

**AN UPDATE FROM MR NIGEL DENNIS, HEAD OF OFFICE, EURO COP**

**EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT PLENARY DEBATE WITH HOME AFFAIRS  
COMMISSIONER MAGNUS BRUNNER - THE CHANGING SECURITY  
LANDSCAPE AND THE ROLE OF POLICE AT THE HEART OF THE EU'S  
INTERNAL SECURITY STRATEGY**

On 21st October during the European Parliament Plenary meeting held in Strasbourg, MEPs debated with Home Affairs Commissioner Magnus Brunner the changing security landscape and the role of police at the heart of the EU's internal security strategy. In total, more than 30 MEPs took the floor.

A clear majority of 19 MEPs expressed their strong support to police officers.

**#protectingtheprotectors**



## **MAGNUS BRUNNER, MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION IN CHARGE OF HOME AFFAIRS**

Mr President, honourable Members, good morning, first of all, let me thank you for putting this important topic on the agenda today. Security is the issue of our times. We are being threatened from the East and we have to rethink our relationships also to the West. We also have what you just discussed before: the conflicts in the Middle East, which actually feed the threat of radical terrorism and divide our communities at home.

Of course, technology also gives new tools to the criminal networks. Our law enforcement must learn to adapt to all these new kinds of threats we are facing, like when hostile states, for instance, employ criminal gangs or even prey upon our youth to carry out hybrid attacks. Only a few days ago, two boys of 17 were arrested in the Netherlands after allegedly being recruited by hackers from Russia, working for Russia also.

In such a world, we cannot just afford business as usual. We need to level up – also when it comes to internal security. The most important way we can do that is by strengthening our cooperation between the law enforcement authorities. I think that is key. The Union has made good progress, I think, on cross-border practices especially, but there is still fragmentation, even as the need for cooperation actually increases.

This is where Europol comes in. Working closely with this Parliament, we have a unique opportunity, I think, to reinforce the EU's internal security architecture by bringing Europol into its full operational potential. Just one example to mention: the anti-smuggling regulation agreed this year. That's the first step we took. Once adopted, Europol will receive additional resources of EUR 50 million and 50 additional staff members.

But I think we must go further than that – creating within Europol specialised capacities to support investigations, for example in areas like data analytics and the digital forensic part. So I think we have to take very important steps forward.

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This brings me to a second aspect of empowering law enforcement: the improvement of access to data. As our societies continue to go digital, so do the criminals and, pretty obviously, we've got fraud, we've got cyberattacks, money laundering, recruitment, also planning violence – they're all happening online. We have a duty to protect, but we can't fulfil that without the evidence that will put criminals behind bars.

We have already taken, I think, very important steps to ensure access to data and enable criminal investigations like the E-evidence package. But the simple fact is actually that with every passing year, we are losing ground in the race against crime. I think it's time to reset the clock on that race. In June this year, the Commission adopted the Roadmap for lawful and effective access to data for law enforcement, which actually sets out actions in key areas like retention of data, interception of communications and AI, of course, which plays an important role.

For next year, we are preparing a technology roadmap on encryption to set out solutions for law enforcement to accept and access encrypted data in a lawful manner, safeguarding cybersecurity and fundamental rights. On data retention, we have already launched the impact assessment and we plan to finalise it in the first quarter of next year.

A third area, honourable Members, is organised crime. Never before have these networks been so professional, so international, so cross-border, or so sophisticated as they are today. Next year, the Commission will propose a new legislative package on updating the definition of a criminal organisation as well as the penalties they face. We will also enhance investigative tools. We will reinforce the intelligence picture against organised crime and improve overall prevention.

Some things about criminal networks are changing, but in one respect I would say they have not changed: they are still doing it for the money and they are doing it for – I would say – a lot of money actually. That is why we have the 'follow the money' approach and that approach remains so important, in my view.

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We need a full transposition and implementation of the Asset Recovery Directive. We are also taking a critical look at our gaps when it comes to tracing criminal finances, as we announced in our ProtectEU strategy, our security strategy. These are just some of the many initiatives we will be launching, including on drugs, on countering terrorism, on firearms, on human trafficking all together.

