# [COVID-19: Council approves conclusions on the impact of the pandemic on internal security and terrorist threat](#)



The Council approved two sets of conclusions on the impact of the pandemic, one on internal security and a second on the threat posed by terrorism and violent extremism.

## Internal security

The conclusions acknowledge the unpredictable threats and challenges that the crisis posed to the internal security landscape. Focusing on making better use of existing means of cooperation and building upon established structures, the Council:

— encourages member states to identify practical solutions to prevent difficulties to strategical operational and tactical cross-border law enforcement cooperation

— underlines the need to prevent the infiltration of criminal networks in the implementation of the Next Generation EU

— encourages CEPOL (EU Agency for Law Enforcement Training) and the member states to develop scenario-based training and practical exercises to ensure preparedness and resilience for future pandemics and other crises

— stresses the need for the Commission to support Europol and the innovation lab to set up a common, resilient and secure instrument for communications in the EU law enforcement cooperation framework

— recommends to member states that they develop and promote awareness campaigns for their citizens to prevent the impact of cybercrime activities, as well as misinformation and hate speech

— encourages member states to share best practices on strategies that improve reporting channels for victims of crimes, such as domestic violence and sexual abuse, during lockdown and crisis situations

## Terrorism and violent extremism

So far the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the terrorist threat seems to have been limited. However, the protracted pandemic may increase member states' vulnerabilities and the risks of radicalisation. The online presence of extremist groups is on the rise since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to COVID-19, counter-terrorism authorities have had to increasingly rely on online capabilities rendering/making their work more difficult.

In the medium to long term, the pandemic and its socio-economic consequences may prove to be a favourable breeding ground for extremist narratives. Some (violent) far-left, far-right and Islamist extremist groups have already incorporated COVID-19 into their narratives, and this might pose security challenges in the medium and long term.

The conclusions therefore:

— Call on member states to continuously contribute to the assessment of the online dimension of the terrorist threat by providing information to the relevant EU bodies. INTCEN (EU Intelligence and Situation Centre) and Europol should continue to deepen their assessment of the impact of the pandemic on terrorist operations

— Invite member states to swiftly give effect to the regulation on terrorist content online, and the Commission and EU internet referral unit to provide support with their technical and operational expertise

— Underline the influence of algorithms and their role in fostering radicalisation as another key point that deserves attention

— Note the need to pay increased attention to emerging security risks, as well as opportunities, stemming from new technologies and underline the role of the EU innovation hub

— Underline the utmost importance of continuing to develop secure VTC systems and channels for the exchange of classified information.

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