



*The OSCE's Opportunity Advantage and Strengthened Collaboration  
with the European Union*

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to have again the opportunity to speak before such a distinguished audience. In complementarity with the presentation by Ambassador Istrate, the Chair of the OSCE Security Committee and our field mission colleague Selma Zeković, I would like to highlight our main activities over the last year, focusing on the OSCE's opportunity advantage with a particular focus on the extensive OSCE efforts to prevent and counter violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism. I will conclude with a few thoughts on 2017, as a year to bring such collaboration to a broader level between the OSCE's and the European Union's counter-terrorism frameworks that share many similar programmatic interests, as well as among its participating States who support our efforts to address transnational threats.

First of all, let me emphasize that the OSCE warmly welcomes that the recently adopted EU Global Strategy attaches priority to “fostering cooperation with the OSCE”, as a “pillar of European security” and a “Europe-wide organization stretching into Central Asia, with a transatlantic link” that “lies at the heart of the European security order”.

The added-value of the OSCE lies not only in its original mission enshrined from its inception at the heart of the organization, namely of creating a bridge between East and West, as the largest regional organization under the Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, but also in the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, the broad network of field presences and the specialized institutions. Indeed, in the Western Balkans, Eastern Europe, South Caucasus and Central Asia, the two organizations can strengthen their co-operation, with a view to boosting impact on the ground. This often makes the OSCE a logical and reliable partner for sustainable regional efforts aimed at countering transnational threats, in particular terrorism.

### **Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism**

has remained a strategic priority for the OSCE over the past two years.

As noted by Ambassador Istrate, the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted in Belgrade last December, under the leadership of the Serbian Chairmanship, a Ministerial Declaration on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism.

This Declaration consolidated OSCE commitments related to preventing and countering VERLT, in full compliance with rule of law and human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In this context, Germany – the OSCE Chairmanship in 2016 – convened in May an OSCE-wide conference focused on preventing and countering VERLT, thereby raising awareness and facilitating the exchange of good practices, while upholding human rights, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law. This conference clearly supports regionally the United Nations' Action Plan to Prevent Violent Extremism.

This year's counter-terrorism conference was attended by more than 300 participants from across the OSCE area, who discussed the challenges related to

the return of foreign terrorist fighters and possible ways for their rehabilitation and re-integration into society, as well as the role of youth and women in the fight against terrorism.

We continue to welcome the EU's active participation at our annual event and the next opportunity will be the OSCE Counter-terrorism Conference that will be hosted by the Austrian OSCE Chairmanship in 2017.

From the overarching recommendations stemming from our discussions, let me highlight in particular that the OSCE participating States, in their efforts to counter VERLT, should fully respect international law, including human rights law, humanitarian law and refugee law, and develop a strong partnership with the private sector and civil society stakeholders, as well as advance the role of women and actively engage youth at all levels and from an early stage in preventing and countering VERLT. Here are a few examples of these approaches in action.

The OSCE Transnational Threats Department is working jointly with the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media on media freedom and responsibilities in the context of countering terrorism, including countering the use of the Internet and social media for terrorist purposes. The initial workshop in Bucharest in October 2015 was followed-up in Sarajevo a few weeks ago, focusing on countering VERLT online. Our team is also developing an OSCE e-learning module on Countering the Use of the Internet for Terrorist Purposes with the support of international experts, including from the UN.

The OSCE continues to provide cost-effective assistance for the OSCE participating States to develop and implement comprehensive national strategies and action plans to counter violent extremism and terrorism. I would like to emphasize the OSCE engagement on national CVE/CT strategies with for example Bosnia-Herzegovina (the colleague from the OSCE Mission in Bosnia-

Herzegovina will later present more in detail a successful project), Serbia and Tajikistan, and Pristina (through the OSCE Mission in Kosovo).

And now a few words about the launching of a new initiative “*Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism*” initiative – LIVE – aimed at building capacity at the grassroots level, with a view to empowering local civil society leaders, including women and youth, to speak up and mobilize their communities against violent extremism.

