

Vienna, 3 July 2017

Dear colleagues,

We are pleased to have received such an overwhelming interest in this year's OSCE-wide Counter Terrorism Conference. The attendance of approximately 550 participants from largely all OSCE participating States made the Conference the largest of its kind.

The Conference was able to draw significant input from high level speakers from all over the OSCE, experts from national authorities, international and regional organisations as well as from civil society. Particular mention should be given to the presentation of recommendations that were previously formulated by young experts during a series of regional workshops preceding the Conference. In addition, during one of the many side events, participants were able to listen to the experiences and recommendations of a former Foreign Terrorist Fighter.

Participants most importantly discussed about the need for increased international cooperation in countering terrorism, the challenges posed by engaging and empowering youth in preventing and countering youth radicalisation as well as the growing necessity to focus efforts relating to rehabilitation and reintegration.

We are therefore pleased to share with you a Chairmanship Perception paper, containing a rich summary of key-findings expressed during the Conference. These findings should provide an even stronger basis for our future work as ministers are meeting next week for the informal meeting of OSCE ministers in Mauerbach, as well as of course the OSCE Ministerial Council in December in Vienna.

Yours sincerely,



Clemens Koja  
Ambassador  
Chairperson of the Permanent Council

## **Chairmanship's Perception Paper**

### **Recommendations from the 2017 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference on 'Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism'**

*Vienna, 23 May - 24 May 2017*

*This document reflects the Austrian Chairmanship's perception of the non-binding recommendations advanced during the Conference*

## SUMMARY

Violent extremism and radicalization that lead to terrorism (VERLT) is a threat faced by both OSCE participating States and their Partners for Co-operation and is high on the OSCE agenda. Countering VERLT through a multidimensional approach is one of the eight strategic focus areas for OSCE counter-terrorism activities (PC.DEC/1063).

The 2017 OSCE-wide Counter-Terrorism Conference on *Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism* (VERLT) was convened by the Austrian Chairmanship, with the support of the Transnational Threats Department/Action against Terrorism Unit, in Vienna, on 23-24 May 2017, under the umbrella of the OSCE 'United in Countering Violent Extremism' campaign (#UnitedCVE).

The event, inaugurated by the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, H.E. Sebastian Kurz, Federal Minister for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Austria, gathered more than 550 high-level participants, practitioners, academics and civil society representatives. 67 OSCE participating States and OSCE Partners for Co-operation, 35 international and regional organizations, including various United Nations agencies, and more than 90 civil society organizations, academia and youth representatives attended the event.

The Conference focused on three main topics highlighted by MC.DOC/1/16 on Strengthening OSCE Efforts to Prevent and Counter Terrorism and by the MC.DOC/4/15 on Preventing and Countering VERLT, namely national experiences and international co-operation in countering terrorism, engaging and empowering youth in preventing and countering VERLT, and rehabilitation, reintegration and the prevention of radicalization to terrorism.

In addition to the three plenary sessions, on the margins of the Conference, the participants had the opportunity to attend and contribute to ten side-events on the following topics:

- The GCTF Initiative to Address the Lifecycle of Radicalization to Violence Toolkit (convened by the United States of America)
- Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism in the Euro-Mediterranean Region: The Role of Religious Communities (convened by Italy)
- Countering Terrorist Ideology and Propaganda: Primary Role of Governments and Public-Private Partnerships (convened by the Russian Federation)
- Protecting Freedom of Expression when Countering Radicalization and Violent Extremism on the Internet (convened by Denmark, Norway, United Kingdom, Austria)
- From Prevention to Reintegration – Experiences in Tackling Violent Extremism from OMiK, UNDP and Local Civil Society (convened by the OSCE and the United Nations Development Programme)

- The Challenge of Jihadist Radicalization: How should Europe and its Partners Respond? (convened by the European Policy Centre and the European Foundation for Democracy)
- Violence Prevention Network: A Successful Approach to Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization in Prisons (convened by Violence Prevention Network)
- Exiting from Extremism: an Austrian Good Practice (convened by Austria)
- Women Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism and Radicalization that Lead to Terrorism (convened by UN Women – United Nations Development Programme)
- Enhancing the Impact of Civil Society and Communities on P/CVE: The Global Solutions Exchange (GSX) (convened by the Prevention Project and the International Civil Society Action Network (ICAN).