I know that there are different opinions in this House, which is fair enough when it comes to details. I respect the diversity we have in this House and let's have this debate, of course. But one thing I believe we can all agree on is that without security, there can be no freedom. Without security, there can be no prosperity. Without security, there can be no democracy. So that is why I always say that security is the issue of our time.



## **TOMAS TOBÉ, ON BEHALF OF THE EPP GROUP, SWEDEN**

We need to make Europe more safe – now and for future generations – because organised crime is on the rise across Europe. Our common task is quite clear. We need to crack down on the criminal networks. At the heart of this work are the brave men and women in law enforcement – those who safeguard our citizens and communities, sometimes by even risking their own life and safety. It is high time that we acknowledge their dedication and sacrifices, making sure that police and law enforcement are better protected.

But, to be frank, sometimes when I listen to the left of this House, it seems that you are more engaged in criticising the police officers than actually combating the criminals. We as EPP instead say that we must provide law enforcement with the tools necessary to crack down on crime, turn Europol into a truly operational police agency and strengthen our cross-border cooperation between law enforcement.

We should pay tribute to those who have made the ultimate sacrifice and got killed in the line of duty with a European Police Day. We must realise that criminality is a threat to the whole of society, to ordinary life, and to the internal market, to economic growth and to rule of law. From EPP, European citizens can trust that we will make sure that we use the full power of European cooperation to push back on this, and we call on the Commission to deliver.



## **BIRGIT SIPPEL (S&D, DE)**

Freedom and security are under pressure. On the one hand, there are hybrid threats, cyberattacks, extremism and, on the other hand, fears due to social insecurity, exclusion, hatred and agitation – offline and online. More than ever, we need police and authorities that work on an ad hoc basis, that are up to date in terms of technology, personnel and training. This also includes a wide range of skills and knowledge, from cyber and intercultural competence to trusting cooperation with civil actors.

Trust is also based on respect for freedoms and fundamental rights, on confidentiality of communication – online and offline. Therefore: More and more surveillance is not an option, but increases fears. What we need, however, is an overall surveillance account so that we can systematically protect security, freedom and fundamental rights, and strengthen trust in people and authorities anew. Because only together can we strengthen freedom and security.



## MATTHIEU VALET (PFE, FRANCE)

For me, the police are like a big family. It is a passion and above all a great pride to give back to France everything it has given me by protecting it for twenty years. In 2023, I was proud to command women and men who, with courage, defended the Republic in the face of scum who set everything on fire, ransacked everything and injured nearly 1,000 police officers, gendarmes and firefighters in France. With us, they will all be decorated, all rewarded and above all honored during a blue, white and red ceremony that Emmanuel Macron did not organize.

With us, the police officers of the RAID, the BRIPP, the intervention brigade, the BAC will not wait ten years after the Bataclan to be decorated for their courage in the face of the Islamist terrorists who crossed Europe to strike my country. With us, all their medical expenses will be covered, without delay, without advances, without begging, without begging. With us, the lawyer's support will be automatic. They will be systematically protected by the administration. We will create a presumption of responsibility for administration. You can also be assured, in this European Parliament, that all these wankers who ransack everything at the expense of honest people who can no longer take it will pay every last penny: no more benefits, no more social housing. Above all, we will put these thugs on dry bread. Faced with the savages who smash a BAC policeman in Tourcoing, a brother in arms, the rule will be simple: you touch a cop, you sleep in prison and it will be at your expense. The same goes for if you are a loyal customer of the police and gendarmes: in addition to a loyalty card, no more up in front of the magistrates who can't take it anymore. It will also be prison for the first offence.

In the face of the narco-scum that plague my country, we will restore the judicial police, which was dismantled by the then Minister of the Interior, Gérard Darmanin, to its former glory. And we will save all these investigators who are dying. To these leftist elected officials, I tell them to stop sully my brothers in arms, policemen, gendarmes, with "the police kills". Talk about Jean-Baptiste Salvaing and Jessica Schneider, policemen whose throats were slit by a terrorist in Magnanville in front of their three-year-old child Mathieu, about gendarme Arnaud Beltrame who sacrificed his life to save a hostage from an Islamist, about Éric Masson, a policeman in France, executed by a drug dealer in Avignon, who left two little girls behind. I also say to my LFI colleagues: see you in 2026 for Florian's trial in the Nahel case. You have sullied his honor. In front of you, I will never be afraid, I will never back down. It is the same for all my brothers in arms who fell for France, in the uniform of the national police.



