

PERMANENT COUNCIL 6 FEBRUARY 2014: PRESENTATION BY THE CHAIR OF THE SECURITY COMMITTEE

Thank you, Mr Chairman, for giving me the opportunity of informing the Permanent Council of our plans and priorities for the Security Committee this year, and for your trust and confidence in giving me its chair. I hope I shall not disappoint.

I say “our” plans and priorities for 2014 for two reasons. The first is that, as elsewhere, we take our steer in the Security Committee from the Chair-in-Office, and my work has been made easy in that respect as Swiss priorities on transnational threats are very closely aligned to my own. The second reason, and no less important, is that the Security Committee is for all participating States and their priorities. One of the reasons why we have not yet published our Work Programme is that we want to give all participating States the opportunity to feed in their thoughts on what we should discuss this year. As chair, I may have to juggle and judge competing or conflicting requests, but the offer remains open until next Monday. I intend to publish the draft Programme next week and present it at the Security Committee meeting the following Monday.

Although the programme is not yet set in stone, we do have some definite themes which I should like to touch on. The first relates to terrorism – an ever-growing and evolving threat that unfortunately affects us all. Together with the Chair-in-Office, we have identified the following areas as meriting particular attention in the Security Committee this year:

Firstly, countering terrorist financing including kidnap for ransom – which will feature both in the March Security Committee meeting and the Counter-Terrorism conference in Interlaken in April. If I could be indulged in a personal, but highly pertinent aside in this context, I’d like to take this opportunity to draw participating States’ attention to UNSCR 2133, agreed unanimously on 27 January, which is the first standalone resolution tackling terrorist kidnapping for ransom and which calls on all Member States to prevent terrorists from benefiting directly or indirectly from ransom payments.

Secondly, countering radicalisation leading to terrorism, and the return of foreign fighters from theatres of war such as Syria, will be another highly topical and relevant issue which we will wish to consider.

Although terrorism may steal the spotlight, it is not the only transnational threat we face, nor the only one where the OSCE is equipped to offer support and guidance. We intend to devote one meeting to policing issues, with a likely focus on community and gender, and another to border management issues, with a particular focus on Central Asia given its particular relevance in view of the 2014 transitions in neighbouring Afghanistan. Counter-narcotics is another area where OSCE activity in this region is particularly relevant and will be the subject of a Swiss-organised conference in October.

Mindful of exhortations by participating States that we should address transnational threats in a cross-dimensional and inclusive manner, and of the importance of a gender perspective in achieving comprehensive security, I intend to introduce, where appropriate, guest speakers from other dimensions or OSCE institutions and propose holding at least one meeting on a specific cross-dimensional issue. Potential topics are still to be finalised but could include issues such as illegal migration and trafficking, or human rights and terrorism.

I would also like to highlight the OSCE's role as a platform for cooperation with other regional or international organisations and propose to hold a meeting devoted to this issue.

One of the most significant achievements at the Ministerial Council at Kyiv, perhaps, dare I say it, the most significant, was endorsement of the first ever set of regional CBMs in the area of cyber/ICT security. This is an area where the OSCE is spearheading best practice and I am delighted that my US colleague, Ambassador Dan Baer, has agreed to continue chairing the Informal Working Group on PC Decision 1039 in order to take forward implementation of the CBMs we have already agreed and to start work on formulating a second set. He can count on my full support.

My predecessors, not least Ambassador Tacan Ildem, developed the useful mechanism of inviting guest speakers from other organisations to talk to the Security Committee about the work they are doing on transnational threats. Their presentations provided us with much food for thought, and I intend to continue bringing outside expertise into Security Committee meetings to help identify areas of synergy and potential cooperation. But I would increasingly

like to focus on what the OSCE itself is doing, and to see how their work is benefitting us – what is working well and might be expanded, and what is less successful and might be dropped or changed. What are we doing that really is “best practice” and might usefully be shared with others? To this end, I intend to invite more representatives from the OSCE Secretariat and Field Offices to share their experience with us, and to invite representatives from the participating States to talk about best practice from their perspective. Over the past few years we have established a solid institutional foundation and mandate for our work; now is the time to concentrate on its implementation.

The OSCE is a platform for dialogue, and that should apply as much to the deliberations of the Security Committee as elsewhere. Transnational threats should engender a spirit of cooperation and consensus amongst participating States that is not always so easy to find in other dimensions. I hope that we can keep that shared goal of an OSCE region increasingly protected from criminal or terrorist threats in mind as we discuss how best to tackle transnational threats. I count on the active participation, commitment and ownership of all our delegations in this endeavour.

I have already benefitted greatly from the support and advice of Alexey Lyzhenkov and his dedicated teams in the Transnational Threats Department and look forward to working with them over the coming year to realise our shared ambitions of promoting and supporting their work in the field. To enable them to concentrate more on implementation than bureaucracy, I have suggested reducing the content and length of the report of our monthly meetings to a format closer to the PC Journal.

Thank you for your attention. I trust that together we will continue to advance the OSCE’s work on transnational threats in a relevant and beneficial direction.