Civil society organizations and other local actors had the opportunity to reflect upon the issues on the Counter-Terrorism Conference agenda during a *Civil Society Day* organized by the Prevention Project in collaboration with the Austrian Chairmanship and the Transnational Threats Department on 25 May. The participants to the *Civil Society Day* shared good practices, lessons learned and their understanding of the current challenges. They also offered concrete proposals for scaling up successful approaches and overcoming obstacles, looking at both the political and funding landscapes. The outcomes of this event will be summarized in a short report that will be distributed to all Conference participants and the broader OSCE community.

During the Conference, the OSCE Secretary General also launched a social media challenge for young people, under the umbrella of the OSCE #UnitedCVE campaign. Under the hashtag #DailyThrills, young people were invited to share how they channel their passion and energy, and their need for meaning, belonging, recognition or adventure in a positive way. This social media challenge is intended to give young people the opportunity to highlight their own stories of resilience and commitment to inspire their peers and promote alternatives to violent extremism.

A strong emphasis was placed on engaging youth. The Austrian Chairmanship invited youth representatives from across the OSCE area to present their recommendations to policy-makers. These recommendations were formulated over the past year during workshops on youth and the prevention of violent extremism convened by the Chairmanship for Western Europe, the Black Sea region, South-Eastern Europe, and Central Asia, under the umbrella of the OSCE #UnitedCVE campaign.

As the world's largest regional security arrangement under Chapter VIII of the UN Charter, the OSCE, with its multi-dimensional approach to security, its specialized executive structures and its network of field operations, was once more recognized as an important regional actor and partner in preventing and countering VERT, especially in Central Asia, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe.

Following the discussions at the Conference, the Austrian Chairmanship identified a number of suggested recommendations outlined in the second part of this document. The

Conference and the non-binding recommendations are put forward by the Chairmanship as a further contribution to the discussions on the United Nations Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and its implementation in the OSCE region in support of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, as well as to the informal OSCE Ministerial meeting that will take place on 11 July 2017 in Austria.

## **Session 1 - Exchange of Views on National Experiences and International Co-operation in Countering Terrorism**

*This session provided an opportunity to consider recent national and international developments, challenges and best practices in countering terrorism, in particular through enhancing co-operation between law enforcement authorities, as well as by involving, where appropriate, civil society, the private sector, and the media. In line with the OSCE's comprehensive approach to security, effective counter-terrorism measures and the protection of human rights are complementary and mutually reinforcing. Human rights protection must therefore be an integral element of all counter-terrorism-activities.*

The recommendations to OSCE participating States, Partners for Co-operation and OSCE Executive Structures as perceived by the Chairmanship include:

*To OSCE participating States and OSCE Partners for Co-operation:*

- To strengthen domestic efforts and international co-operation in preventing and countering terrorism and VERLT in full compliance with OSCE commitments and all obligations under international law, including international human rights law, international criminal law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law;
- To place human rights and the rule of law at the very core of any strategy to counter VERLT and terrorism in order to strengthen its effectiveness and ensure that its implementation does not undermine its very purpose to protect and secure a democratic society;
- To effectively address the whole life-cycle of terrorist radicalization, from prevention to reintegration, and facilitate networking aimed at preventing and countering VERLT drawing on existing good practices, in particular those developed by the Global Counterterrorism Forum;
- To ensure that the criminal justice response to VERLT and terrorism is effectively complemented by appropriate preventive measures;
- To ensure that emergency measures taken in strict accordance with all requirements under international law are subject to procedural safeguards and judicial oversight and effectively limited to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation, including in duration, geographical coverage and material scope as defined in OSCE commitments and under international human rights law;