## **ASSITA KANKO, ON BEHALF OF THE ECR GROUP, BE**

In every European country you will hear horrifying stories about how police officers have been treated. You will hear their frustration about how their work and the effort and intention they put into it is less and less likely to lead to convictions and change in society. Motivation drops, and it starts making less sense for young people to commit to the mission of a police officer. And this is at a time when the security landscape has fundamentally shifted: cybercrime, hybrid warfare, organised crime and persistent terrorism – the lines between internal and external security are blurred by these global challenges. The EU must view these threats as a common European problem, demanding the implementation of a unified, robust and adaptable internal security strategy. As a believer in EU security sovereignty and as rapporteur, I hailed the Entry/Exit System as a triumph of our common pragmatic resolve over bureaucratic apathy. It is a vital shield to strengthen our Schengen external borders and empower our border protection officers. Border guards and national law enforcement are at the forefront of integrating EES data into criminal databases for real-time alerts on watch lists, individuals and documents. This ties into protecting the EU's focus on preventive policing against terrorism and trafficking. I believe this is the path we must continue to follow.

At the heart of this strategy, the role of our police forces – the primary gatekeepers of our democratic way of life – is essential. We need to honour them. We need to support them. We need to address their needs by prioritising resources to improve their functioning and well-being, and by giving back a sense of purpose to their mission. And this is for the security of every European citizen.



## **FABIENNE KELLER, AU NOM DU GROUPE RENEW, FR**

Europe is facing a profound transformation of its security environment. I think we are all saying it here, the threats are multiplying, getting stronger: terrorism, organized crime, hybrid threats, foreign interference. The protection of our fellow citizens is a European priority. We need to strengthen police and judicial cooperation at EU level. This cooperation already exists on a local scale. As you know, Commissioner, we visited the Kehl cooperation centre together. There are 56 centres of this type where the police and customs cooperate on both sides of the border. At the European level, Europol, Eurojust and the Public Prosecutor's Office are the pillars of this cooperation. The revision of their mandate is scheduled for 26.

I call on you, Commissioner, to strengthen the capacity of these agencies to facilitate their investigations and the exchanges of data that you have mentioned. I urge you to make the most of the action on the ground that is already being carried out in these centres, at the borders of our Member States, and the spirit of cooperation between the police, the gendarmerie, the national customs and all the services that conduct investigations in order to move forward together towards a Europe of security, firm on the rules and, above all, respectful of the rule of law.



## **SASKIA BRICMONT (GREENS, BE)**

Mr President, yes, there is a real urgency to give the means to community policing, to a police force and a justice system equipped to fight against all forms of organised crime, drug trafficking, sexual violence against women and children, terrorism. But our leaders, mostly on the right, it should be remembered, Mr. Tobé, do not see it that way. The police are the tool at the service of a security agenda used to access more and more of our data, to silence any opposition to their austerity policy of unprecedented social violence. And it is a dirty role that you entrust to police officers who are committed to the service of society. People peacefully marching for their social and pension rights paid the price last Tuesday in Brussels. Intimidation, violence, tear gas in the presence of children. Protesting is a right. The use of force in Anderlecht to evict families who are demanding a roof over their heads in the face of a right-wing state, which often abandons and exploits them, is not something normal. Having a roof over one's head is a right. It's the security we need in the face of an uncertain future, the vagaries of life, bills to pay, and mouths to feed at the end of the month. The security of being able to walk freely and without fear in our streets, on a daily basis as well as in demonstrations. This requires restoring trust between the police and citizens to move forward together.....(The President cut off the speaker)



## **ÖZLEM DEMIREL (THE LEFT, DE)**

You want to talk about more security in our cities? About the growing crime? With pleasure. Then let's talk about growing social inequality. Let's talk about how the public authorities have actually been thinned out by the requirements of the EU in recent years, and also the public service. Let's talk about how much unpaid overtime the police put in for unnecessary border controls. Instead of talking about the use of dangerous Tasers or rubber bullets in Europe, let's look for real solutions.

