

**SCO Secretary-General's statement at the OSCE
Annual Security Review Conference
(24 June, 2020)**

Dear Mr. Greminger,

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

I express my gratitude to the Albanian side, the Secretary General Mr. Greminger for extending the invitation to this Conference.

The SCO and the OSCE are the largest trans-regional organizations in terms of territory and population, carrying out multi-profile activities in the spheres of maintaining peace and stability, sustainable economic and humanitarian development.

We give significant consideration to the activities of our European partners and are ready to develop substantive working relationship in the areas of intersection of interests.

First and foremost, we note our joint efforts to strengthen security in Central Asia.

We believe that, in the situation of the coronavirus pandemic, we should pay close attention to the emerging risks in the fields of contemporary challenges and threats.

Firstly, a fertile ground is being shaped for proliferation of radical ideas in the society against the background of the current socio-economic crisis caused by the pandemic, and as a result, there is also a threat of recruitment activities of terrorist and extremist organizations.

We support a positive synergy of joint activities focused on implementing preventive educational and information policy, which exposes terrorist ideology, creates conditions for the successful socialization of the youth, unleashes their creative talents and develops intercultural and intercivilizational dialogue.

In addition, we believe that it is important to develop cooperation on international information security issues to contain the growth of crime in the information space, including the increasing incidence of cybercrime.

Secondly, our concerns related to the threat of biological terrorism are becoming more acute.

The rise activation of international terrorist organizations, especially ISIS, in the northern provinces of Afghanistan is also a matter of deep concern of the SCO member states.

In this regard, under coordination of the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, the competent authorities of our countries are building up a joint capacity for rapid response and prevention of terrorist attacks, in the conditions of self-isolation and quarantine.

Thirdly, the pandemic has slowed the world economy down.

However, the economic downturn did not affect the illicit drug trafficking.

Even during the pandemic, these illegal markets continue generating huge profits.

We need deep analysis to address the gaps in understanding how the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on drug production and supply routes will affect terrorist organizations, which benefit financially from facilitating trafficking of drugs and other illicit substances.

It is also expected that organizations involved in drug trafficking will increasingly resort to digital and cyber technologies.

An important step in strengthening investigative measures in this area was the SCO international anti-drug operation "Spider Web" conducted at the end of March this year, which resulted in seizure of more than 3 tons of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances.

The world anti-drug community paid special attention to the preventive efforts of our Organization during the special event on fighting illicit drug trafficking via DarkNet on the sidelines of the 63rd session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs.

We are also exploring opportunities for interaction in the SCO-UNODC-OSCE format.

I would like to point out that during the SCO summit scheduled for the upcoming autumn in St. Petersburg the following list of documents on security issues are to be adopted: on ensuring biological security, cooperation in the field of international information security, countering the drug threat and the proliferation of terrorist and extremist ideology, including in the Internet.

Fourthly, the situation in the neighboring Afghanistan - a country, which is both an SCO observer state and an Asian partner of the OSCE - remains the subject of close attention of our organizations.

It is important to continue dialogue on issues related to the reconstruction of Afghanistan, taking into account the shift in internal political dynamics following the agreement signed in Doha between the US Government and the Taliban.

We see importance of further strengthening coordination with the Afghan side in the fight against terrorism, drug trafficking and illegal migration through the mechanism of the SCO-Afghanistan Contact Group and the OSCE partner programs.

We positively estimate our contacts with the OSCE and hope for constructive synergy of our efforts in building an inseparable and indivisible territory of security and development.

During the current crisis, the global community should choose solidarity, avoid politicization and fragmentation in order to effectively and painlessly confront new threats and security challenges.

I would like to thank Mr. Greminger for his personal contribution to strengthening dialogue between our organizations.

Thank you for your attention.