

**OSCE-wide Expert Seminar on
*Promoting the Resilience of “Soft” Targets against Terrorist Attacks
through Public-Private Partnerships*
(16-17 December 2019, Vienna)**

CONCEPT NOTE

Recent terrorist attacks in the OSCE area and beyond have shown a tendency towards attacks on “soft” targets. Terrorists exploit the open nature and public character of these locations to maximize civilian casualties, chaos, publicity and economic impact.

Effectively protecting “soft” targets poses particular challenges given the need to balance security concerns with maintaining the accessibility of these locations. Moreover, the variety of “soft” targets, the involvement of the private sector and local actors, ensuring a human-rights compliant response as well as the changing nature of the threat have to be taken into account.

In view of the above, the international community has stepped up its efforts to protect “soft” targets against terrorist attacks. UN Security Council resolution 2396 (2017) outlines the need for States to develop appropriate contingency and emergency response plans for terrorist attacks as well as to establish or strengthen national, regional and international partnerships with stakeholders, both public and private, as appropriate, to share information and experience.

Furthermore, the Global Counter-Terrorism Forum (GCTF) developed non-binding good practices for governments and businesses when developing policies to protect “soft” targets. The UN Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (UN CTED) published a Compendium which provides States with good practices and relevant guidelines, indicators, standards, risk assessment measures and recommendations on how to protect critical infrastructure against terrorist attacks.

Taking into account that both, “soft” targets and critical infrastructure are often privately owned and operated, the OSCE is well-placed to provide a platform for multi-stakeholder dialogue and to exchange expertise and networking.

To this end, the OSCE Secretariat’s Action against Terrorism Unit (TNTD/ATU) will hold an OSCE-wide expert seminar on the protection of “soft” targets against terrorist attacks to offer OSCE participating States and Partners for Co-operation as well as international and regional organizations, civil society, academia and private sector an opportunity to share related information and experience, in particular on the establishment of public-private partnerships. The seminar will aim at raising awareness about the threat and to determine ways in which the OSCE can support OSCE participating States in increasing “soft” target resilience.

Beneficiaries

Participants for this event will be expert-level officials who are responsible for the protection of “soft” targets in their respective countries. Experts from other regional and international organizations as well as civil society, academia and business representatives will also be invited. It is expected that participants will be able to engage in discussions and debates and to present on good practices and lessons learnt within their respective countries, institutions and/or enterprises.