Dear colleagues, The current images of police operations speak volumes. You are burning the police for your wrong policy. We saw this in France when the police were supposed to beat up the workers – for an anti-social pension reform. We see this in Germany when the police are supposed to beat up pro-Palestine solidarity demonstrations in the name of the German reason of state. Colleagues, stop the authoritarian restructuring of the state!



## LENA DÜPONT (EPP, DE)

Mr President, Commissioner. Sometimes it helps to look at what we have already achieved. The area of security, freedom and justice – the idea of Tampere in 1999 – is now being brought to life – with Europol's daily fight against crime, as recently in Latvia together with Austria and Estonia in the field of cybercrime. Frontex officers who stand at the external border every day and work together with the Member States against organised crime, drug trafficking, arms smuggling, cigarette smuggling and trafficking in human beings.

These selected examples alone make it clear that European police cooperation is a crucial building block of our European security architecture. It is our police officers from all Member States and in all Member States who ensure safety and order every day. And therefore a heartfelt thank you from here.

At the same time, the situation is changing dynamically and sometimes dramatically. Internal and external security are inextricably linked. Organised crime, terrorist groups and third-country actors are challenging us more than they have been for a long time. We do not need to reinvent Europe's security architecture. We need to strengthen what we already have. This applies to Frontex and Europol, it applies to the exchange of information.

And because much has already been said today by the Commissioner – and rightly so – let me focus more on cross-border cooperation. We have such wonderful examples in this area as the recent anniversary of the German-French operational unit, the joint centres in Kehl, which Fabienne Keller mentioned. This means that we must focus on removing practical hurdles for them, being able to organise joint exercises, financing language courses and, above all, recognising what an excellent contribution they make to our European security architecture. We expect police officers to protect us, our society, our democracy. Let's do the same for them. (The speaker agreed to answer a blue-card question)



## **RAQUEL GARCÍA HERMIDA-VAN DER WALLE (RENEW, NL), BLUE-CARD QUESTION**

Thank you, colleague Düpont, for taking this blue card. I am sure that you are also very familiar with the latest terrorist threat report – also from Europol from last year. We both share the concern that radicalisation on the extreme left and the extreme right poses a security risk for our Union. So, I wanted to ask you if you agree with me that any sort of cooperation with any parties on any side of the extreme spectrum should not be taken as a serious political possibility or option at this moment – on a national level, but also on a European level?

Lena Düpont (EPP), blue-card answer

blue-card answer. – Thanks, colleague, for that very important question. I assure you that this is indeed part of our policies.

If you just heard what the colleague from the left side told about her understanding of police work in a democracy, I can easily sum it up by saying this is for sure not my understanding.



## **JUAN FERNANDO LÓPEZ AGUILAR (S&D, ES)**

Freedom and security go together in Article 6 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. And there is no freedom without security. Just as there is no security without freedom. And this European Parliament is making that commitment when it renews the internal security strategy so that the European Union is a global actor against organised crime and terrorism on this new front posed by hybrid threats.

And the European Parliament also wants to be part of the renewal of Europol's mandate – which you have promised for 2026 – because we have worked on strengthening Europol's technological capabilities. But there is also a need for the exchange of information, the exchange of intelligence and effective cooperation between all European security agencies, as well as public-private cooperation in guaranteeing the security of Europeans.

But the message is not complete if we do not say that freedom is also represented in parliamentary control, in the scrutiny exercised by the national parliaments and this European Parliament, on internal security, also fulfilling the mandate of Article 12 of the Treaty on European Union.



## **JORGE BUXADÉ VILLALBA (PFE, ES)**

Mr President, if in just four years 1 200 000 foreigners enter Europe illegally and you do not know their origin, background or intentions, you have a security problem; if in Spain 51,000 expulsion orders are issued by the police and the complicit government only deports 3,000, you have a security problem; if more than 50% of asylum seekers have their application rejected and yet stay in Europe, you have a security problem.

If you are more concerned about a boy tweeting in X "white lives matter" than a herd of foreigners raping a young woman in Alicante, if you distribute money to entities linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and your ports are a sieve for drugs, you have a security problem; if from your government you pardon antifa terrorists because the victims are from VOX, if you justify violence against patriots, if you fail to protect the police, if terror has better weapons... You have a security issue. In reality, the security problem is you.

