

EU Leaders Urge ‘Rapid and Coordinated’ Response to Terror Attacks



French President Emmanuel Macron, right, and Austria’s Chancellor Sebastian Kurz, left, speak via videoconference shown on a screen in the European Council building in Brussels, Belgium, Nov. 10, 2020.

PARIS – After the recent terror attacks in France and Austria, European leaders held a summit Tuesday in France to coordinate the response against terrorism, and they are pushing for a “common coordinated and rapid” European response to counterterror attacks.

The question of how to respond to Islamist attacks like the recent ones in Nice and Vienna brought together Tuesday French President Emmanuel Macron and Austrian Chancellor Sebastian Kurz at the Elysee Palace in Paris where they were joined by videoconference with the leaders of Germany, the Netherlands, and top EU officials.

President Macron urged a “common coordinated and rapid” European response to counterterror attacks.

Macron detailed the need to develop common databases between EU states, improve cooperation between law enforcement, share intel and enact tougher legislation on the continent. Any threat at EU external borders or inside even one member state is a threat to the entire EU, said the French president.

European leaders also stressed the need for what they said should be a “determined fight against terrorist propaganda and hate speech on the internet.” Macron mentioned Netherlands and Austria as good examples of how this fight should be carried out.

He said the Internet is a space of freedom, and social networks are, too, but this freedom exists only if there is security and if it does not serve as a refuge for

those who flout European values or seek to indoctrinate with deadly ideologies. Macron said terrorist propaganda must be removed within an hour once it is flagged.

To counter jihadist terrorism, EU leaders also are calling for measures to ensure that the teachings of imams on the continent do not include hate speech.

Charles Michel is the president of the European Council.

Michel said religious freedom is key in Europe, but there also is a need to guarantee that imams preach the right values of tolerance and peace.

This meeting took place on the eve of the anniversary of the November 2015 attacks that killed more than 100 people in Paris.

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