

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001026/26  
to the Commission  
Marieke Ehlers (PFE)  
(11 March 2026)**

*Subject:* ProtectEU and fundamental freedoms: clarifying ideological categories under EU counter-terrorism law

In its communication of 26 February 2026 entitled ‘ProtectEU: Agenda to prevent and counter terrorism’ <sup>(1)</sup>, the Commission identifies, alongside jihadism, factors such as ‘rejection of democratic values’, ‘anti-Muslim hatred’, ‘nihilism’ and ‘anti-system ideologies’ as emerging drivers of radicalisation.

Given the broad and potentially interpretative nature of these concepts, and in the light of Articles 11 and 12 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the Commission is asked:

1. Are the terms mentioned in the communication defined in EU law or in operational counter-terror frameworks, and do they trigger specific monitoring, risk-assessment or funding priorities, and if so, how does the Commission legally differentiate between legitimate, protected criticism of Islam and actionable ‘anti-Muslim hatred’, ensuring counter-terrorism frameworks do not infringe upon freedom of speech?
2. How does the Commission ensure that analytical categories, such as ‘anti-system ideologies’ or ‘rejection of democratic values’, cannot extend to peaceful political opposition, institutional reform movements or Eurosceptic positions protected under EU law?
3. Does the Commission confirm that only conduct involving incitement to violence or terrorist activity — and not ideological or philosophical dissent as such — can fall within the scope of EU counter-terror measures, and what specific legal safeguards exist to prevent broad philosophical classifications, such as ‘nihilism’ or ‘anti-system ideologies’, from being misused to monitor or criminalise non-violent political dissent?

Submitted: 11.3.2026

**Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission  
(3 June 2026)**

The ‘ProtectEU: Agenda to prevent and counter terrorism’ <sup>(1)</sup> is a non-legislative policy document.

The terms used in this communication are analytical descriptors reflecting trends as outlined, among others, by the EU Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation <sup>(2)</sup>, observed in Member States and practitioners’ assessments as well as research stemming from the Knowledge Hub on Prevention of Radicalisation — these do not create new legal categories or offences.

References to ‘anti-system ideologies’ or ‘rejection of democratic values’ concern narratives that legitimise violence or seek to replace democratic processes by violent or terrorist means.

The Commission is committed to fighting anti-Muslim hatred as defined by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance Recommendation <sup>(3)</sup>.

EU action is grounded in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU <sup>(4)</sup> and applicable legislation. Expressions of opinion, including criticism of religions or public policies, are protected under Articles 11 and 12 of the Charter.

Intervention is justified only where conduct meets the thresholds set by law, such as incitement to violence, terrorism, hatred or discrimination, as defined in relevant EU and national legislation.

Directive (EU) 2017/54 on combating terrorism <sup>(5)</sup> defines terrorist offences and offences related to terrorist activities, including the public provocation to commit a terrorist offence.

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<sup>1</sup> Commission communication of 26 February 2026 entitled ‘ProtectEU: Agenda to prevent and counter terrorism’ (COM(2026)0101).

<sup>(1)</sup> COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, THE COUNCIL, THE EUROPEAN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMITTEE AND THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS ProtectEU: Agenda to prevent and counter terrorism, COM/2026/101 final.

<sup>(2)</sup> [https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU\\_TE-SAT\\_2025.pdf](https://www.europol.europa.eu/cms/sites/default/files/documents/EU_TE-SAT_2025.pdf).

<sup>(3)</sup> European Commission against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) General Policy Recommendation No 5 (revised) on preventing and combating anti-Muslim racism and discrimination: <https://rm.coe.int/ecri-general-policy-recommendation-no-5-revised-on-preventing-and-comb/1680a5db32>.

<sup>(4)</sup> [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/char\\_2012/oj/eng](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/treaty/char_2012/oj/eng).

<sup>(5)</sup> <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/2017/541/oj/eng>.