Ladies and gentlemen, there is only one solution: zero tolerance, police persecution, speedy trials, high sentences, uncomfortable prisons and mass deportations.



## **MALIK AZMANI (RENEW, NL)**

Mr President, Commissioner, ladies and gentlemen, the world is changing rapidly, and in these turbulent times, a great deal of attention is rightly being paid to international security. But as we look outwards, we must not forget our internal security. Threats are also increasing within Europe, often stimulated from outside, from drug violence to subversion and terrorism. Strengthened European cooperation is very important and our police officers have a crucial role to play in this, and it is up to us to ensure that they receive the support and resources that are needed. The internal security strategy is essential in this regard.

But words are not enough. I call on the European Commission to quickly come up with concrete proposals that strengthen the position of our policemen and women, including in the fight against the production of and trafficking in drugs. For a Europe that is not only strong outside, but also safe within its own borders.



## **JAUME ASENS LLODRÀ (GREENS, ES)**

Today we cannot talk about the European police model without talking about what is happening on our streets. And allow me to remind you of an anniversary: on a day like today, in 1971, in Paris, hundreds of demonstrators against colonialism in Algeria were arrested, murdered, tortured. And this has not been recognized by France until last year. That has to do with the vision we have of security, a vision marked by our colonial mentality.

Now it's not so much Algeria anymore, but it's Palestine, and we see it in Britain's Anti-Terrorism Act, which associates solidarity with Palestine with terrorism. And we see it in Ayuso's Madrid, of the Popular Party, which persecutes Palestinian symbols because it believes it is a security problem. And we also see it in Berlin, in Budapest, when demonstrations are banned or broken up for security reasons. And we saw it last week when a group of women were fined for carrying a Palestinian flag.

Today we cannot talk about security without talking about that colonial mentality that is still present in our European police model.



## **JEROEN LENAERS (EPP, NL)**

A secure European Union requires more than just strong borders or military preparedness. It also requires robust police capacity and real cooperation. Cross-border crime, cyber threats and hybrid attacks affect our freedom on a daily basis, which is why internal and external security must be better integrated. No more separate domains, but collaboration to close gaps and respond faster. Coordination is not a luxury, but a bitter necessity.

We need to invest in more police capacity so that police forces can act effectively, including in border regions where drug trafficking is flourishing, for example. And at the same time, we are strengthening that European cooperation. The two go hand in hand. Firmly on the streets and connected in Europe. The strengthening of Europol is crucial in this respect. More resources, more manpower to be able to effectively support police colleagues in the Member States.

But more is needed. In many Member States, the police are under pressure: too little influx, high workload, increasing violence, limited career prospects, young talent dropping out, just when it is so desperately needed, officers who are spat on, harassed and attacked during their work, which undermines our rule of law. Whoever guarantees our safety must be safe himself. This is also a task for Europe. I call on the Commission once again to develop a European approach to systematically map violence against the police with comparable data, a targeted policy and better protection of our enforcers. What we don't measure, we can't solve and we have to solve this.



## **EVIN INCIR (SOCIALISTS, SWEDEN)**

Mr President, security isn't just another cost; it is to protect our societies, communities, our homes and our businesses from deep harm – from stopping crimes before they happen to fighting terrorism and safeguarding information.

We need strong systems and strong police cooperation as organised criminal gangs operate across borders. Over 70 % of criminal gangs are active in at least three countries in parallel. And they are toxifying the lives of our children. Collaboration between EU Member States has never been more vital.

The Commission's proposal to make Europol stronger is welcome, but it must be based on real needs, and the needs of the Member States. Coordination must be strengthened within the EU and it must also be strengthened with global partners.

But with greater power must come greater responsibility. Intelligence-sharing must improve, yes – but always with strong safeguards. Expanded surveillance must protect rights, because in the end, one truth remains clear: security matters to ensure safety, but it must be done in a secure way.



