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Paris attacks

European response must focus on cooperation and not scaling back freedoms

The European Commission today outlined some proposals aimed at guiding Friday's meeting of EU justice and home affairs ministers in response to the tragic terrorist attacks in Paris. Ahead of the extraordinary council meeting, Green home affairs spokesperson **Judith Sargentini** said:

"It is still impossible to come to terms with the attacks in Paris but it is understandable that work is already beginning on a European response. EU governments and authorities must now work together to address the threat posed by terrorists across Europe but this should focus on real solutions. It is important that this response does not exacerbate public fear and uncertainty by scaling back basic democratic freedoms. At the same time we need to face down knee-jerk populist backlashes against refugees, who have come to Europe to escape the same terror and insecurity. We do not want to live in a state of fear and heightened discrimination: this is exactly the response the terrorists want.

"These attacks have again underlined the need to strengthen police, judicial and intelligence services. Not only do they need more resources for investigative and police work, there is also a glaring need to improve cooperation between the different authorities in EU member states. There are existing tools, like joint investigation teams in Europol and Eurojust, but they are hardly used and under-resourced. The worry is that focus will again turn to mass surveillance measures, like the PNR air passenger data monitoring system, which are inefficient and a massive drain on resources that are badly needed elsewhere.

"We need to do more to prevent arms are getting to terrorists in Europe. This implies strengthening EU rules to classify semi-automatic weapons as military and introducing end-user inspections. There is also a need to do more to tackle the financing of terrorism. Fully implementing the recently-agreed anti-money laundering directive without delay would be an important step to this end, as would ensuring no banks working in Europe are hosting terrorist financing. We also need to make sure we are not financing IS by purchasing oil it controls."

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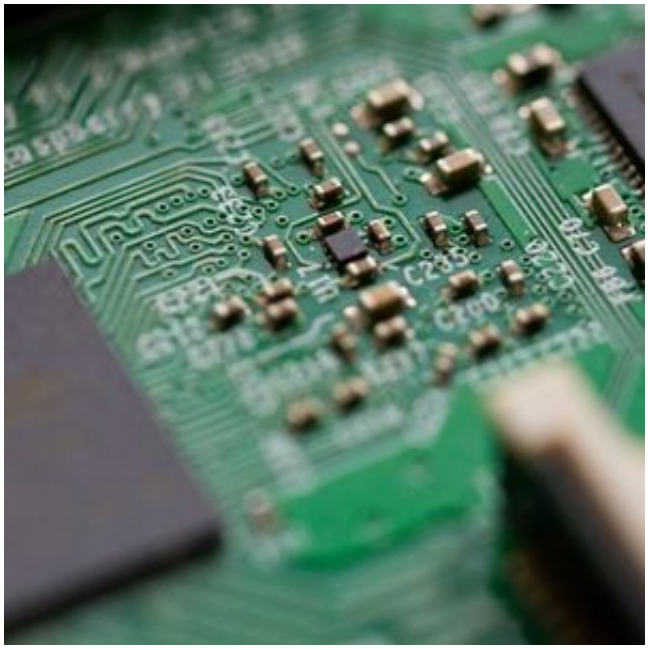


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Judith Sargentini

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