In the same vein, we have been organizing out of the box training activities, including social media training for youth on countering violent extremist narratives, and table-top exercises to promote inter-agency co-ordination. We are developing a training for police officers on the role of community policing in preventing terrorism and countering VERLT. The training is based on a joint guidebook of the OSCE Transnational Threats Department and the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights.

All these activities are reinforced by our overarching communication campaign, “OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism” (#UnitedCVE). This campaign was launched in 2015 and seeks to leverage the potential of social media to engage and rally youth and civil society in support of the global consensus against violent extremism. We have achieved an unprecedented outreach of over 12 million people since last year. Through this campaign, we are sending a unified message from the OSCE as a community, reinforcing a global consensus against violent extremism leading to terrorism and we invite external stakeholders such as the EU, and especially civil society, to rally behind and contribute to the campaign.

The OSCE was ready to present its ongoing efforts at the High-Level Meeting on Global Efforts in Integrating a Youth Dimension in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (22<sup>nd</sup> of September 2016) that discussed the

threat posed by violent extremism and explored how to build resilient societies and a resilient youth. In the context of the constantly growing co-operation between our organizations, we are confident that further opportunities may arise.

There is plenty of room for the EU and the OSCE to co-operate together in preventing and countering VERLT -- such as the recent UNGA High-Level Meeting on Global Efforts in Integrating a Youth Dimension in Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism, which shares the same objective as our LIVE initiative. I would like to draw your attention again to the recently adopted EU Global Strategy which highlights among other commitments, “to deepen work on education, culture, communication, youth and sport to counter violent extremism”, and “work on counter-radicalisation by broadening partnership with civil society, social actors, private sector and the victims of terrorism, as well as through inter-religious and inter-cultural dialogue.” All these areas reflected in LIVE and other VERLT-related activities of the OSCE.

### **Preventing the Cross-Border Movement of Terrorists**

In the remaining remarks, I would like to briefly dwell upon another important programme of our activity. In 2014, the OSCE Ministerial Council in Basel pledged our support to the implementation of UNSCR 2178 (2014) on the phenomenon of **Foreign Terrorist Fighters**. When it comes to preventing the movement of these so-called FTFs, we focus on 3 areas where more efforts are required: 1) strengthening border control capacity; 2) enhancing the sharing of information through the use of Advance Passenger Information (API); and 3) improving State’s identification management systems.

In relation to *strengthening border control*, we conduct hands-on training in the detection of forged travel documents for countries in South-East Europe, South Caucasus, and Central Asia. As we have seen from both the recent attacks in

Europe and the flow of migrants, attempts to use fraudulent or counterfeit documents to enter is widespread.

The OSCE training actively contributes to the EU's overall border security by preventing the cross-border movement of criminals/terrorists/smugglers and others using false documents. Given the challenges, we could be doing more with the support of the EU, and a partnership with FRONTEX would be welcome.

This training is supplemented by an initiative we are working on to create mobile training teams to support States in identifying foreign terrorist fighters through behavioural profiling, interviewing techniques, and the detection of documents. EUROPOL has developed Common Risk Indicators for the Identification of FTF's, and we hope that these could be shared with the OSCE.

On information sharing - The OSCE is *supporting and assisting States in the establishment of Advance Passenger Information systems*. The OSCE is actively involved in the international awareness-raising campaign on API and the German Chairmanship is currently negotiating a politically-binding commitment among participating States to adopt API regimes, in line with UNSCR 2178. This commitment seeks to promote some of the standards that the EU has set through its recent Passenger Name Record (PNR) Directive – in particular the establishment of 'single window' passenger data units, and the need to check passenger data against watch-lists and databases.

On API, we are also working directly with States to support them in establishing national API systems. Our first capacity building effort is taking place in Serbia later this year with the financial support of Germany. With increased collaboration with the EU, we could increase our capacity-building efforts significantly.