## **JOACHIM STANISŁAW BRUDZIŃSKI (ECR, PL)**

I would like to thank you for your contribution. Commissioner. The strategy we are discussing here focuses on the EU level and cooperation between countries, but less attention is paid to the integration and support of local and national police services, which are often on the front line. Particular attention should be paid to the role of the police in counteracting the unrest and dangers exacerbated by – as has already been mentioned – mass illegal immigration caused by people who do not respect public order and the social norms in force in our countries.

It should be noted that Member States should have full autonomy in the way their services operate. As a former Minister of the Interior of the Republic of Poland, I am proud that I was able to work with fully professional police officers. But I am horrified by the vision of this argument, which is also being made here in this House, that police officers in my country behave in such a way – as we have witnessed in the United Kingdom – that they kneel in front of criminals, that they dance in pink skirts at equality marches, that they perhaps begin to deal not with catching bandits and criminals, but with putting in prison people who pray in front of abortion clinics. More common sense and more trust for the Polish police...



**RAQUEL GARCÍA HERMIDA-VAN DER WALLE (RENEW, NL)**

Mr Lenaers just said it very well: our officers are being harassed and spat at. But how are they attacked? Very often this is done with explosives that have the power of a hand grenade. Explosives that are legally produced in the EU and then sold. A Cobra 6 can be found online for next to nothing. And that has nothing to do with fireworks. Criminals like to make smart use of the opportunities offered by our internal market.

The recent evaluation of the current fireworks rules shows that it is time for European action. This confirms what mayors all over Europe have been warning about for a long time. Commissioner, please take this seriously. Make sure our agents can do their jobs safely. Give people back our streets. Take this reaching hand and we will get to work together.



## **JAVIER ZARZALEJOS (EPP, ES)**

This is a debate, that of the central role of the police in the Union's internal security strategy, which has taken a long time to take place and, therefore, we have to draw conclusions.

Too often we have the impression that, in defining security strategies, we simply take the police for granted, we take for granted their professional commitment, which exists. That is why we have to start by honoring a political and moral imperative, and that is to protect those who protect us.

Without police, without security forces, without law enforcement agencies, there is no rule of law and no exercise of freedoms. The police at the service of democracy is the rule of law. And the truth is that there have never been so many physical, verbal and digital aggressions against public security professionals. Therefore, if we want an effective security strategy, we must strengthen the primary instrument of that strategy, which is the security forces. In this sense, the police must be considered as a risky profession, and we are committed to it.

We need to ensure a general improvement in working conditions and comprehensive support services – including psychological support – for members of the security forces; we have to make progress in the harmonisation of the criminal treatment of the protection of the security forces and their professionals at the European level; and it is urgently necessary to substantially improve the provision of human, material and technological resources to close the scandalous gap between the capacity of the police and the advantage of criminal organizations.



## **ELENA DONAZZAN (ECR, IT)**

**We have a growing internal security problem within the EU, in our cities and in our homes. We must recognise the vital role of police and security forces.**

**On the one hand, we need a whole-of-society approach to security and defence, as the Niinistö report reminds us: strengthening our military capabilities and rethinking the role of conscription, of a service, especially for young people, and of a larger reserve. On the other hand, we must recognise the fundamental role of the police and security forces. In recent days we have seen pseudo-pacifist marches demonstrating in favor of Gaza and turning into violent attacks against those who, in uniform, were only guaranteeing order and legality.**

**Here, today, I cannot fail to remember Valerio, Davide and Marco, the three carabinieri who lost their lives in the province of Verona, in Italy, in a tragic and senseless way: our thoughts and our thanks go to them and to the entire carabinieri corps.**

**And I find it unacceptable that someone, even in this House, has tried to justify this cowardly act by ranting about capitalism, instead of unhesitatingly condemning the violence. I am talking about Mrs Salis, who has also gone unpunished in this Chamber, and her usual disobedience. To ensure safety, we must first respect those who wear the uniform.**



## **CYNTHIA NÍ MHURCHÚ (RENEW, IE)**

Europe's security landscape is changing. Digital scams and online fraud create particular challenges. Developments in technology are providing new opportunities for criminal gangs to profit from thousands of Europeans who are being lured through bogus investment platforms, romance scams and identity theft. This type of crime doesn't stop at borders but too often friends, our police forces stop at borders.

