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Counter terrorism

EU cannot ignore human rights in cooperation with third countries

The European Parliament today adopted a resolution on EU cooperation with third countries on counter-terrorism. Commenting after the vote, Greens/EFA foreign affairs spokesperson **Alyn Smith** said:

"The protection of human rights cannot be an afterthought for the EU in its cooperation with third countries in the Middle East and North Africa on counter-terrorism. The European Parliament has today sent a clear message to this end.

"Concerns have been raised about the opaque nature of this new move towards cooperation with third countries. The cooperation agreement has not even been officially published: to ask us to take a position on a document we have not formally even seen underlines the extent the member states want the Parliament to turn a blind eye to rights abuses. We have today rejected that approach.

"This agreement with the League of Arab States, which does not even include a human rights clause, is a weak, vague document. There is, we quite agree, a need for cooperation with third countries, and that co-operation must be based on the rule of law and defence of human rights and the process carried out in a transparent manner.

"It should be based on an unambiguous definition of terrorism and must be subject to democratic control. It is also clear that a coherent approach to terrorism implies addressing the root causes of radicalisation, like poverty, discrimination and marginalisation. This must also be a focus of the EU in its dealings with third countries."

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