OSCE SECURITYDAYS

Building Bridges:
Promoting Dialogue
to Prevent Radicalization
and Violent Extremism

Vienna, 21-22 May 2015

REPORT

Introduction

As more and more communities in the OSCE area and neighbouring regions face growing threats from violence motivated by extremism and increasing intolerance towards people from certain cultural, ethnic and/or religious backgrounds, it is more important than ever to engage different communities and religious groups in inclusive, frank and constructive dialogue with each other. Such dialogue has the potential to increase mutual understanding and respect between different groups. It can also help us gain a better understanding of the nature and main drivers of violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism.

The OSCE has traditionally been active in promoting initiatives and creating platforms for different forms of dialogue at various levels as a means of countering radicalization, correcting misperceptions, decreasing tensions, and promoting stability and a culture of tolerance across the OSCE area. It seeks to ensure that such dialogue is inclusive by engaging women and youth; that it addresses critical social, economic and political issues, as well as the security implications of violent extremism and radicalization; and that it strengthens co-operation between governments and civil society.

To further advance these efforts, an OSCE Security Days event on **"Building Bridges: Promoting Dialogue to Prevent Radicalization and Violent Extremism"** was convened by the OSCE Secretary General on May 21-22, 2015, in Vienna. It provided a high-level forum for dissecting the roots of the challenge and discussing how different levers and tools – including media, education, inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue, and empowerment of women and youth – can contribute to effective counter-narratives that can help reduce tensions and turn vulnerable individuals away from the kinds of extremism and radicalization that lead to violence.

This Security Days conference was organized in co-operation with the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media, the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and the Anna Lindh Foundation for Intercultural Dialogue. It was generously supported by Finland, Serbia,

Switzerland and Turkey. The OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OSCE Center in Bishkek and ODIHR also contributed to the success of this event.

Over 300 participants representing OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, religious communities, civil society, media, the academic community and youth engaged in an open debate about the root causes of radicalization and violent extremism that lead to terrorism and about possible measures and actions to prevent and counter these processes. Special focus was given to the role of media, education and inclusive dialogue involving youth, women and religious leaders. Thanks to social media and other Internet platforms, many more people in the OSCE region and beyond were also able to participate in the event.

The aim was to review existing tools and best practices to combat violent radicalization; offer a platform for regional dialogue and co-operation, including with OSCE Mediterranean and Asian Partners for Co-operation; and identify a roadmap for future joint action with other international and regional organizations, including on engaging civil society. It also served as a launching pad for further collaboration between the OSCE and other international and regional organizations on preventing violent extremism and radicalization by promoting tolerance, non-discrimination and respect for diversity.

Former Chancellor of Austria Wolfgang Schüssel set the scene with a keynote speech focusing on migration and the tension between freedom of expression and respect for differences. While underscoring that there was a distinction between economic migrants and asylum seekers, he noted that conflict situations and the lack of security in various local contexts surrounding the OSCE area were pushing large flows of migrants toward Europe on an unprecedented scale. The life-threatening risks these people faced in trying to reach their destinations and the challenges awaiting them upon their arrival had created a humanitarian emergency. Because children and young people constituted the largest share of displaced people and forced migrants, Schüssel said that the risk of a "lost generation" was very real. Acknowledging that there is no simple solution to this crisis and that even the best policies might not be able to tackle the complex mix of short- and long-term challenges related to the reception and integration of migrants in Europe, he emphasized that a middle way had to be found between an "open door" policy which would not be accepted by European governments and societies and a policy of rejection that was inconsistent with European values and above all unrealistic under the present circumstances. He highlighted education as a critical tool for integrating migrant communities as well as for countering radicalization. He also emphasized the natural role that the OSCE and its comprehensive approach to security could play in promoting tolerance and preventing radicalization. The Organization could perform a particularly important function in sharing lessons learned and best practices across a variety of countries and contexts. He suggested that the OSCE might consider establishing new tools to further structure this dialogue, including by setting up an academy devoted to this undertaking.

