



**European Union**

**Geneva Conference on  
Preventing Violent Extremism – The Way Forward**

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**Statement on behalf of the European Union**

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**Geneva, 08 April 2016**

**- CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY -**

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Preventing Violent Extremism – The Way Forward  
(08 April 2016)**

**Statement delivered by EU Commissioner for Migration, Home Affairs and Citizenship,  
Dimitris Avramopoulos, on behalf of the European Union**

Ladies and gentlemen. It is a privilege to speak here today.

**The horrific terrorist attacks** around the globe remind us of the **urgent need to join forces** to fight radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism at a global level.

Terrorism cannot be defeated with security measures alone. The response to radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism needs to **be holistic**.

I see a great value in today's event, and **the UN's Action Plan** for more actions at international level.

In the European Union, we presented our vision to fight terrorism and radicalisation in the **European Agenda on Security** last year.

Let me explain how we work in the EU on preventing violent extremism.

Our approach is based on local knowledge. Criminal justice, information exchange, education and youth participation, inter-cultural dialogue, employment and initiatives for social inclusion – all can play a crucial role.

We set up the **Radicalisation Awareness Centre of Excellence** with 2000 European practitioners such as teachers, health care workers, social and youth workers, prison officers and NGOs to exchange best practices on prevention.

The approach is founded on understanding root causes.

The goal, to propose practical tools and recommendations to both practitioners and decision makers. The European Union is ready to share this expertise in the UN framework.

Our second priority is the internet. Or rather, its abuse by terrorists to target our youngest, most vulnerable citizens with messages of violence.

In December, I launched the **EU Internet Forum**. **I brought together** EU Ministers, internet companies and civil society to see how terrorist material can be taken offline. Also, how we can replace it with positive counter-messages.

We also set up a referral mechanism with EUROPOL to help EU countries and internet companies identify terrorist material online. First results are very positive.

Beyond our own backyards, we are also active in **developing strategic communications** to people outside the EU. A **Task Force** is working in the Arab world to identify shared values and develop concrete communication actions. This is the **Syria Strategic Communication Advisory Team (SSCAT)**, a project with clear value.

Communication is not the only answer, however. Addressing root causes means also **eradicating the inequalities** that lead to exclusion, marginalisation and radicalisation.

Our material support **to developing countries** is a given. Poverty reduction, ensuring sustainable economic, social and environmental development, democracy, rule of law, good governance and human rights – these are critical pieces of the anti-radicalisation puzzle.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Violent extremism is not only a European challenge. It is a global one. Together we can pool enormous **resources and expertise to face this immense challenge**. The prevention of violent extremism will not happen overnight. A joint approach, based on our shared values is a sine qua non.