



2015 Human Dimension Implementation Meeting
Working Session 8 – Rule of Law
Protection of Human Rights and Fighting Terrorism
25 September 2015

**Statement by Thomas Wuchte, OSCE Head on Anti-Terrorism Issues
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Thank you Chairperson,

The Action against Terrorism Unit, in the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department, is mandated to serve as focal point for the co-ordination and facilitation of OSCE counter-terrorism activities, under the [OSCE Consolidated Framework for the Fight Against Terrorism](#). Our job is to assist OSCE participating States in fulfilling their OSCE commitments and international obligations in the field of counter-terrorism – commitments which are many, and cut across the three OSCE dimensions of security.

As a matter of fact, the **first ever joint meeting of the OSCE's three committees** which was held this year in June at the initiative of the OSCE Serbian Chairmanship – a joint meeting of the Security Committee, the Economic and Environmental Committee, and the Human Dimension committee – focused on countering terrorism.

In the same spirit, the OSCE Transnational Threats Department continues to work closely and to have an excellent co-operation with ODIHR, and other OSCE institutions such as the Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFOM), to ensure that all human rights implications in our programmes and activities are identified, understood and appropriately addressed.

I would like to briefly **highlight two developments** since my remarks at the HDIM last year.

First, OSCE participating States and their Partners for Co-operation have been facing an unprecedented **threat from foreign terrorist fighters**, and the brutal rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant. This phenomenon presents us with challenges that are not necessarily new: preventing terrorist radicalization; detecting in time individuals with a terrorist intent; strengthening border controls and international co-operation; bringing terrorist offenders to justice; and reintegrating violent extremists. But **these challenges are more acute, and the need to be consistent in our policies and to uphold human rights and the rule of law in our response is ever more crucial**.

Last December, OSCE participating States adopted in Basel a [Ministerial Declaration on the OSCE's role in countering the phenomenon of foreign terrorist fighters](#) in the context of the implementation of UN Security Council resolutions 2170 (2014) and 2178 (2014). We have focused since the beginning of the year on promoting the implementation of this Declaration.

I would like to highlight in particular that the OSCE Serbian Chairmanship convened an OSCE-wide conference on June 30th and July 1st to discuss, from a cross-dimensional perspective, the **challenge of countering the incitement and recruitment of foreign terrorist fighters**. ODIHR and RFOM were closely involved and the Chairmanship issued a [perception paper on outcomes and recommendations](#) from the conference, which I invite participants in the HDIM to read.

The Chairmanship aptly [concluded](#) the conference by underscoring that “every time participating States undermine human rights, they undermine their own counter-narrative to violent extremism” – which brings me to **my second point**. The OSCE has been actively involved since the beginning of the year in the **Summit process on Countering Violent Extremism (CVE)** which was launched by the United States in February as a call for action to counter the drivers of terrorism, and in particular the hateful extremist ideologies that radicalize, recruit or incite to violence.

[Countering violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism](#) following a multi-dimensional approach is a strategic focus area for OSCE counter-terrorism activities. We have devoted a significant amount of time and energy to promote policy dialogue and facilitate the exchange of experiences. For instance, our Department submitted last December a **draft good practices document on women and CVE**, which we expect will be adopted next week by the Global Counterterrorism Forum in New York as a non-binding guidance on mainstreaming gender in CVE.

I believe **we should now focus our efforts on practical implementation**, and I believe that our Organization can play an even bigger role by leveraging its field operations and its expertise across the board, especially in the human dimension, and especially in relation to mobilizing civil society.

Let me stress, as I have done consistently each time I took part in the HDIM since 2012, that besides ensuring that counter-terrorism policies and measures uphold human rights and the rule of law, it is incumbent upon all of us to **actively challenge terrorism as a denial of human rights – to actively challenge ideas that violence is a legitimate course of action – to actively challenge the intolerance and hatred that nurture terrorism** as they fuel other forms of violence.

Accordingly, the OSCE Secretary General and the OSCE Serbian Chairmanship launched in spring **an advocacy campaign** [“OSCE United in Countering Violent Extremism”](#). The campaign is intended to send a unified message from the OSCE to help reinforce a global consensus against violent extremism and to better communicate through social media on all relevant activities across the Organization.

All OSCE participating States, their Partners for Co-operation, as well as academic institutions, civil society organizations across the OSCE area, are invited to rally under the umbrella of this campaign. We have released a number of videos, including from the OSCE Youth Ambassadors. **You can also support the campaign at the HDIM** by sharing your views and efforts using the campaign hashtag #UnitedCVE, and by taking a picture outside this hall at our campaign corner with the OSCE Youth Ambassadors.

Moreover, our Department is **proposing to implement a training initiative to build the capacity of civil society leaders** across the OSCE region to effectively and safely speak out, mobilize others, and take appropriate action against intolerance and violent extremism in their specific local context.

In closing, I should note that the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted in Basel another Declaration in the field of counter-terrorism, namely a [Declaration](#) on the OSCE role in countering **kidnapping for ransom and hostage-taking committed by terrorist groups** in the context of the implementation of UN Security Council resolution 2133 (2014). This is another area of work where enhanced international co-operation, more capacity-building, as well as public-private partnerships are needed for prevention, to protect the lives of hostages, and to secure their safe release without ransom payment or political concessions.

Thank you.