in particular). The directive criminalises:

- **Travelling within, outside or to the EU for terrorist purposes**, e.g. to join the activities of a terrorist group or with the purpose of committing a terrorist attack.
- **The organisation and facilitation of such travel**, including through logistical and material support, such as the purchase of tickets or planning itineraries;
- **Training and being trained for terrorist purposes**, e.g. in the making or use of explosives, firearms, noxious or hazardous substances mirroring the existing provision of knowingly providing such training;
- **Providing or collecting funds** with the intention or the knowledge that they are to be used to commit terrorist offences and offences related to terrorist groups or terrorist activities.

The Directive will also complement the current legislation on the **rights for victims of terrorism**. It includes a catalogue of services to meet the specific needs of victims of terrorism, such as the right to receive immediate access to professional support services providing medical and psycho-social treatments, or to receive legal or practical advice, as well as assistance with compensation claims. The emergency response mechanisms immediately after an attack will be also strengthened.

Next steps

The adoption by the Council marks the end of the legislative procedure.

Once the new rules are published in the EU Official Journal, member states will have 18 months to transpose them into national law.

The UK and Ireland are not bound by the directive, but may decide to opt in. Denmark has an opt out on this Directive.

- [Text of the Directive on combating terrorism](#)
- [Response to foreign terrorist fighters and recent terrorist attacks in Europe \(background information\)](#)
- [EU fight against terrorism \(background information\)](#)

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