- To ground the measures aimed at preventing and countering terrorism and VERLT on evidence-based research, and to evaluate their value and effectiveness using metrics and evaluation;
- To develop a holistic and multifaceted approach to preventing and countering VERLT, addressing all the conditions conducive to the spread of terrorism, including lack of education, marginalization, poverty, unemployment, discrimination, including gender-based discrimination, disenfranchisement, and human rights violations, in order to effectively prevent VERLT and terrorism in the medium to long term;
- To promote good governance, tolerance, non-discrimination, interfaith dialogue;
- To integrate gender aspects in efforts to prevent and counter VERLT, noting the increasing number of young women and girls travelling to and from conflict areas;
- To build resilient societies, including through countering terrorist and violent extremism messaging in a human-rights compliant manner and by offering alternatives to these narratives, including on the Internet, social and other media;
- To develop a two-fold approach based on: a) creating open, inclusive and equitable societies as the most meaningful strategy to prevent VERLT and terrorism, based on the respect for human rights, good governance, tolerance, characterized by a well-functioning justice system, social inclusion, enhanced access to economic, social and cultural rights, human rights education as well as real and equal economic, social and political opportunities for all and giving to all a sense of belonging and ownership in the societies where they live b) effective counter-narrative strategies aimed at preventing and countering VERLT;
- To partner with credible voices from the civil society, in particular youth, families, teachers, victims of terrorism, local communities, women groups and organizations, religious, cultural and education leaders, social workers, as well as the media and the private sector that can both deliver counter-narratives, and get involved in building up a positive perspective to preventing and countering VERLT in a sustainable way;
- To implement community-policing approaches to prevent terrorism and counter VERLT in partnership with the public, thus building trust between the police and local communities; security fora, hotlines, advisory centers, monthly contact meetings, and town-hall style dialogue between the police and local communities were mentioned in this context as good practices;
- To assess how to prevent and counter the use of the Internet for terrorist purposes while upholding international human rights standards, including on freedom of expression and freedom of the media, and recognizing that bolstering the positive use the Internet and social media is critical to building pluralistic and democratic societies that are resilient to VERLT;
- To partner with a variety of stakeholders, including civil society, in particular with, youth, families, teachers, victims of terrorism, local communities, women groups and organizations, religious, cultural and education leaders, social workers, as well as the media and the private sector with the aim to enhance opportunities to recognize, and

engage with individuals at risk of VERLT and develop tailored and human rights-compliant strategies, policies, and programmes that will reduce the appeal and spread of VERLT;

- To strengthen inter-agency co-ordination, in particular among law enforcement and intelligence agencies, at the international, regional, sub-regional, national and local levels, with the aim to exchange information, deliver context-relevant and effective preventive actions, strengthen legal co-operation in criminal matters related to terrorism;
- To improve information-sharing, in accordance with international human rights standards and domestic data protection legislation, regarding (i) relevant financial data in order to follow the money trail for terrorism financing, (ii) relevant biometric data to identify terrorists crossing the borders, and (iii) the use of forged documents to reduce opportunities for terrorists assuming fake identities;
- To make sure that the Interpol FTF database is thoroughly checked at the border; that the information transmitted to Interpol is accurate, adequate and relevant in relation to the purpose for which it is being stored; and to ensure that effective safeguards are in place for the input of information into the database and its use in accordance with international human rights standards;
- To address the challenges related to the increased use of encryption communication technologies by terrorists, in compliance with international human rights and data protection standards and securing freedom of expression and access to information both *online* and *offline*;
- To improve advance screening of passengers, through the use of Advance Passenger Information (API) systems, in line with Annex 9 of the ICAO Chicago Convention and Passenger Name Records (PNR) while fully respecting international human rights standards, including in relation to the right to privacy and data protection;
- To ensure the accountability of terrorists, including returning foreign terrorist fighters, through the criminal justice process and to establish, as appropriate, alternatives to prison for offenders, in particular for children and youth.

*To OSCE Executive Structures:*

- To continue effectively mainstream the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and of gender considerations, as integral part of all OSCE activities aimed at preventing and countering VERLT;
- To continue promoting a multi-dimensional understanding of the factors underlying VERLT;
- To continue implementing and developing concrete projects at the local level to address conditions conducive to terrorism;
- To facilitate upon request more capacity building for government officials from the OSCE participating States and OSCE Partners for Co-Operation and respectively for



the local communities in the field of preventing and countering VERLT in a human rights compliant manner.