The root causes of radicalization and violent extremism that lead to terrorism

Violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism seem to be on the rise in many societies, though the main drivers of this trend remain opaque. The conference explored the nature of the challenge, including the socio-economic, cultural, religious and other factors that contribute to radicalization that leads to violent extremism and terrorism as well as the link between radicalization and security.

In recent years, horrific episodes of terrorism in countries around the world have shocked public opinion and compelled governments to intensify efforts to counter violent extremism and address the root causes of radicalization that leads to violence. Yet violent extremism and terrorism are not new phenomena. Indeed, radicalization leading to violence is a highly complex and context-based process that has been transformed and sometimes accentuated by the specific challenges facing increasingly interdependent and diverse societies.

Participants concurred that the root causes of radicalization that leads to violence are manifold and have to be understood context by context. At the same time, multiple drivers and factors often reinforce each other. Yet the process that leads to violent radicalization is hardly a deterministic one. For instance, adverse socio-economic conditions are often a contributing factor to radicalization but violent extremism is far from an inevitable outcome of poverty or marginalization. The fact that individuals from well-educated and wealthy households also become radicalized and join terrorist groups was seen as indicating a spurious or in any case imperfect correlation. Attention was also drawn to the moving threshold between embracing radical views and resorting to violence to act on these views. It was clarified that in many societies radicalization per se does not constitute a crime whereas terrorist violence in all its forms is outlawed, including the sheer incitement of it.

With these caveats in mind, there was broad agreement that the threat of terrorism was on the rise and that some factors stood out over others in contributing to the phenomenon. Some countries have built matrixes to understand and even attempt to identify potential future victims of violent radicalization. The roots of the process may be at the personal, group, community, or even national levels. Ideology and religion may or may not be part of a given radicalization phenomenon. Often several factors interact in the radicalization process, but in some cases grievances at the individual level or collective frustration experienced by a given community may be enough to explain a violent outcome.

It was suggested that a growing number of people are now characterized by "multiple identities" and that this reality may explain why the challenge of integration has become more complicated. The involvement of multiple factors and contexts makes the prevention of radicalization that leads to violence a very complex and at times daunting collective effort. For the same reasons, however, authorities have a range of tools at their disposal and can partner with civil society on many different levels in countering violent radicalization. Both top-down and bottom-up approaches have roles to play.

Among the most cited factors contributing to violent radicalization are a lack of economic and social opportunity, a history of discrimination based on ethnic, religious or other considerations, and a background of exploitation. Imperialism and colonization were cited in this context. One main divide among experts seems to separate those who emphasize individual causes and decisions and those who concentrate on collective factors, often with a historical dimension. It was pointed out that each era had its own specific types of terrorism. During the Cold War, the East-West confrontation was accompanied by forms of right-wing and left-wing terrorism. Today's conflicts in the Middle East are compounded by the outbreak of violent forms of religious fanaticism.

Experts on the Middle East noted, however, that religious fundamentalism was just the latest incarnation of violent ideologies that have repeatedly affected the region over the past decades and centuries. A widespread sense of humiliation and the elusive resolution to the region's many conflicts could be identified among the root causes, but did not preclude the need to understand specific factors in the present context on a country-by-country basis. It was pointed out that religions generally do not support extremism and virtually always condemn violence. It was therefore incorrect and misleading to blame religions for acts of violence carried out in their name. Some proposed to deny the use of the adjective "Islamic" to the self-proclaimed "Islamic State" in Syria and in Iraq since it engaged in despicable deviations from the religious traditions of the affected societies and it was opportunistically manipulating religion to pursue agendas that have nothing to do with religious precepts.

The critical role that dialogue can play in debunking false pretences and correcting misperceptions was cited by many participants. Inclusive dialogue that takes into account the experiences and standpoints of all parties can promote mutual understanding and also help identify those individuals in a radicalized group who may be willing to accept a peaceful resolution to their cause. It was noted that in European history, the solution to specific terrorist challenges was often achieved through a combination of repression and engagement with individuals and groups whose grievances were recognized as legitimate and addressed in a constructive way. Some proposed to better scrutinize the self-stated claims and demands of today's terrorist leaders as a first step towards addressing the phenomenon without surrendering to a logic of violence. Separating terrorist leaders from potential recruits and identifying interlocutors were generally seen by experts as important elements of an effective counter-terrorist strategy.

