

**Expert Workshop on Preventing Terrorism : Fighting Incitement
and Related Terrorist Activities**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first welcome her Royal Highness Princess Bajrakitiyabha Mahidol to this seminar and thank her for the particular interest shown in a subject of high importance for us all the prevention of terrorism.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is my pleasure, on behalf of the Chairman-in-Office to open this Expert workshop on Preventing Terrorism and to do it jointly with the Council of Europe.

This is the first time that our two organisations are setting up a joint event in the field of counter-terrorism and I do particularly welcome the participation of the Council of Europe in this initiative.

The Council of Europe has also worked extensively on human rights and the fight against terrorism, a theme which is also of great relevance for our seminar today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Terrorism and incitement to terrorist activities are targeting both East and West of Vienna. As the then 55 pS clearly stated in the 2001 Bucharest Plan

of Action for Combating Terrorism, “Terrorism is a threat to international peace and security in the OSCE area as elsewhere.” Let me also remind you that in 2002, at the Porto Ministerial Council, our Organisation adopted a Charter on Preventing and Combating Terrorism, in which pS (art. 22) “Commit themselves to combat hate speech and to take the necessary measures to prevent the abuse of the media and information technology for terrorist purposes, ensuring that such measures are consistent with domestic and international law and OSCE commitments”. The Sofia Ministerial reaffirmed previous commitments and expressed the intention to step up OSCE activities and measures to prevent and combat terrorism and to address all factors which engender conditions in which terrorist organisations are able to recruit and win support.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On September 8th, the UN General Assembly adopted by consensus the UN Counter-terrorism Strategy and its plan of action, as the first truly universal comprehensive instrument to prevent and combat terrorism, while calling on States to take measures to ensure respect for human rights for all and the rule of law as the fundamental basis of the fight against terrorism.

By this, the international community has showed its unity and resolve in combating terrorism.

Implementation of the Strategy requires the enhancement of co-operative and co-ordinating efforts both within the UN system and between the UN and other relevant multilateral actors.

I sincerely hope that our seminar and the other initiatives of the OSCE in the field of the fight against terrorism can bring significant contribution to these international efforts.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The border between measures taken to criminalise what is incitement to commit a terrorist act and measures infringing on the freedom of expression is not easy to define and this is indeed where this seminar finds all its relevance.

While the UN Security Council Resolution 1624 calls on States “to prohibit by law incitement to commit a terrorist act”, hence recognising that States have an obligation to take effective counter-terrorism measures, it is also a duty for the States to respect their international human rights obligations. As Martin Sheinin, the Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights while Countering Terrorism rightly said “these two requirements are not mutually exclusive”. We might even add that effective CT measures and the protection of HR are not conflicting goals but complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The right to freedom of expression also calls for a sense of responsibility. At the same time, prevention of counter-terrorism should not be a pretext for States to justify the use of restrictive or repressive measures against their populations.

No speech should promote or condone criminal hate motivated acts, whether based on race, religion, ethnicity or any other identifiable human

characteristic. From its inception, the OSCE has highlighted the problems of hate speech inciting to violence. Extensive commitments have been adopted to combat such acts motivated by prejudice, intolerance and hatred. The promotion of mutual respect and understanding, should remain the cornerstone of our work. In this context, we welcome all initiatives promoting, inter-cultural, inter-faith or any other form of dialogue and understanding. The Alliance of Civilisations is one of the best known examples in this regard. Also, during the Tolerance Implementation Meeting on Inter-cultural Inter-religious and Inter-ethnic Understanding in Almaty delegations and civil society have formulated very useful and concrete recommendations in this field.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Let me conclude that, the nature of terrorist threat is evolving and we are all confronted with increasingly diffused or informal organisations, using various methods to challenge our societies. It is therefore my hope that this workshop, through the exchange of information and best practices, will be an opportunity to enhance our international cooperation in the fight against incitement and related terrorist activities. To achieve this goal, let me reiterate the importance for all of us to implement the United Nations legal framework, to disseminate relevant standards set up by other organisations and to give due respect to the norms and values of the OSCE. It is only then, that peace and security, which are OSCE's core priorities will help States to overcome new emerging threats.

I thank you.