We can no longer allow our security strategy to be based on dealing with cybercrime and online fraud on a purely national basis. They are trans-European crime problems. They require cross-border solutions, real-time information sharing, linked investigations through Europol and the use of collaborative investigation teams to track the money across jurisdictions. Criminals use technology to move quickly and our police have to move much faster.



## **VERENA MERTENS (EPP)**

When we talk about the security situation in Europe, we must not forget one thing – our police. It is our first line of defence – day and night – when it comes to protecting our citizens – from attacks, organised crime and cyberattacks. But in many of these debates, including here in this House, it is often forgotten.

But these dangers do not disappear just because we talk less about them. Violent extremists are networked throughout Europe, organized fraud cases are on the rise, and cybercrime knows no borders. As a former police officer, I know what it means to be on this frontline. That is why I am expressly committed to honoring the women and men who protect our lives. I call for a European day of remembrance for police officers, especially those who have lost their lives in the line of duty. I would like us to finally make it clear politically: We stand by those who protect us, those who put their own lives in the fire for us in the event of a killing spree or attack. Protect the protectors!



## **ANA MIGUEL PEDRO (EPP, PT)**

Few professions carry as much weight as that of a police officer, often at the risk of his own life. Europe has changed. Crime today is transnational, technological and borderless. And those who are on the front line of our police feel this change every day.

The new internal security strategy, Commissioner, is a decisive step. Criminals already operate without borders. It is time for justice and the security forces to do so too. European justice must be as agile as the crime it fights. This also means providing the police forces with modern and effective means. You cannot fight the crime of the future with instruments of the past.

But, Commissioner, no strategy wins if it leaves behind those who implement it. Without respected, trained and valued police officers, there is no European security. Today, the number and violence of attacks against law enforcement agents increases. What was once an exception has become routine. What was once shocking is now tolerated. And a Europe that wants to be strong must start by respecting those who defend it.



### **EMMANOUIL FRAGKOS (ECR, GR)**

Mr President, before we demand that police officers be examples of social behaviour, we must guarantee them dignity. The phenomenon of police officers working afternoon jobs to supplement their daily wages offends common sense and the sense of justice, it affects the very core of the rule of law. We are talking about the people who are faced with the wave of illegal immigration in the state where smuggling and the mafia rule. At the same time, in Italy, France and Germany, police officers are paid two, three and four times the salary of a Greek police officer respectively.

Nevertheless, the Greek police continue their work heroically, despite the unbearable reality. An obvious condition for the success of the European Union's internal security strategy is convergence with the European average salary.



## **DOLORS MONTSERRAT (EPP, ES)**

When a police officer risks his own life to defend the freedom of all, he does not ask for privileges, he demands justice. Recognizing their work as a risky profession is not a privilege, it is a moral and political duty. Europe created Frontex, Europol or CEPOL to respond to terrorism and organised crime. But it is no longer enough to react. Today the European People's Party proposes something else: to act before evil acts. The narco-boat that rammed the Civil Guard in Barbate not only murdered two policemen, it attacked the freedom of the entire Union, and in the face of that there is only room for firmness in response.

We must shield the principle of authority, recognise the police as a profession of risk throughout the European Union and make attacks on police officers Eurocrime so that criminals understand this message.

The laws are obeyed and the policeman is respected in every corner of Europe, because when a policeman falls, our freedom falls. To defend them is to defend our democracy.



## **CATERINA CHINNICI (EPP, IT)**

As the daughter of a judge, Rocco Chinnici, killed by the mafia with the men of his escort; as a magistrate, who for many years worked in direct contact with the judicial police; As the mother of a Carabinieri officer and a police officer and now as a legislator, I firmly believe it is our duty to protect those who protect us.

Women and men of the police, by fulfilling their duty, guarantee us security, rights and freedoms, facing risks and dangers that are sometimes fatal. Like the three carabinieri who lost their lives last week in Italy during an operation and whom, personally, in this Chamber today I would like to remember and pay tribute.

Provide national and European law enforcement authorities with the human, financial and technical resources they need to tackle crime, especially organised crime. Strengthen, as foreseen in the ProtectEU strategy, cross-border operational cooperation in law enforcement and Europol's support to Member States. Strengthen the social and legal protection of members of the police force, recognizing their occupational risk.