Others argued that states and international organizations have a critical role to play not only in promoting international co-ordination and co-operation, but by avoiding policies and stances that are widely perceived as inflammatory and "unjust." Some representatives from North African countries mentioned Western double standards as a significant hurdle in both developing an effective counter-radicalization strategy and in winning the so-called hearts and minds of disenfranchised groups. Consistency in the fight against terrorism was also mentioned as a critical yet sensitive point. Many states are committed to eradicating terrorism but nonetheless pay ransom when their citizens are kidnapped, thus enabling terrorist groups to secure funding to finance future crimes.

Some participants emphasized the need to promote a pluralistic culture based on respect for diversity as an element of strength for society. The denial of certain rights; the lack of legal channels for the protection of basic freedoms; political systems that do not allow for open debate; states that engage in violence – all these situations can create fertile ground for radicalizing processes.

As an organization directly involved in resolving conflicts of a different nature and with a physical presence in many countries, the OSCE can act as a key early warning institution. The Organization was urged to further leverage its role as a conflict prevention mechanism,

including in the field of counter-radicalization and counter-terrorism. It was also noted that as the largest regional security organization promoting a comprehensive definition of security, the OSCE offers a powerful platform where States can compare approaches, share best practices and strengthen co-ordination in combating the common threat of violent extremism. Existing OSCE commitments were recalled by a number of participants.

How can the media help prevent violent radicalization that leads to terrorism?

Traditional and new media can be used as vehicles for promoting extremism and intolerance. In particular, the Internet and social media have become powerful tools in the hands of terrorists and other violent groups. However, media can also be efficient tools for spreading a message of tolerance and for connecting activists in both government and civil society working to advance dialogue and mutual understanding. What are the media's role and responsibilities in refuting prejudices and misperceptions and presenting counter-narratives to help prevent violent radicalization? How can the media become active stakeholders in a security dialogue involving governments and international organizations? Can freedom of expression and security be mutually reinforcing rather than in tension with each other?

There was broad agreement that media, especially new media such as internet-based social platforms (social media), have contributed to radicalization, including by advocating terrorism. Terrorists use media to glamorize their actions and promote their objectives, as well as to portray themselves as attractive role models or even heroes. As journalism has evolved, terrorist organizations have taken advantage of the increasingly blurred boundary between journalism and commentary, and exploited low-cost, easy-to-use technology and Internet platforms to promote their agenda to a wide audience.

Participants concurred that more appropriate and effective ways were needed to confront this misuse of the media without suppressing media freedom, which is a foundation of a healthy civil society, because repression alone cannot destroy the roots of the problem. Moreover, the rapid evolution of technology makes controlling the media increasingly unrealistic. Yet as some pointed out, there is a thin line between free speech and hate speech. One panellist noted that each society will have to work out its own balance in this respect, but the common red line for the international community as a whole should be the incitement of violence.

Others emphasized that journalism should be guided by ethics but also admitted that cultural norms and values may differ significantly across societies, leading to possible tensions. Participating journalists agreed that news stories should avoid becoming tools for terrorists by propagating and sensationalizing their horrific actions. However, they admitted that deciding what to publish can be a difficult, but insisted it should be left to journalists to settle instead of being regulated. Even the concept of what is offensive may be relative and therefore difficult to fully frame within the boundaries of the law.

At the same time, it was recognized that journalists not only have a responsibility to verify the news they report, but that they must also be aware that media convey both information and values. Yet journalists should not be expected to counter narratives of radicalization on their

own. Instead, they should recognized that it is in their interest to join forces with other actors from civil society as well as from government in working toward the common goal of protecting society from violent extremism. Indeed, the narrative of "universal values" should be the common cause of all those who seek a peaceful solution to the inevitable tensions that characterize increasingly diverse societies.

