News | 14.12.2011

European Anti-Terror Policies will finally be evaluated

Resolution passed with clear majority

After long negotiations, the European Parliament today has adopted a resolution[1] on the EU counter-terror policies of the last ten years with a clear majority. It calls on the Commission to do a comprehensive evaluation of all measures with regard to their effectiveness, their costs, their fundamental rights impacts, and their democratic control. The evaluation shall also look into the hidden costs that have been imposed on the private sector, which thereby is used for financing acts of sovereign power. The Parliament also calls for looking into the causes of terrorism instead of only fighting the symptoms. MEPs point out in their decision that the intensity of counter-terrorism measures also have to be reduced in line with the development of threat levels.

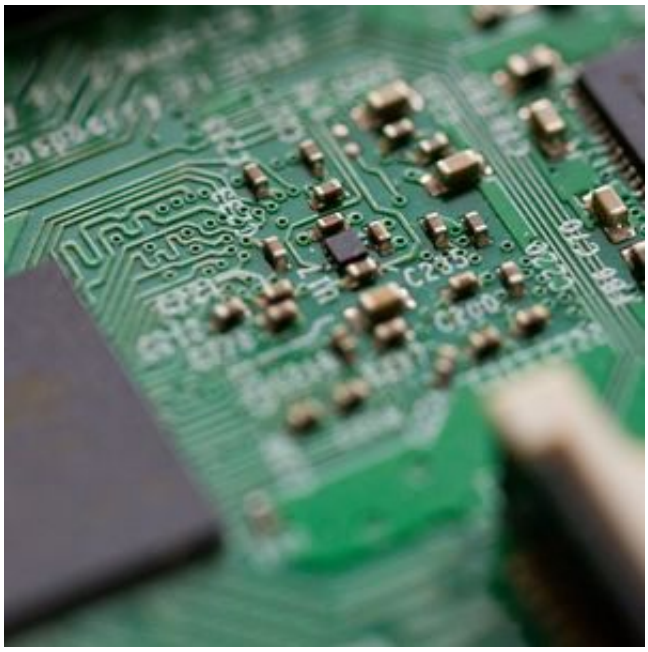
Such a thorough evaluation of ten years of the fight against terrorism is urgently needed. The European Parliament points out in its resolution that many of the meausures adopted since 2001 imply mass surveillance with totally unclear benefits, which shift the burden of proof towards unsuspicious citizens. New instruments for security agencies and law enforcement authorities have often been introduced without an impact assessment. Evaluations produced so far, e.g. as on the data retention directive, have not been able to provide proof of the necessity and proportionality on the basis of solid facts. Therefore it is to be applauded that the Commission now has to produce a comprehensive evaluation report, which will be presented to a Joint Parliamentary meeting of the European Parliament and national parliaments.

Greens/EFA have supported this decision from the beginning, though we have liked to see even more thorough research on some aspects. Unfortunately, the conservative EPP group has fought against the evaluation for months, and has watered down the resolution in the course of the negotiations. In spite of many tough compromises, it was impossible to find an agreement with them in the end. The resolution today was suported by all other groups with the euro-sceptic conservative ECR group abstaining. Conservative EPP home affairs politicians are now isolated in the European Parliament.

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