## **Session 2 - Engaging and Empowering Youth in Preventing and Countering VERLT**

*This session provided an opportunity for participants to engage with youth representatives who participated in a series of workshops convened by the Austrian Chairmanship on the prevention of violent extremism for youth from Western Europe, the Black Sea region, South Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Recommendations from the workshops were previously circulated by the Chairmanship respectively as [PC.DEL/1438/16](#), [CIO.GAL/38/17](#), [CIO.GAL/70/17](#) and [CIO.GAL/84/17](#). The session highlighted the potential of youth as agents of positive change in preventing and countering VERLT, as encouraged by Ministerial Council Declaration 4/15, the UN Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism and UN Security Council resolution 2250 (2015).*

The recommendations to OSCE participating States and OSCE Partners for Co-operation as perceived by the Chairmanship include:

- To actively engage and empower youth at all levels not simply as vulnerable and potential victims of violent extremism, but as agents of positive change; to involve youth in the design and implementation of governmental and local policies on preventing and countering VERLT, as an essential part of building resilient societies; to increase youth participation and sense of belonging to societies, as youth and also children are likely to be targeted by and exposed to terrorist propaganda;
- To work with youth to formulate and disseminate alternative narratives and to highlight role models that will appeal to young people and effectively compete with terrorist propaganda offering purpose, belonging, adventure, redemption, heroism;
- To enhance the exchange of information, lessons learnt and good practices on how to effectively reach out and engage with youth in preventing and countering VERLT;
- To encourage and fund additional research into the drivers of VERLT to ensure policies and measures are based on holistic evidence and multi-dimensional understanding rather than assumptions; more research is especially needed to understand what makes the overwhelming majority of communities and individuals resilient to VERLT;
- To avoid the pitfalls of stigmatizing particular groups or communities through measures to prevent and counter terrorism and VERLT, and of validating violent extremist narratives by unwittingly co-opting their terminology;
- To refrain from equating religiosity with vulnerability to VERLT and to uphold freedom of religion or belief;
- To reject associations of terrorism with a specific religion, ethnicity or nationality, and to address violent extremism holistically, to include also hooliganism, hate crimes,



gender-based violence, inter-ethnic conflict, incitement to hatred, hate speech and intolerance;

- To address the barriers to effective youth participation in efforts to prevent and counter VERLT, including lack of information and communication, stereotyping and experiences of discrimination;
- To expand opportunities for youth to inform OSCE efforts at all levels, including political dialogue and programming on preventing and countering VERLT;
- To offer positive perspectives and real alternatives to young people, by tackling youth unemployment, investing in culture and education, supporting social and civic programmes to channel youth energy towards productive ends and give them a real sense of agency and control over their lives;
- To recognize the vital role of formal and informal education in building skills such as critical thinking and conflict prevention, enabling youth to be more prepared for dealing with uncertainty, frustrations, and equipping them to recognize and reject violent extremist and intolerant narratives;
- To create educational programmes to raise awareness among youth about the tactics used by terrorist to both radicalize and recruit, including through social media;
- To offer capacity building opportunities for parents, teachers, social workers, and other actors working with children and youth so they can identify and respond appropriately to concerns related to VERLT;
- To develop partnerships with the ICT industry and businesses to enhance the effectiveness of strategic communication and counter-messaging efforts;
- To provide training to media professionals and encourage self-regulation to ensure ethical reporting about terrorism and VERLT and at the same time more positive reporting about diversity and cohesion;
- To enhance medial literacy, especially digital literacy, and critical thinking among the public at large and youth in particular;
- To facilitate the reporting of hate crimes and hate speech by members of the public and ensure swift public condemnations and effective criminal justice response, in accordance with international human rights law;
- To ensure a targeted and rule-of-law based approach to filtering and blocking online content in order to uphold freedom of expression and the media, recognizing that social media only serve as a catalyst not a cause of VERLT and that violent extremism thrives on lack of information and disinformation;
- To rebuild trust in state authorities, including among youth belonging to minorities, by, inter alia, addressing corruption, discrimination, increasing transparency, enhancing participation and developing inclusive dialogue between public authorities and different groups in society;
- To foster inter-ethnic and inter-cultural understanding and promote the social, political and economic inclusion of persons belonging to minorities and respecting their rights;