In this regard, it was suggested that international organizations like the OSCE could provide a platform for promoting open discussion about values rather than attempting to define codes of conduct or other similar guidelines for journalists reporting on terrorism and radicalization-related issues. International organizations could also support programs aimed at strengthening media literacy among the general public and especially among young people, as well as promoting contacts and exchanges between media representatives in different societies. One participant proposed a "Magna Carta of the Internet," which could be the product of the collective work of many stakeholders, including values-based international organizations like the OSCE. Since information warfare is part and parcel of many of today's conflicts, some participants emphasized that the OSCE plays an important role in promoting freedom of the media as well as media accountability as part of conflict resolution and reconciliation processes.

Although new media can be hijacked by radical groups, they can also empower ordinary people to become voices for positive engagement in society. This is increasingly the case with "citizen journalism," which aims to protect citizens' rights and societal values. By focusing on stories of particular significance to society and raising awareness about the risks as well as the opportunities that certain events and trends present to individuals and communities, citizen journalism can be a powerful tool for preventing radicalization in all its forms.

Several participants emphasized that to ensure that media will be an independent and powerful voice in society, legal guarantees must be in place and ownership of media companies should not be concentrated in just a few hands. Lack of political pluralism and weak rule of law often go hand in hand with submissive media and biased reporting. One of the fundamental ways to prevent abuse of the media by violent groups is for states and international organizations to protect the principle of free media and to ensure conditions for a pluralistic media sector.

How can education challenge misperceptions and biases, and counter violent extremism?

Education plays a key role in the formation and propagation of personal as well as societal norms and values. It can be a bridge between individuals, communities and cultures, identifying commonalities across traditions, and highlighting the positive contributions of diversity to society. How can education be used to address the drivers of radicalization that leads to violent extremism and terrorism? How can educational institutions better co-ordinate their efforts to do this at the local, national, regional, and international levels? How can educators be made more aware of their unique role as security providers?

While there was general agreement that education could play a key role in preventing radicalization that leads to violence, the real question was what type of education and which actors should take the lead in providing it. One speaker pointed out that there is no one-size-fits-all solution and even the best education may not prevent the drift of an individual or group towards embracing violence. Consensus emerged that educational institutions as well as international organizations like the OSCE should concentrate on "civic education," which aims to transmit principles and values that can help individuals and groups understand both their rights and their responsibilities as members of society.

In this context, international organizations with a comprehensive view of different education approaches and systems in various national contexts can make a useful contribution by identifying best practices and lessons learned from a comparative perspective. ODIHR was singled out as playing a critically important role because this OSCE Institution can link its work in the field of human rights and democratization with civic education initiatives.

Education is not only of key importance for young people but also for adults. Many of the most common prejudices and stereotypes that feed discrimination, which can be found among all ages and levels of society, stem from lack of knowledge about other cultures. The Anna Lindh Foundation conducted research which revealed that cultural values do not differ significantly in societies throughout the Mediterranean region. The perceived gap is much wider than the actual one. One speaker provocatively stated that there has never been a risk of a "clash of civilizations" but of a "clash of ignorance" largely attributable to insufficient information or misperceptions about "the other." Therefore promoting dialogue between cultures should be a key element not only of formal schooling, but of education in all stages of life. It was emphasized that the media could play a key role in supporting this goal, possibly in partnership with governmental entities.

Particular attention should be paid to transmitting the values of acceptance, integration, and tolerance for diversity. This is especially important in addressing specific challenges related to new minority groups, including those composed of migrants. It was suggested that some successful approaches to addressing the needs of traditional national minorities, such as linguistic and ethnic minorities, could also be used with new minorities. For example, best practices in bilingual education and proactive approaches to integrated schooling to avoid any type of segregation, including self-segregation, could be introduced. The OSCE's long-standing efforts to protect the rights of national minorities was highlighted as offering a useful source of expertise and tools for addressing new challenges related to the integration of migrants in Europe.