**OIHANE AGIRREGOITIA MARTÍNEZ (RENEW, ES)**

We have been talking for some time about ensuring security in a holistic way and being autonomous and sovereign, and we are only aware of this when we have a situation that leaves us in check, such as the one we experienced yesterday with Amazon Web Services.

We will only be able to live peacefully if we are able to guarantee physical, digital, air, maritime and energy security at a minimum. This is a matter of strategic sovereignty. Without security there is no freedom.

In the Basque Country – in my country – we were clear about this and that is why we are committed to a comprehensive police force as a principle of autonomy. They can and should count on the Ertzaintza to develop the European security model.



## **MARAVILLAS ABADÍA JOVER (PPE)**

Two weeks ago, an officer was stabbed through his helmet. Has anyone thought of his family or colleagues? Two years ago, two civil guards were killed fighting drug traffickers at sea...

Two weeks ago, an officer was stabbed through his helmet. Has anyone thought about your family or your colleagues? Two years ago, two civil guards were killed fighting drug trafficking in a boat.

Has anyone thought about those who today continue to go out to protect our borders? How many more names do we not know because some governments refuse to collect the cases?

How many police officers doubt whether this is worth it? How hard is that silent disease that so many face in solitude! That is why this Parliament must say loud and clear that it is indeed worthwhile to go out and defend freedom and the rule of law. It is worth it and we have to protect them. Organized crime does not respect borders. We need a common strategy, reliable data and sufficient equipment to ensure their safety.

We must recognise the security forces and bodies as high-risk professions, because to defend our agents is to defend the freedom of all Europeans.



## **OTHER WELCOME CONTRIBUTIONS.....**

### **MATTHIEU VALET (PFE)**

It is regrettable that in a debate on the role of the police, which play such a crucial role in our democracies, you have cut the discussion short and disallowed blue cards...

### **MILAN UHRÍK, EUROPE OF SEVEREIGNTY AND NATIONS**

Crime in Europe is rising at an incredible rate, but it is you, the Progressives, who are politically responsible for the rapes, thefts and murders committed by illegal migrants and their gangs across Europe,

### **ANDRÁS LÁSZLÓ (PFE)**

We don't need fancy new strategies and even more bureaucracy to defend Europeans against crime. The European internal security strategy is nothing more than an attempt by Ursula von der Leyen to gaslight European citizens...

### **CHARLIE WEIMERS (ECR, SWEDEN)**

Migrant-fuelled drug gangsters flaunt stolen wealth: Lamborghinis, watches, designer bling. Every time I see them, I think, 'They steal from us, they poison our children, they murder with impunity'. No longer. In Sweden, if a gangster cannot prove legal income, the state takes it. Cars, watches, clothes, even villas – over 200 cases this year, millions seized. That is deterrence. Police are the front line. They must be at the heart of Europe's strategy. Sweden shows the way.

### **AFRODITI LATINPOULOU (PFE, GR)**

The police of every country are the pillar of its stability. Now that almost all EU Member States are filled with illegal immigrants and criminals, we must finally untie their hands. Enough with a neutered police force...

### **CHRISTOPHE BAY (PFE)**

Since Mrs von der Leyen's 2024 speech proposing to make Europol an operational service, we are clearly heading towards a federal police force. Security must remain a national competence.

### **MACIEJ WĄSIK (ECR)**

Mass migration has led to a huge increase in crime. False asylum seekers entering Europe en masse are a threat to our citizens, families and children...

## **MAGNUS BRUNNER, MEMBER OF THE COMMISSION (CLOSING REMARKS)**

Thank you very much for your contributions, to those who had contributions in this Chamber, it's great to see that there is such wide agreement on the main challenges: on security, on the police forces, on law enforcement altogether. I even believe there is also a strong consensus on where we must go, which direction we must go.

Security challenges, as most of you mentioned, are more cross-border, more sophisticated, more international, and we can only succeed by becoming also more European in our responses. That means better coordination and cooperation between law enforcement with Europol as a central hub; that means also more harmonised laws at EU level, combined, of course, always with room for regional cooperation based on what local needs there are; and, thirdly, also backed up with the resources we need to keep Europe safe in this changing world. On all of this, I look very much forward to working together with you to find solutions – at the end of the day, that's what it's about.