- To promote broad dialogue and conduct advocacy campaigns for mutual understanding and respect, common ground around universal human rights, in order to build resilience to divisive discourse, “us vs them” thinking, and polarization that provides a fertile ground for VERLT;
- To encourage religious leaders to promote inter-faith dialogue down to the grassroots level and to offer them training to understand VERLT and engage more effectively with young people;
- To safeguard and expand the space for civil society organizations, such as women, youth and community-based organizations, which provide critical avenues to reach vulnerable or concerned individuals;
- To treat youth with dignity and to uphold the rights and specific needs of youth and children at all times, including in the context of juvenile criminal justice when they are suspected or found to have committed terrorism-related offences.

### **Session 3 - Rehabilitation, Reintegration and the Prevention of Radicalization to Terrorism: Good Practices from the OSCE Area**

*This session provided an opportunity for policy makers and practitioners from participating States to share experiences and review with international experts challenges, lessons learnt and existing good practices. It also took stock of the on-going work in other multilateral fora and provided the opportunity to discuss the potential role OSCE executive structures could play, within their respective mandates, in supporting participating States in this regard. The session highlighted that the sheer number and diversity of returnees poses a daunting challenge for the national and international criminal justice sectors. Participating States are challenged to address this threat in an effective way, which enforces legislation and ensures security, while upholding the rule of law and international human rights standards. In this regard, OSCE participating States have notably affirmed in MC.DOC/1/16 the importance of co-operating in efforts to develop and implement rehabilitation and re-integration strategies.*

The recommendations to OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation and summary of the discussions as perceived by the Chairmanship include:

- To design and implement disengagement, rehabilitation and reintegration programmes following a comprehensive and multidisciplinary approach; such programmes are most effective when they draw on wide ranging expertise and involve all stakeholders that may engage with individuals at risk of or already radicalized to terrorism, in particular families, teachers, local communities, women groups and organizations, religious, cultural and education leaders, social workers;
- To tailor interventions on a case by case basis, taking into account the individual experiences and needs, as the process of radicalization to terrorism is always a sum of individual experiences and contextual factors and there can be no one size fits all solution for rehabilitation and reintegration;

- To foster the support of relatives and of the local community, as a key factor for success, and to work with the communities to which foreign terrorist fighters (FTFs) may return or have returned, to ensure that negative dynamics are addressed and support mechanisms are available;
- To focus on individualized assessment and mitigation of risks that persons radicalized to terrorism may pose; and to enhance in this context cooperation and appropriate sharing of information within and among States while ensuring full compliance with international human rights standards;
- To tackle in a human rights compliant and gender-sensitive way the significant challenge for state authorities, in particular to the criminal justice sector, that individuals radicalized and/or recruited into terrorism are getting younger and younger with the proportion of women involved in terrorism significantly increased over the past years;
- To ensure human prison conditions and good prison management, in compliance with human rights standards, as essential prerequisites for preventing the spread of VERLT in prisons and effective rehabilitation and reintegration programmes;
- To provide training for prison guards on the importance of respecting and promoting human rights in connection with preventing and countering VERLT in prisons, and to facilitate the work of non-governmental experts in prisons, as appropriate, to support rehabilitation and reintegration programmes;
- To consider whether there are optimal sentences and/or other possibilities to incentivize the participation in rehabilitation programmes while maintaining its voluntary character, which is essential for it to be successful, and also alternatives to imprisonment for less serious terrorism-related offences, especially for juvenile offenders;
- To consider working with “formers”, namely repented individuals once involved in VERLT, while carefully assessing on a case-by-case basis whether and how they can contribute to prevention efforts.
- To use the resources and technical assistance offered by UNODC, UNICRI, GCTF and non-governmental organizations active in this field in designing strategies, policies and programmes for rehabilitation and reintegration of violent extremist offenders.