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*Mr Liviu DRAGNEA
President of the
Camera Deputaților
Palace of the Parliament
Str. Izvor nr. 2-4, sector 5
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Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the Camera Deputaților for its Opinion on the Communication 'Delivering on the European Agenda on Security to fight against terrorism and pave the way towards an effective and genuine Security Union' {COM(2016) 230 final}.

The aim of this Communication was twofold: first to assess the state of implementation of the European Agenda on Security¹ in relation to specific operational issues, and to identify implementation gaps in the fight against terrorism. Second, to identify what action was needed to address the gaps and, building on existing tools, to develop new cooperation structures between operational services responsible for combating terrorism. It also set out the roadmap towards an operational and effective Security Union increasing our collective capacity to tackle the terrorist threat.

The Commission welcomes the support of the Camera Deputaților for the roadmap and takes note of the positive remarks in the Opinion on a number of key elements in the fight against terrorism, namely information exchange, the Schengen Information System, the prevention and fight against radicalisation, the importance of cyber-security.

In addition, the Camera Deputaților raised a number of specific points on which the Commission would like to make the following comments.

¹ Commission Communication COM(2015) 185 final of 28.4.2015 'The European Agenda on Security'.

As the Opinion rightly points out, the provisions of the EU treaties make clear that national security is the exclusive competence of the Member States. In its Communication of 14 September 2016², the Commission pointed to the need to harness the potential benefits of sharing information and intelligence to make a real operational difference. However, it made clear that this should be done by making full use of the possibilities for cooperation under the EU Treaties, within the competences defined in the Treaties. This is why the Commission encouraged Member States to consider further interaction between the Counter Terrorism Group, which is an intergovernmental intelligence forum and law enforcement authorities cooperating within the framework of Europol (the European Counter-Terrorism Centre), with the objective of joining up the dots.

On violent radicalisation, the Commission welcomes the Camera Deputaţilor's positive feedback on the Communication supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism³ which the Camera Deputaţilor expressed in its recent Opinion of 4 October 2016. This Communication builds on the EU Strategy for combating radicalisation and recruitment for terrorist purposes while at the same time implementing a more holistic approach to radicalisation including other policy areas such as education or social integration and deepening certain aspects in line with the approach set out in the European Agenda on Security⁴.

The Commission supports Member States in countering terrorist propaganda through various initiatives as well as the work under the EU Internet Forum. Through the previous Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team and now the European Strategic Communications Network the Commission supports Member States in the exchange of good practice and building capacity to tackle terrorist propaganda, particularly Daesh propaganda. Within the Radicalisation Awareness Network (RAN), most civil society actors exchange best practice in developing their own counter and alternative messages. This work will be further supported through the Civil Society Empowerment Programme presented at the High Level meeting of the EU Internet Forum on 8 December 2016 in Brussels.

The Commission supports Member States in the development of multi-agency structures at local level that will facilitate coordination and cooperation between all relevant stakeholders including local authorities such as law enforcement services as well as civil society actors and communities. At the RAN high Level Conference on radicalisation that took place on 9 November 2016 in Brussels, the RAN Centre of Excellence presented a first handbook with

² Commission Communication COM(2016) 602 final of 14.9.2016 'Enhancing security in a world of mobility: improved information exchange in the fight against terrorism and stronger external borders'.

³ Commission Communication COM(2016) 379 final of 14.6.2016 'supporting the prevention of radicalisation leading to violent extremism'.

⁴ Commission Communication COM(2015) 185 final of 28.4.2015 'The European Agenda on Security'.

guiding principles which provided specific guidance on information exchange and outreach to communities.

The Commission welcomes the Camera Deputaților's interest in the Commission's action towards the implementation of the Security Agenda and the development of a genuine and effective Security Union.

The Commission hopes that the clarification provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Camera Deputaților and looks forward to continuing our political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,

*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*

*Dimitris Avramopoulos
Member of the Commission*