POLICY BRIEFING

Picking up the pieces after Paris:
Root causes and possible solutions to
the radicalisation challenge

Wednesday 9 December 2015

15.00-17.00 (registration from 14.45)

EPC Auditorium (3rd floor)

14-16 Rue du Trône, 1000 Brussels

Organised by the European Foundation for Democracy, the Counter Extremism Project and the European Policy Centre.

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The dramatic terrorist attacks which struck Paris on the evening of 13 November provided a dramatic reminder of the unprecedented challenges posed by jihadism to European security. The attacks have demonstrated how the continent, far beyond France, is gradually becoming a potential target of the Islamic State in Syria and Iraq (ISIS) and the rather sophisticated modus operandi of the Paris attackers have also marked a steady shift away from the 'lone wolf'-styled actions witnessed earlier in Tunisia and in Paris itself at the beginning of this year. It demonstrates, in stark relief, the asymmetrical nature of ISIS's 'war machine'. More generally, and looking beyond the obvious security dimension of the current anti-terrorism responses at the European level, radicalisation of individuals in Europe, directly connected or otherwise with the foreign fighters phenomenon, represents a multi-dimensional and far-reaching challenge to the capacity of European governments and societies to integrate their Muslim citizens, while at the same time creating a sense of shared community values and interests. The time has therefore come for stock-taking and reflection on radicalisation and its various policy implications for Europe.

What are the root causes of radicalisation - the pervasive ideology, radical preachers urging jihad & the hijacking of religion etc. - and how do these interact with factors such as culture, identity and socio-economic conditions? How can European governments and societies effectively tackle such a phenomenon in the context of a comprehensive, non-polarising and multi-stakeholder approach? And what could be the contribution to Europe's responses, in terms of expertise and best practice, from countries in the Muslim world, which have long been exposed to the radicalisation challenge?