Other tools often connected to the school system, such as sports, were also discussed. Sports have been proven to help both children and adult to socialize and to break down social barriers by fostering communication and dialogue. Inspiring experiences from the Balkans were cited to show that even communities divided by painful memories of war can start rebuilding ties by playing sports together. It was underlined that the beneficiaries are not only the individuals directly involved in these activities but also their families and schools, as well as civil society and local government, and crime prevention was another positive side-effect.

Indeed, inter-community recreational activities seem to have a multiplier effect and can be an important element of successful confidence-building and security promotion strategies. International organizations like the OSCE which operate on the ground in divided societies can capitalize on these synergies.

Religious education was also discussed. Several speakers from the southern Mediterranean said that reform of religious education was needed in some of countries in their region to ensure that educators fully understood their critical role not only as teachers and mentors but also as security providers. At the same time, it was pointed out that in Europe and in the West more broadly the study of religion had been neglected for too long, and that religious extremist groups took advantage of the generally low level of knowledge of religion in secular societies to spread myths and biases. Education about one's own and other religions can help to identify shared values among religions, prevent religious precepts from being distorted and abused, promote respect for human rights, and help to counter radicalization and phenomena such as Islamophobia and anti-Semitism.

One speaker proposed regional reviews of history and other textbooks with a view to seeking common understanding about events and issues that remain divisive in North-South and East-West relations. Sometimes initiatives as simple as translating seminal religious texts into other languages can enhance mutual understanding between societies.

International organizations like the OSCE have no role in determining school curricula. They can nonetheless promote the adoption of common principles guiding education, such as tolerance, inclusivity and respect for diversity. They can also support civil society initiatives aimed at improving the level and the quality of education. Finally, they can exchange information with organizations from other regions to identify successful projects promoting intercultural dialogue and facilitating reconciliation processes that could be replicated or adapted in other regions.

Fostering inclusive dialogue: The critical role of women, youth and religious leaders

Inclusive dialogue has the potential to increase mutual understanding and respect between different communities and groups within societies. What can the international community do to support the inclusion of women, young people and religious leaders in participatory dialogue processes that build bridges between communities, religions and cultures, enhancing security for all? How can women, youth and religious leaders be empowered to become voices for tolerance and bridge builders within their own communities? How can the concerns of women and youth in particular be constructively addressed to prevent their disenfranchisement and marginalization, and what role can religious leaders play in supporting this process?

It was broadly acknowledged that both women and youth were particularly vulnerable to radicalization, but also key partners in any successful effort to counter radicalizing tendencies in local communities and in society at large. Young people striving to find a place in society can experience deep individual or generational frustration and alienation if their needs and

expectations are not met, making them ripe targets for extremist movements, including violent groups. This is particularly true when socio-economic conditions such as high unemployment or a lack of social mobility block avenues to personal fulfilment. In most societies, women still suffer from gender-based discrimination, which can also limit their prospects and marginalize them. This makes some women receptive to radical groups that present a more defined and relevant role for women. For example, distorted role models seem to be a factor in attracting women to the self-proclaimed "Islamic State" in Syria and Iraq.

In the case of far-right movements in Europe, it was noted that ideology rarely played a decisive role in attracting adherents. Extremist and violent ideologies are often embraced by individuals whose sources of frustration differ significantly. The work of plethora of organizations focused on engaging radicalized youth has clearly shown that when given the chance to express their needs and desires in constructive ways, many young people take up that opportunity. The involvement of formerly radicalized young people in these outreach groups can play an essential role in the success of their work.

Young people have the capacity, as several participants pointed out, to swiftly reassess their decisions and become powerful forces for integration. The crucial first step, one speaker stressed, was to ensure that their needs, grievances and aspirations are heard and acknowledged in the public space. Sometimes it is not actual discrimination or exclusion but feeling insufficiently valued by society that leads a young person to embrace radical views and resort to violence in an extreme attempt to gain visibility and recognition. In this regard, it was noted that even well-educated individuals from wealthy households join the ranks of extremist groups, including terrorist organizations.