Finally on *improving identification management systems*, there are two initiatives I want to highlight: firstly, our efforts to promote membership of ICAO's Public Key Directory (PKD). Today, having an e-passport is not enough; one must be able to confirm it is authentic, and this is done through the PKD. Only 17 of the 28 EU Member States are currently members, we organize national workshops to assist States in preparing to join.

The second initiative we are working on in this area is improving the security of breeder documents, so that birth or marriage certificates cannot be so easily forged in order to acquire a genuine identification. All EU States recently received a questionnaire on the links between their civil registry and travel document issuance systems. We will be developing capacity-building projects based on the responses we receive.

### **Moving Ahead Towards 2017**

Let me now turn to very recent or upcoming events relevant for the EU-OSCE co-operation.

We very much appreciate that the OSCE has been invited to integrate its efforts in the field of CT and CVE under the EU's Western Balkans Counter Initiative (WBCTi). We have proposed a number of activities that were included in the WBCTi matrix and participated in the planning meeting held in Tirana from 10 to 13 May 2016, and will join the next co-ordination effort in Tirana on 11 November with the Regional Cooperation Council (RCC).

We welcome that the Office of the EU Counter-Terrorism Coordinator will be joining us at the 16-17 November regional event on Countering the Use of Internet for Terrorist Purposes that will take place in Skopje. This is a good example showing the great potential of co-operation between the EU and OSCE, which can lead to even more tangible impact of our joint activities at the

regional/sub-regional level. With these examples above, we believe that the OSCE is ideally placed to support the establishment of a RAN-like network in the Western Balkans and/or Central Asia.

Other upcoming areas include: the Seminar on the Central Asian Perspective on Violent Extremism (11-12 October) (organized by the EU Delegation to Dushanbe) or the Conference on Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (organized by the EU Special Representative for Central Asia) that will take place in Kyrgyzstan (8-11 November 2016) which illustrate the reciprocal cooperation activities planned by and between the OSCE and EU. As mentioned, Austria is the incoming Chairmanship and its government has already announced that one of their priorities next year will be youth and VERLT.

In summary, the OSCE has extensive experience in dealing with VERLT and other CT issues, which remain very high on our agenda, and the organization is unique in that it deals with all three components of security. In South Eastern Europe and Central Asia, the OSCE has field presences in all countries (as a value-opportunity compared to many other international actors). The OSCE has been working on VERLT for many years, has a robust thematic team, solid experience, local knowledge and insights available, and is well equipped to emphasize and support preventive aspects.

As such, the OSCE can be for the EU a valuable and effective partner to effectively counter terrorism and prevent VERLT, thus it is important to explore more concrete areas to join forces. Working with women, families, youth and other civil society actors holds a strong potential to build capacity on the local level. I discussed before the COTER meeting today about opportunities for EU-OSCE partnership on countering terrorism with EU officials from DG Home, DG Near, DEVCO, FPI, EEAS, GSC/CTC.



On implementation: our existing capacity-building projects to counter VERLT and to enhance traveler identification at the border make us well-placed to partner with the EU in supporting States.

On awareness-raising: we use a combination of multilateral meetings, online campaigning, and focal point networks to raise awareness of the international commitments.

On political will: the OSCE increases standards through the adoption of politically-binding decisions by consensus among the 57 participating States.

As a final word, I would like to make a few points about OSCE collaboration with any partner:

Major terrorist attacks have been carried out in Europe and beyond. Therefore, increased solidarity in countering terrorism is key.

The OSCE stands ready for strengthening mutually beneficial partnerships not only in implementation, but also in earlier stages of strategic planning. Continued information exchange and timely sharing of work-plans enable a more effective resource management.

The OSCE stands ready to be actively involved with the EU in potential project development, co-ordination/strategic planning for projects and identification of funding partners, regional and sub-regional high-level events which are to be conducted in the OSCE area, including long-term ones, in particular in Western Balkans and Central Asia.

In closing, I want to reiterate that the OSCE stands ready to remain a substantive contributor in generating political will, raising awareness and building capacity and to work together with the EU in the OSCE area.

Thank you.