



2019 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference

Taking Stock of Efforts to Prevent and Counter Terrorism as well as Violent Extremism and Radicalization that lead to Terrorism in the OSCE Area

Bratislava, 25-26 March 2019

Closing remarks

H.E. Ambassador Thomas Greminger, OSCE Secretary General

Thank you Mr. Chairman

Under Secretary-General, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As families mourn their loved ones, a whole nation and the world are struck by sadness following the shocking attack on worshippers gathering for prayer in two mosques in New Zealand.

In Italy, a young Egyptian boy is hailed as a hero after he saves an entire bus of schoolmates from what would have become a deadly attack.

Acts of violent extremism and terrorism are brutal reality and a constant menace. They remind us of the critical importance of joined-up and well-conceived responses to what is an increasingly complex and diverse challenge. There is no one-size fits all approach. Our responses need to be context-specific and inclusive of all relevant actors.

The OSCE's comprehensive approach to security offers a good basis to address this complexity. It promotes mutually reinforcing objectives within a framework that places strong emphasis on the respect for the rule of law, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Discussions over the past two days have shown that the **OSCE is well-equipped to contribute to preventing and countering violent extremism and terrorism.**

Numerous speakers stressed the importance of **involving civil society, women and youth** at all stages of policy-making – from designing action plans to implementing counter-terrorism policies. To this end, the OSCE is continuing to offer a number of training programmes, resources and tools.

Under the **LIVE Initiative** (Leaders against Intolerance and Violent Extremism), train the trainer courses for youth, women and community leaders seek to establish a cadre of multipliers who can empower civil society to prevent VERLT.

To raise awareness and promote the exchange of good practices in preventing and countering VERLT, the OSCE is addressing specific challenges through a series of **guidebooks**. One of them focuses on the role of civil society in the context of South-East Europe, another in Central Asia. The next guidebook will elaborate on pre-criminal interventions and referral mechanisms. Additional guidance is also being developed on gender awareness for security sector actors, as well as on rehabilitation and reintegration.

Discussions also highlighted the range of our latest efforts to promote effective criminal justice, strengthen border security and management, suppress the financing of terrorism, counter the evolving terrorist use of the Internet, and protect critical infrastructure. All of this is part of a comprehensive package, encouraging and enabling complementary actors to play their role in an inclusive effort.

But we also need to be **responsive to a rapidly changing environment**. The defeat of ISIL/DAESH on the battlefield is one current example mentioned repeatedly that will have repercussions on our posture here in Europe.

Among the **trends and evolving challenges** raised, many warrant further in-depth discussion. They include, among many others, the use of migration channels by foreign terrorist fighters, links between terrorist financing and organized crime, as well as ideologically or faith-based factors that push towards further polarization in societies.

Speakers also highlighted that terrorists are adapting their tactics and modus operandi to inspire, recruit, radicalize and commit terrorist attacks using more sophisticated tools than in the past. The Internet, artificial intelligence, drones were mentioned and the discussion provided us with plenty of food-for-thought on the **role of technology** – a discussion that will become rapidly more prominent in the years to come.

Dear colleagues,

High-level participation of our UN friends from CTED, UNOCT and UNODC bear testimony to the importance of **inter-agency collaboration**.

The OSCE has participated in CTED assessment visits, and participated in open briefings of the Counter-Terrorism Committee, while taking into account its recommendations when planning OSCE training and capacity building activities.

Last October I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with USG Voronkov. I look forward to operationalizing our interaction further on numerous issues of shared interest.

I also look forward to advancing our activities with the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia and welcome the mapping exercise to chart activities of UN agencies and other regional and international organizations operating in Central Asia. This will be a useful tool for coordination, information sharing, identification of gaps and potential identification of synergies and cooperation.

Our long-standing cooperation with UNODC is underpinned by joint implementation of training on counter terrorist financing in Central Asia and now also in South East Europe.

In this context of partnerships, I also wish to highlight the **active role and support of parliamentarians** in strengthening legislation, promoting solidarity with victims of terrorism and speaking out strongly and promptly against intolerance, discrimination and violence. I commend the emphasis placed on counter-terrorism by the OSCE's Parliamentary Assembly.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's Conference attracted over 400 participants from OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation, from international and regional organizations, civil society and academia from across the OSCE area. It has been an excellent opportunity to reinforce our joint commitment to tackling the terrorist challenge.

Thank you for your active participation in the debate.

I also thank the Slovak Chairmanship for the warm welcome to Bratislava and the excellent conduct of this meeting. Finally, I commend the Transnational Threats Department, and in particular the Action against Terrorism Unit for their role in planning and organizing this meeting.

Thank you for your attention.