In other cases, however, the root causes of alienation have to be tackled head-on, such as by providing legal and material tools for integration for economic migrants. One panellist noted that in recent migrant communities, young men are often without family and sometimes temporarily homeless in receiving societies. While addressing their socio-economic needs call for tailored policies, feeling discriminated against and excluded can be partly offset by promoting connections not only with social services but with people who are positive forces, which can encourage socialization and counter negative stereotypes.

Women can play a key role in promoting integration, especially in societies in which the family is the fundamental institution providing socialization, material support and education. Research has shown that in societies with low levels of female emancipation, conflict tends to be more frequent or widespread. It was underscored that women's engagement in society and their empowerment must be enshrined as key objectives in national and international legislation. In Afghanistan, for example, the Constitution sets a quota of 20 percent female representatives in Parliament. This achievement was made possible thanks to a dialogue which women representatives were able to develop with religious representatives.

Religious institutions and leaders were seen to have an interest in preventing the radicalization of youth and other vulnerable groups and working closely with both state institutions and civil society organizations to build effective de-radicalization strategies at the community level.

Religious leaders can play a powerful role, particularly in religious education, since religious extremism is the product of a distorted or poor interpretation of religious texts and precepts. They also have an important influence on shaping culture and can play a proactive role in promoting tolerance and integration. In some countries, religious institutions are elements of a much larger network of civil society institutions that can act as safety nets for potential victims of radicalization.

There was broad agreement that while legislation and the action of state institutions were certainly important, solutions had to be tailored to local situations and sometimes to individual cases. The work of NGOs on the ground was therefore irreplaceable and should be strongly supported. At the same time, it was acknowledged that NGOs could have hidden agendas or indeed become party to intra-societal strife involving radicalized groups. It was therefore suggested that international organizations could help to create a level playing-field for NGOs to engage in a constructive and principles-based dialogue. Organizations like the OSCE which promote a comprehensive understanding of security should continue to work closely with women, youth and religious leaders, recognizing their role as security providers while at the same time respecting the independence of civil society actors. It was suggested that both regional and inter-regional projects involving networks of NGOs could be explored.

A call to action: Strengthening international responses to radicalization that leads to terrorism

What are the key elements of a joint strategy bringing together regional partners to counter violent radicalization and address fundamental security concerns while taking into account the need to respect basic human rights? What have been the main shortcomings and most notable lessons learned so far? Is there room for greater co-ordination, including with civil society actors? What next steps can be taken to advance a regional approach?

The final session of the conference, which brought together the leaders of a number of regional and international organizations, focused on the role that regional and multilateral institutions can play, individually and collectively, to strengthen the international response to radicalization and violent extremism that can lead to terrorism. The goal was to identify follow-up initiatives, including the creation of new coalitions and joint projects. This session was also intended to stimulate discussion among the OSCE participating States and their Partners for Co-operation on how to maximize the Organization's added value in this effort.

Violent radicalization is a global phenomenon requiring both global and regional solutions. In recent years more than 80 countries have been directly affected by terrorism, including many OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation. UN Security Council Resolution 2178 provides guidelines for the international community to confront this challenge, including through preventive approaches, such as promoting dialogue and tolerance, and eradicating the root causes of the problem, including discrimination, disempowerment, underdevelopment and long-standing regional conflicts. The OSCE Cordoba Declaration of 2005, which rejects the identification of terrorism and extremism with any religion, culture, ethnic group,

nationality or race, is also an important reference point; a review of progress made since 2005 was proposed.

As the world's largest regional security organization, the OSCE could provide strong impetus to UN-mandated commitments to prevent and counter violent extremism and terrorism throughout the Euro-Atlantic, Eurasian and Mediterranean regions. It was emphasized that this OSCE Security Days conference should start a process involving other regional actors.

The UN Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC), which is active in key areas such as combatting intolerance and hate speech and promoting intercultural dialogue and the integration of newcomers in host societies, stood ready to co-operate more closely with the OSCE on specific regional chapters of its mandate. The UNAOC and other organizations had already worked closely with the OSCE to strengthen the role of mediation in addressing international crises and preventing conflict, and it was suggested that similar collaboration could be activated in the broad field of de-radicalization. Indeed, one speaker suggested that an "Alliance of Institutions" could be formed to implement concrete initiatives focused on building a common counter-narrative and launching practical co-operation projects at the local and community levels.

