Published on *The Parliament Magazine* (https://www.theparliamentmagazine.eu)



# Radicalisation: 'Everyone must take responsibility for what is happening', Parliament told

Written by Martin Banks on 22 June 2018 in News
News

A mother who tragically lost her son in the 2017 Manchester terrorist attacks has spoken out against radicalisation.

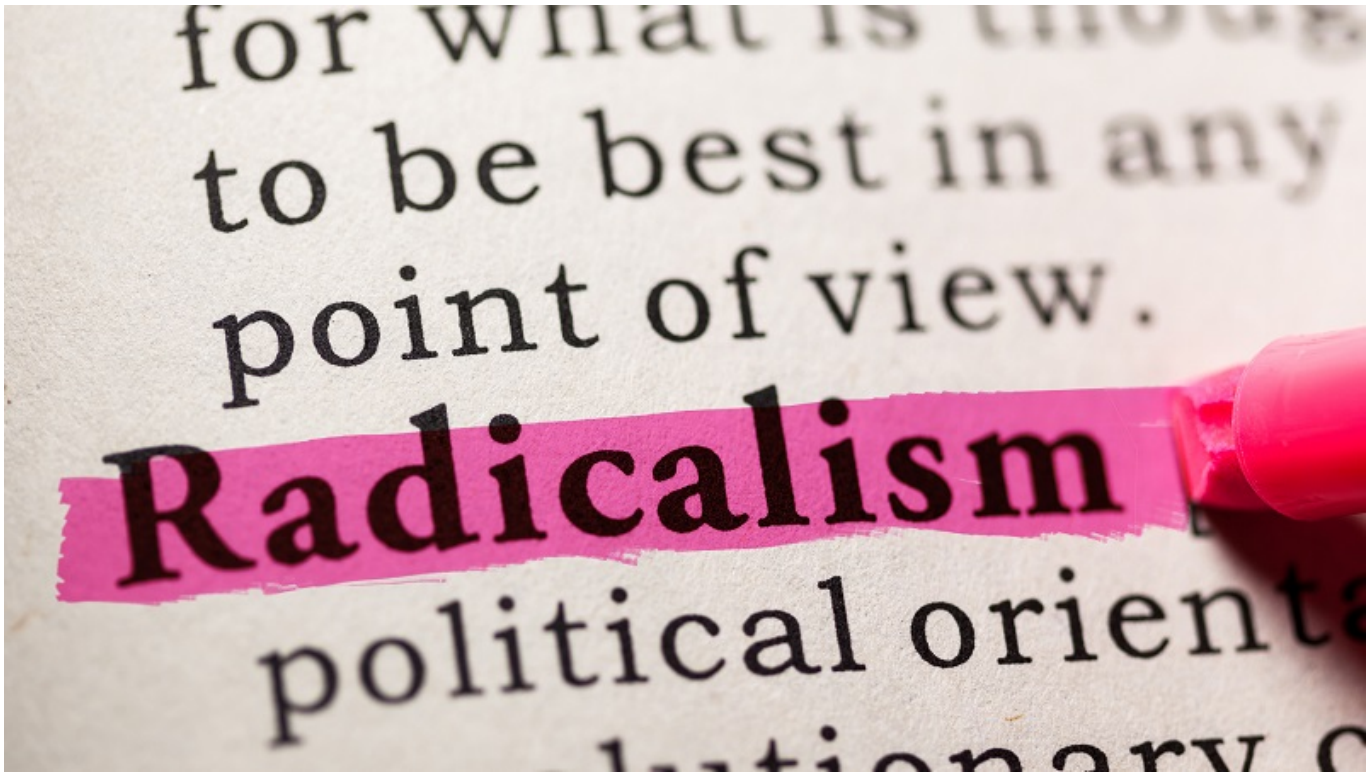


***Photo credit: Fotolia***

Speaking in Parliament, Figen Murray told MEPs that after the death of her son Martyn Hett she had decided to use her influence to create and promote a strong counter-narrative to extremism.

She said she had done this by talking to young people in schools, colleges and prisons telling her personal story.

Appearing at a hearing on ‘Promoting peace, fighting youth radicalisation, fostering a welcoming

Europe', she said, "It was a pleasure to speak to such a welcoming audience today and I am pleased I came all the way to Brussels to do so. I truly believe it is of the utmost importance that I continue to deliver a robust counter-narrative to radicalisation and hate that continues to be delivered by extremists across the world.

"Doing this in a positive way, contrary to the rhetoric of hate, underpins the approach I take. Right now though, it is time everyone took responsibility for what is happening in our societies if we are to see any change in the way people think on the matter."

The Brit said she fully supported the aims of the meeting which she said were to raise awareness about the many initiatives aiming at promoting peace and preventing youth radicalisation through a holistic and community-based approach, addressing the root causes of radicalisation rather than its symptoms; build support for the efforts of citizens, civil society, and governments that push back against discrimination and violent extremism; and highlight the role that xenophobia and populism play in the radicalisation cycle; and discuss the challenges of a welcoming Europe, to demonstrate the relevance of a welcoming attitude to migrants in fighting radicalisation.

Speakers also included ECR group MEP Sajjad Karim, who cautioned that Europe has to "stand up and fight for its values if a major crisis is to be averted."

The warning comes as the European Parliament begins its one-year countdown to its next polls, which Karim said he fears "could be hijacked by extremist parties - due to low participation in the European elections - and as a result, xenophobic views becoming more mainstream."

Karim hosted conference on Wednesday on preventing youth radicalisation in Europe which also brought together representatives from academia and civil society to identify and discuss ways to encourage constructive engagement against radicalisation.

The speakers included European security union Commissioner Julian King.

Karim said, "This conference was about bringing together all sections of society to promote positive engagement against radicalisation and to help foster a welcoming Europe. In this respect, we succeeded. Figen Murray and Commissioner King brought together the policymaking formulation and someone with direct experience of losing a loved one.

"In 15 years of being an MEP, I have never been so worried. Xenophobia has been on the rise for many years now and has only been exacerbated by the Brexit vote and a rise in populism across Europe.

"This is why we - as Europe - are the continent that has to stand up and fight for our values if we are to win the day. There are no others that seem willing to do so and this is the reason why I continue to make the European Parliament available as a platform to the tremendous challenge I see ahead of us.

"It means our member states must remain totally engaged in fighting this rise of extremism and collectively, under the banner of the European Union, our commitments must be strengthened," added Karim, who is a Vice-President of Parliament's anti-racism and diversity intergroup (ARDI) and chairs its working group on Islamophobia.

The other speakers at the event were Estelle Cincinatis from the European Jewish Community Centre in Brussels, Dr Ajmal Hussain from the University of Manchester, Shelley Piasecka from the University of Chester and Professor Simon Piasecki from Liverpool Hope University.

**About the author**

Martin Banks is a senior reporter for the Parliament Magazine

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