

(English version)

**Question for written answer E-001208/26
to the Commission**

António Tânger Corrêa (Pfe), Tiago Moreira de Sá (Pfe), Marieke Ehlers (Pfe), Petra Steger (Pfe), Virginie Joron (Pfe), Volker Schnurrbusch (ESN), Ondřej Knotek (Pfe), Marion Maréchal (ECR), Afroditi Latinopoulou (Pfe), Sebastian Tynkkynen (ECR), Jean-Paul Garraud (Pfe), Tomasz Froelich (ESN)

(23 March 2026)

Subject: ProtectEU: stronger security for Europeans or the policing of ideas and democratic dissent?

The Commission's new internal security strategy, ProtectEU ⁽¹⁾, aims to strengthen the EU's capacity to address terrorism, organised crime, cyber-threats and hybrid attacks. Key measures include enhanced intelligence-sharing, expanded data access, stronger powers for EU agencies such as Europol, and a 'whole-of-society' approach integrating security considerations across EU legislation and policy.

While the objective of protecting citizens is legitimate, these measures raise serious questions regarding proportionality, political neutrality and the protection of fundamental rights, including freedom of expression, political participation and lawful assembly. Security policies must remain focused on criminal activity and genuine threats, without encroaching on lawful civic participation or political dissent.

1. How does the Commission ensure that ProtectEU measures focus exclusively on criminal behaviour and genuine threats, without infringing on citizens' rights to freedom of expression, political participation and lawful assembly, as guaranteed under Articles 11, 12 and 52 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union?
2. What concrete legal safeguards and oversight mechanisms will the Commission implement to ensure that enhanced intelligence-sharing, data access and other security measures are strictly proportionate, limited in scope and subject to independent judicial or parliamentary scrutiny?
3. How will the Commission prevent the 'whole-of-society' security approach from inadvertently involving or monitoring lawful civic activities, associations or online expressions of opinion, and how will transparency and accountability be ensured in such cases?

Supporter ⁽²⁾

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Answer given by Mr Brunner on behalf of the European Commission
(19 May 2026)

ProtectEU ⁽¹⁾ embeds in its core the respect for fundamental rights, which is ultimately ensured also by the co-legislators, the Council and the European Parliament. In accordance with EU law, each proposal announced in ProtectEU needs to respect the principle of proportionality.

When preparing legislative initiatives, EU Better Regulation rules ⁽²⁾ require the Commission to prepare impact assessments where the possible impacts of the initiatives on fundamental rights are assessed.

This evidence-based approach, overseen by the independent Regulatory Scrutiny Board ⁽³⁾, ensures legislative initiatives are consistent with EU values and allows the co-legislators to take an informed decision.

Furthermore, during the preparation for ProtectEU, the Commission consulted the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights.

As one of the central principles of ProtectEU, the 'whole of society' approach intends to involve all stakeholders that can meaningfully contribute to the security of the EU, including citizens, civil society, academia and the private sector.

Thus, public consultations made available on the Have Your Say portal accompany all impact assessments. This stakeholder engagement plays a crucial role in ensuring transparency and accountability, and in building trust in the drafting and implementation of EU security policies.

¹ Commission communication of 1 April 2025 on ProtectEU: a European Internal Security Strategy (COM(2025)148).

² This question is supported by a Member other than the authors: Christine Anderson (ESN).

⁽¹⁾ COM (2025) 148 final.

⁽²⁾ SWD (2021) 305 final.

⁽³⁾ https://commission.europa.eu/law/law-making-process/regulatory-scrutiny-board_en.