It was also suggested that ties could be strengthened between the OSCE and the Union for the Mediterranean, which includes all the EU member states and 15 countries from the southern Mediterranean, thus providing a unique bridge for fostering interregional dialogue along a North-South axis. The Union for the Mediterranean was particularly interested in the nexus between security and development, and its Secretariat was ready to deepen its dialogue and co-operation with the OSCE and other organizations on women's empowerment, youth support and education, and other topics closely connected with development and a comprehensive definition of security. A July 2015 conference on violent radicalization organized by the Union for the Mediterranean was seen as the first follow-up to the Security Days conference.

There was broad agreement that some initiatives could only be successful if a systematic link was formed with civil society institutions that could take messages and operations to the field level, and not only in the broad area of development and security. The Anna Lindh Foundation reminded the audience that culture was among the key targets of some the most virulent current strains of violent extremism. The self-proclaimed "Islamic State," for example, had perpetrated violent acts in the Middle East and elsewhere directed against individuals and institutions representing pluralistic culture. Attacks on museums and historical sites were also a clear indication that some terrorists groups were waging a full-blown assault on civilization. Represented in 43 countries, the Anna Lindh Foundation promoted the Mediterranean as a cradle of civilization and as a region that could be at the forefront of an intercultural dialogue based equality and respect. With its vast network at the civil society and grassroots levels, the Foundation could work with organizations like the OSCE to identify specific strategies to support all stakeholders in peaceful coexistence and mutual development, including educational institutions, journalists working in multicultural

environments, and youth and women leaders who can serve as role models. The Foundation's "Young Arab Voices" program was mentioned as a particularly successful initiative.

The King Abdullah bin Abdulaziz International Centre for Interreligious and Intercultural Dialogue (KAICIID) reinforced the call for a dialogue involving civil society, with an emphasis on interreligious and interfaith dialogue. Building bridges was intrinsic to the mission of KAICIID, which included all major religions in its efforts to unite religious leaders and policymakers around the goal of international peace. It was suggested that KAICIID's workshops and seminars could more directly address the link between dialogue and security, and a partnership with the OSCE was proposed to channel existing expertise and contacts towards clearly defined security-oriented outcomes. One idea could involve religious leaders in assessing security threats to states and societies.

The Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) emphasized that a platform for co-ordination among international organizations should be based on a strong conceptual framework and a common set of principles, including ethical ones, to guide the process. External experts from academia and civil society could help identify both. The OIC stood ready to deepen collaboration with the OSCE on these matters. Egypt, which currently chaired the OIC and is an OSCE Partner for Co-operation, expressed readiness to work with both the OIC and the OSCE on issues such as combatting Islamophobia and counter-terrorism. The OIC Fatwa Committee was mentioned in this context as an experience that could potentially be replicated

Several representatives of the OSCE Mediterranean Partners for Co-operation exhorted the OSCE participating States to consider new decisions and commitments that would more structurally link the challenge of radicalization to issues such as the integration of migrants and respect for religious and new ethnic minorities. At the same time, it was recognized that much more needed to be done in the southern Mediterranean region in terms of political reform, support for education and media literacy, and religious education reform to make sure that young people received positive rather than divisive messages.

The OSCE was widely appreciated for providing an inclusive platform for an action-oriented discussion that engaged so many other regional and multilateral organizations, civil society, NGOs, journalists, academic experts and the broader public. But it could also provide a platform on which to build interregional coalitions to advance joint policies and initiatives. For example, during the Security Days event, the OSCE Secretary General and the Serbian 2015 OSCE Chairmanship launched a campaign around the slogan "OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism" to build momentum within the Organization, its participating States and Partners for Co-operation, and with civil society and other partners to prevent and counter radicalization and violent extremism that lead to terrorism. The OSCE Secretary General invited all the other regional and international organizations to support the campaign. It was also suggested that the OSCE "New-Med" Track II network of think tanks and research institutions could be tasked with producing cutting-edge analysis on radicalization and also be encouraged to develop ties with similar networks linked to other international institutions. More broadly, OSCE Track II initiatives, including Security Days, could partner with civil

society actors to create a more permanent channel of communication between civil society and diplomatic circles. They could also play a key role in youth outreach.

Leadership at the national level was seen as key for mobilizing international efforts to counter violent extremism. The OSCE Chairmanship provided an effective mechanism for channeling political support into multilateral outcomes. The OSCE's added value lay in its inclusive membership, comprehensive approach to security, extensive field presence, and its early warning systems and conflict-prevention mechanisms. The OSCE toolbox could be leveraged to address contemporary conflicts about identity just as effectively as it has been used in other types of conflicts.

Key Recommendations

- The OSCE should continue to provide a platform for dialogue on both counter-radicalization and integration issues. Lessons learned and best practices could be shared more systematically among OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, including by launching dedicated initiatives to complement and support work done in the counter-terrorism field. The idea of an OSCE academy supporting international research, exchanges, and civil-society outreach in the broad field of counter-radicalization and integration could be explored in this context.

- As an organization with extensive experience in conflict prevention, conflict management and post-conflict rehabilitation, the OSCE should redouble its efforts to tackle the root causes of radicalization as another way to enhance security and promote peace.

- Since religious leaders and educators can play a crucial role in preventing radicalization processes and promoting a culture of tolerance, the OSCE should engage more actively with them and support interreligious dialogue as part of its counter-radicalization strategies. The promotion of interreligious and intercultural dialogue should be seen as part and parcel of security building in the OSCE area and neighboring regions.

- As the "eyes and ears" of the international community in a variety of conflict-prone regions, the OSCE could act as an effective early-warning system also for the prevention of violent acts resulting from radicalization and extremism by mobilizing capacity, expertise and contacts at the local and community levels, including through its field operations where appropriate.

- As an organization with a long track record promoting freedom of the media, the OSCE should join forces with journalists to protect their independence while raising awareness about their responsibility for promoting tolerance and respect for different cultures and religious beliefs. While continuing to support professional media in their important role as providers of information and objective reporting, the OSCE could devote more efforts to countering the tendency to use social media as a platform for promoting extremism and violence.

- "Where does freedom of speech end?" is a difficult question to answer. But the OSCE should continue to uphold the fundamental tenet that freedom of speech should always stop short of inciting violence. The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media can share its decades-long experience in supporting freedom as well as the accountability of the media.

- The OSCE could join other actors at the national and international level, including associations of media representatives, in exploring a new "Magna Carta of the Internet" setting standards for responsible reporting, thus contributing to the promotion of freedom of speech, tolerance and security.

- The OSCE's long-standing experience advocating for the protection of the rights of national minorities can offer important lessons on how to deal with newer minorities such as migrant communities in host countries. This transfer of knowledge and best practices could apply, for instance, to the field of native-language education, reform of school curricula and the promotion of integration policies.

- The OSCE should proactively engage women and youth in counter-radicalization and integration-oriented strategies recognizing their unique and key role as buffers to the spread of violent and divisive ideologies within and across societies. Gender-tailored responses should be an essential component of an effective response to the phenomenon of violent radicalization and should be an integral element in promoting a comprehensive definition of security.

- The OSCE has long-standing, dynamic and pragmatic partnerships with Mediterranean and Asian countries. Ongoing discussions with these Partners for Co-operation on issues related to countering violent extremism should continue to feature a variety of perspectives and aim at generating action-oriented initiatives, including possible concrete projects in both OSCE participating States and Partner countries.

- Regional organizations could form an "alliance of institutions" to join forces in countering radicalization and violent extremism. Their efforts should focus on creating a common counter-narrative and launching practical co-operation projects at the local and community levels, including by actively engaging civil society actors.

- The OSCE Track II networks could partner with civil society actors in OSCE participating States and Partner countries to create a more permanent channel of communication between civil society, academia and diplomatic circles. They could also play a key role in youth outreach.

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